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**HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT**

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES**

(HANSARD)

Tuesday 9 February 2021

House of Commons

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The House met at half-past Eleven o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Virtual participation in proceedings commenced (Orders, 4 June and 30 December 2020).

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

Oral Answers to Questions

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

The Secretary of State was asked—

UK Research and Development

Jack Lopresti (Filton and Bradley Stoke) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to support UK research and development. [912039]

Mr Speaker: I call the Secretary of State—and congratulations.

The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Kwasi Kwarteng): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

We announced at the spending review an investment of £14.6 billion in R&D for 2021-22. This will no doubt cement our status as a science superpower here in the UK. We are taking forward the ambitious commitments in the R&D road map, which was published only last year, and we are of course continuing co-operation with the EU through association with the Horizon Europe programme.

Jack Lopresti [V]: Apprentices have played a key role throughout this pandemic, including working on the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, which is helping the country overcome this virus. Can my right hon. Friend confirm that, in National Apprenticeship Week, he will be working with and encouraging more R&D-based businesses to provide apprenticeship opportunities so that more young people can gain the skills they need to progress in this field?

Kwasi Kwarteng: Absolutely. I thank my hon. Friend for the great work he is doing as co-chair of the all-party parliamentary group on apprenticeships. He will know that apprenticeships are a key part of this Government's plan for jobs as we build back better from the pandemic, and that is why we are offering employers cash payments of up to £2,000 when they hire a new apprentice, until 31 March this year.

Chi Onwurah (Newcastle upon Tyne Central) (Lab [V]): We are all grateful to Britain's world-leading scientists for blazing a trail of hope in this terrible pandemic, but how are Government protecting science's future? Medical charity research is predicted to fall by over £4 billion after Government refused support. University research has only been offered loans to cover losses from international students, while 90% of UK researchers are excluded from support, even though the virus prevents them from finishing their research. Postgraduate research students from the nine doctoral training programmes have written to demand action, given the escalating scale of the crisis, and there is a massive reduction in funding for early career researchers. Why are Government not protecting the future of the science that is protecting us?

Kwasi Kwarteng: The hon. Lady seems to be living in a parallel universe. If we look at the vaccine roll-out—we have seen 12.3 million, or nearly 12.3 million, people vaccinated as of this morning—we can see that the strength of the UK science base is really impressive. It is looked on throughout the world as something to aspire to. We are a world-leading science power—a science superpower. I have already mentioned the £14.6 billion that we have committed to R&D, and this is an area where we are confident and world-beating.

Post Office Closures: Scotland

David Mundell (Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale) (Con): What assessment his Department has made of the effect of the closure of post offices operated by CJ Lang & Son Ltd on the post office network in Scotland. [912040]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Paul Scully): Post offices and postmasters have played an absolutely key role in our communities, especially at this particular time, and I am pleased to report that, of the 25 CJ Lang branches due to close—while discussions continue—CJ Lang has agreed to keep 18 open. Post Office Ltd is actively working on alternative arrangements to ensure continuity of services for affected locations.

David Mundell: My constituents in Eastriggs, Thornhill, Gretna and the Georgetown area of Dumfries will be pleased to hear that their local post offices are not to close at this time, particularly during a pandemic. Can the Minister reassure me, however, that in the negotiations or discussions that are to take place between the Post Office and CJ Lang—or SPAR, as it is known locally—the Post Office will have the flexibility to look at new models of operation of a post office in such a retailer so that that model can meet the needs of the retailer, the needs of the Post Office and, most importantly, the needs of the post office customer?

Paul Scully: My right hon. Friend has been a big champion for post offices in his constituency and across Scotland, including the world's oldest post office in Sanquhar. I am glad to report that, yes, the Post Office does want to be flexible in delivering postal services across the country, including different models, according to demand.

Dismiss and Re-engage Tactics

Navendu Mishra (Stockport) (Lab): What recent discussions he has had with (a) employers and (b) trade unions on the use of dismiss and re-engage tactics in negotiations with employees. [912042]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Amanda Solloway): Using threats of firing and rehiring as a negotiating tactic is completely unacceptable. That is why this Government have asked ACAS to look into this matter. It is talking to businesses and employee representatives to gather evidence of how fire and rehire has been used in practice.

Navendu Mishra [V]: I refer the House to my entry in the Register of Members' Financial Interests.

GoNorthWest bus workers, many of them my constituents, are balloting for industrial action against shameful fire and rehire tactics that would see 10% cuts to wages and jobs and sickness protection policies shredded, all in the middle of a pandemic. With British Airways recently forced to back down from similar threats against cargo staff after targeted strikes by Unite the union, does the Minister agree that Government inaction against this exploitative legal loophole has meant that industrial action and trade union organising are working people's only defence against disreputable employers?

Amanda Solloway: This Government have an unprecedented record in looking after employee rights, and we expect all employers to treat employees fairly in a spirit of partnership.

Covid-19: Support for Businesses

Jason McCartney (Colne Valley) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to support businesses during the covid-19 outbreak. [912043]

David Linden (Glasgow East) (SNP): What discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on increasing support to businesses affected by the covid-19 outbreak. [912050]

Selaine Saxby (North Devon) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to support businesses during the covid-19 outbreak. [912055]

Allan Dorans (Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock) (SNP): What discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on increasing support to businesses affected by the covid-19 outbreak. [912062]

Joy Morrissey (Beaconsfield) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to support businesses during the covid-19 outbreak. [912070]

Patrick Grady (Glasgow North) (SNP): What discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on increasing support to businesses affected by the covid-19 outbreak. [912076]

The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Kwasi Kwarteng): It is well known that we spent over £280 billion on an unprecedented package of

support for businesses, including the job retention scheme, support grants and Government-backed loans. I speak regularly with my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer on all the support measures available for businesses, including in the next stage when we try to lead and help them through the pandemic and towards recovery.

Jason McCartney [V]: Hundreds of my local hospitality businesses are extremely grateful for the Government support grants they have received. As the success of the vaccine roll-out allows those businesses to start planning reopening, will my right hon. Friend continue to speak with the Chancellor about helping hospitality businesses, including the wedding industry, as they get back on their feet, perhaps by extending help with VAT and business rates?

Kwasi Kwarteng: As my hon. Friend knows, we speak all the time not only to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer but to the sector; indeed, ministerial colleagues spoke to the sector just yesterday and I have dipped in on roundtables as well. We are very concerned about this; we fully recognise the great efforts my hon. Friend is making on behalf of his constituents, but we are in regular contact with our colleagues in the Treasury.

David Linden: Almost 24,000 retail, hospitality and leisure businesses in Scotland are currently supported by 100% rates relief. That support has been extended until the end of July, but the Scottish Government want to go further and Scottish businesses need us to go further. However, due to borrowing constraints placed on Scotland's Parliament, the funding necessary to extend further can only come from the UK Government, so does the Secretary of State agree that his Government should step up and fund this relief for another year?

Kwasi Kwarteng: What I do agree with is the fact that we have extended an unprecedented range of support and measures. I am in regular contact with my right hon. Friend the Chancellor; he has taken a nimble approach, and I look forward to engaging with him on what further support we can supply.

Selaine Saxby [V]: The hospitality supply chain has remained open despite a significant loss of earnings to continue supplying the NHS and schools that have to be open. Here in North Devon, Philip Dennis and Savona delivered to people's homes and operated pop-up click and collect venues when many vulnerable households struggled for supermarkets slots. However, these companies are not eligible for the same support as the hospitality businesses they normally service; will my right hon. Friend ensure that they have the support they need so they are still trading when our hospitality sector reopens?

Kwasi Kwarteng: As my hon. Friend knows, in January the Chancellor announced an additional £500 million in grant funding to local authorities for the additional restrictions; this discretionary funding enables local authorities to support businesses, including, as she pointed out, those in supply chains that have been adversely impacted by restrictions but are ineligible for other measures. This funding comes on top of the £1.1 billion allocated in November 2020.

Allan Dorans [V]: If the furlough scheme is not extended beyond April, Scotland, like the rest of the UK, will face mass unemployment, with the consequent damage to businesses, communities, families and the mental health of hundreds of thousands of people. Will the Secretary of State therefore urge the Chancellor to take urgent action to ensure that this is avoided by extending furlough?

Kwasi Kwarteng: I am absolutely mindful of the immense pressures our businesses right across the UK are suffering under at the moment. I am in regular contact with my right hon. Friend the Chancellor, who has acted in an unprecedented way; as I have said, he has put £280 billion into the economy to help our struggling businesses. But of course we are looking at the situation as it evolves, and we are very keen to help our economy through this.

Joy Morrissey [V]: May I congratulate my right hon. Friend again on his new position and on behalf of the 3,700 businesses across Beaconsfield that have benefited from the £200 million-worth of Government-backed loans since the start of the pandemic? Will he join me in paying tribute to Buckinghamshire Council for its excellent work in ensuring that businesses are supported during the pandemic, and confirm that he will continue to offer all the support he can to protect jobs and keep businesses afloat so that we can look to not only restart our economy but build back better from the pandemic?

Kwasi Kwarteng: Throughout this crisis, as I am sure my hon. Friend is aware, the Government have stood by businesses, as she mentioned, and worked tirelessly to protect people's jobs and livelihoods across the entirety of our country. As we emerge from the pandemic, we will ensure that we seize the initiative, as she put it, to build back better, greener and faster from this pandemic.

Patrick Grady: Does the Secretary of State not accept that, if people who are excluded from support packages are forced to wind up their businesses and move to universal credit or social security, that is more costly to the Government and damaging to the economy in the long run? Surely it is better to bring the excluded in from the cold now than to pay the long-term costs of exclusion in the future.

Kwasi Kwarteng: I fully appreciate—this is our key message as a Government—that jobs and employment are a No. 1 priority. That is exactly why my right hon. Friend the Chancellor extended the furlough scheme. I am in constant conversation with him about how better to provide support for our economy under this distress.

Edward Miliband (Doncaster North) (Lab): Businesses are facing a £50 billion bombshell in less than two months as Government support packages are due to end, and there is still no clarity about the future. The Secretary of State must realise that the Budget is too late. Businesses are making decisions now about their future and that of their workers. The CBI director general said a week ago:

“Businesses are currently completely in the dark when planning for the weeks and months ahead and this is hindering investment.”

The Secretary of State's job is to stand up for our businesses, so can he explain to them why, yet again, they are being left completely in the dark?

Kwasi Kwarteng: What I will explain is the fact that, in four weeks in the job, I have seen 200 business leaders. I meet the BROs—the business representative organisations—constantly, and I am in constant dialogue with them to ensure that the Government provide the support. We have provided £280 billion so far, which is beyond any precedent that we have seen. We are in constant conversation not only with our stakeholders but with the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Edward Miliband: Excuses are no substitute for a plan. Businesses need clarity and certainty, and they are not getting it from the Government. Let me turn to another critical issue facing them. We want them to succeed in our new trading relationship with the EU, but according to Make UK, 60% of manufacturers are experiencing disruption, the fashion industry says it faces “decimation”, and hauliers are warning of a permanent reduction in trade. What personal, tangible action is the Business Secretary taking to get a grip and deal with the mountains of red tape now facing our businesses?

Kwasi Kwarteng: Of course, Mr Speaker, you will remember that, ahead of the Brexit deal, we were told that there was never going to be a deal and that we were going to crash out with no deal. We were told all sorts of scare stories about what would happen with Brexit. I fully accept that there are issues on the border, and I fully accept that many of the business leaders I have spoken to have raised issues, but I think the situation is far better with a deal—ask Nissan in Sunderland—than was the case, certainly, only three months ago.

Stephen Flynn (Aberdeen South) (SNP) [V]: I have been listening closely, and so far the Secretary of State has failed to give a long-term commitment to the furlough scheme, he has failed to provide any certainty whatsoever on business rates, and he has failed to back support for the excluded. As was just referred to, businesses are not just dealing with the damage caused by the pandemic; they are also facing the chaos of Brexit. Exports from the UK to the EU are reportedly down by 68%, and just 10,000 out of 50,000 customs agents are in place. Can the Secretary of State confirm just how bad things need to be before his Government set aside their dogma and instead ask the EU for a grace period in order to protect Scottish businesses?

Kwasi Kwarteng: I remind the hon. Gentleman that the Brexit debate is over; he, for his own purposes, wants to rekindle this. The business leaders I have spoken to have been extremely grateful for the fact that we got a deal, which he and others opposed—they also predicted that we would not get one. We are moving forward with an active plan and active engagement with the economy. Some £280 billion has been proffered so far. That is a picture that he fails to recognise.

Stephen Flynn: It is probably helpful to advise the Secretary of State that in Scotland the Brexit debate is far from over—in fact, we are just getting started. But I will take it from his answer that there will not be any grace period for Scottish businesses. However, there is

one area where I hope he can provide some positive news: in relation to the North sea transition deal. The perfect storm of the pandemic and price crashes has seen 12,000 jobs associated with the North sea go already—and sadly, more are expected to follow. Can the Secretary of State confirm that he still expects the deal to be signed by the end of March, as his predecessor stated in the House? Will he agree to meet me and my colleagues in the city to discuss this hugely important matter?

Kwasi Kwarteng: The hon. Gentleman is quite right. He will be courteous enough to acknowledge that, as Energy Minister, I was directly involved in the conversations ahead of the North sea transition deal. I was very much in favour of bringing forward the completion of the deal. I am hopeful that we can manage to reach a really good deal, in which the sector accepts the need for decarbonisation very quickly.

Christine Jardine (Edinburgh West) (LD) [V]: The UK is a key player in supporting the research happening in developing countries that will be essential to putting an end to the pandemic and allowing our businesses to recover. Is the Secretary of State aware of the devastating blow that overseas development aid cuts will be to businesses and could be to our position as a global science leader, sending a message that the UK is not a reliable partner in long-term science advancement and business across the world?

Kwasi Kwarteng: I do not accept that any change in overseas development aid money will undermine our position as a global science superpower. As I said earlier, the science community around the world has been extremely impressed with how we are proceeding with the vaccine roll-out and the great innovation that takes place in this country.

Covid-19: Support for Hospitality

Rachel Hopkins (Luton South) (Lab): What steps his Department is taking to support the hospitality industry during the covid-19 outbreak. [912044]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Paul Scully): As part of the Government's unprecedented package of business support, worth £285 billion, hospitality businesses have access to the coronavirus job support scheme, grants, loans, reduced VAT, a business rates holiday and a moratorium on commercial evictions. We keep those and all support under review.

Rachel Hopkins [V]: I draw the House's attention to my entry in the Register of Members' Financial Interests.

It is Heart Unions Week, and I am pleased that Unite the union has published a hospitality and tourism recovery plan that outlines how the Government could safeguard jobs, protect working standards and rescue the sector. Does the Minister agree that it is important that the Government should work closely with trade unions and hospitality businesses to create a sector recovery strategy and that extending the job retention scheme, introducing rapid testing for hospitality staff and creating a hospitality commission to retrain workers would provide the sector with certainty to help it bounce back better?

Paul Scully: I thank the hon. Lady. We work with the sector and also with trade unions; I am in constant discussions with them about their various sectors. Yes, it is important that we work together with the hospitality sector on reopening it, allowing it to recover and grow its resilience. I am talking not just about the support; given the 12.3 million vaccinations that have been done to date, we will soon be able to reopen the hospitality sector and allow it to bounce back.

Covid-19: Support for Luxury Textile Sector

John Lamont (Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to support the luxury textile sector during the covid-19 outbreak. [912045]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Amanda Solloway): My hon. Friend will be aware of the great support that the Government have already given. The Government continue to offer unprecedented support through packages for businesses worth more than £280 billion. That includes loan schemes, grant funding, tax deferrals, the self-employment income scheme and, of course, the coronavirus job retention scheme. All have been designed to be accessible to businesses in most sectors and across the UK.

John Lamont: I am grateful for that response. As the Minister will know, the damaging tariffs from the US-EU trade dispute are punishing textile mills in my Borders constituency. Textile bosses tell me in no uncertain terms that these tariffs are going to cost us jobs and investment. Will the Minister agree to meet me and representatives from the textile sector in my constituency to discuss opportunities to support them during this difficult time?

Amanda Solloway: My hon. Friend has been a huge champion for Scottish textiles, and we are working hard to de-escalate the dispute and get punitive tariffs removed. Either I or the Secretary of State would be very happy to meet him and representatives from the textile sector in his constituency. I know that the Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, my hon. Friend the Member for Sutton and Cheam (Paul Scully)—the Minister for small business—continues to engage with stakeholders from across the retail and consumer goods sector.

Covid-secure Working

Tonia Antoniazzi (Gower) (Lab): What recent steps he has taken to strengthen and update his Department's guidance to employers on covid-secure working. [912046]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Paul Scully): We keep the safer workplaces guidance under continuous review. Public Health England and the Health and Safety Executive advise that the guidance remains robust on the basis of current scientific advice.

Tonia Antoniazzi [V]: The answer that the Minister has given does not reflect the situation facing a lot of my constituents who work at the Driver and Vehicle

Licensing Agency in Swansea. If the Government themselves cannot put in place suitable infrastructure to protect employees and substantially change their practices at the DVLA, how can they expect other companies to do so? Will he commit to speaking to his Secretary of State about the issue?

Paul Scully: I regularly speak to the Secretary of State about such issues. In the event of a workplace outbreak, businesses should follow the advice outlined in their action card guidance, and that includes departments such as the DVLA. The guidance is designed by the Department of Health and Social Care for specific outbreak situations, and businesses should contact their local PHE health protection team if necessary.

Andy McDonald (Middlesbrough) (Lab) [V]: Mr Speaker, “The effects are non-permanent or reversible, non-progressive and disability is temporary”.

Those are the words of the Minister for Employment in justifying why covid-19 has not been categorised as a “serious” workplace risk. Some 112,000 British citizens are dead, tens of thousands are experiencing long covid, and many more have permanent damage to vital organs, but only 0.1% of complaints result in an enforcement notice. This is serious, and re-categorisation is urgently needed. The UK continues to suffer the highest covid death toll in the world, but with such a disregard for workplace safety, is it any wonder?

Paul Scully: We work with Public Health England and with the Health and Safety Executive to ensure that we have the best safer workplace guidance, and if there are specific examples where that is not working, I would be happy to take that on board, but with 12.3 million first-dose vaccinations undertaken to date, hopefully we can get through this period and have even safer workplaces as the economy comes back to normal.

Net Zero by 2050

Andy Carter (Warrington South) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. [912047]

Henry Smith (Crawley) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. [912048]

The Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth (**Anne-Marie Trevelyan**): We are matching the UK’s world-leading net zero ambition with world-leading action. The Prime Minister’s 10-point plan for a green industrial revolution will accelerate our path to net zero with £12 billion of Government investment, including a commitment to power every home in the UK with offshore wind by 2030. In December, we published the energy White Paper and we will publish our net zero strategy ahead of COP26.

Andy Carter [V]: I thank the Minister for her statement. Could she expand on some of the points she makes, particularly the support that small businesses in towns such as Warrington might expect to receive to reduce their carbon emissions and contribute to net zero targets at a time when many are concerned about the costs of day-to-day business in the light of covid?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: We recognise the challenges that SMEs are facing and we want to work with businesses to build that green recovery, so we are offering up to £6 million with a boost in SMEs’ access to energy efficiency competitions to develop green solutions. Through the SME net zero working group, we are hearing from businesses how we can go even further to support them. Financial savings are available to businesses taking steps to achieve net zero, and I would encourage SMEs to sign up to the Race to Zero campaign.

Henry Smith [V]: A year ago, the UK airline industry committed to net zero carbon by 2050. What support and assistance has the Department been providing to this important sector, which is suffering loss at the moment, so that it can contribute in the future?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: The Government are backing the airline sector to achieve net zero, committing £3.9 billion, with industry, to fund aerospace research and development from 2013 to 2026. This includes the FlyZero project, to study in depth the potential for zero emission aircraft. We are also investing £125 million in the future flight challenge, to enable the use of new forms of green and autonomous aircraft.

Old Mine Workings: Safety

Stephen Kinnock (Aberavon) (Lab): With reference to recent flooding in Skewen, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the Coal Authority on the safety of old mine workings. [912049]

The Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth (**Anne-Marie Trevelyan**): First, I wish to offer my sympathies to all the families affected in the Skewen floods. My officials have been updated by the Coal Authority on the flooding in Skewen on a regular basis and on the work that it and local partners are doing to support the community, remediate the site and allow people to return safely to their homes. I will be meeting people from the Coal Authority shortly to discuss its work and the investments it is making to reduce the risk of this ever happening again.

Stephen Kinnock [V]: My constituents in Skewen have been devastated and traumatised by the flooding that ripped through their homes on 21 January. The disused mine workings that caused this incident are the responsibility of the Coal Authority and, ultimately, of the UK Government. Will the right hon. Lady therefore ensure that the Government fill the gaps not covered by insurance and provide financial support to those who are not insured? Does she agree that not a single Skewen resident should be left out of pocket by this terrible flooding?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: The hon. Gentleman is a wonderful advocate for his constituents, and I hope very much to be able to visit Skewen with him and talk personally to those affected. The Coal Authority does not have liability for flooding; flooding, whether from a river, stream or groundwater, is mainly dealt with through insurance, and I know that the Welsh Government emergency grant equivalent of the Bellwin scheme for those affected by flooding in England provides a higher

sum. So I look forward to working with him and to hearing directly from his constituents as soon as we can arrange this.

Green Hydrogen

Chris Grayling (Epsom and Ewell) (Con): What assessment he has made of the capacity of the UK to produce green hydrogen. [912051]

The Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth (Anne-Marie Trevelyan): The UK has expertise and assets to support both green and blue hydrogen. Our twin-track approach to enable both routes, in line with our 2030 5 GW ambition, will drive cost-effective supply volumes in the 2020s, while scaling up green hydrogen.

Chris Grayling [V]: My right hon. Friend is right to talk about both forms of hydrogen. Ideally, of course, we would all be using entirely green hydrogen—as she knows, there are problems with the renewable transport fuel obligation, which I hope she will be able to sort out—but blue hydrogen is going to be part of what we need in the coming decades. What steps is she taking to ensure that we provide the right support for the carbon capture that must, by definition, go alongside the production of blue hydrogen so that it is genuinely a net zero fuel?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: We are committed to making the UK a global leader in developing carbon capture and hydrogen production, so we are supporting both through new commercial frameworks and financial support, via our £1 billion for a carbon capture and storage infrastructure fund and £240 million for our net zero hydrogen fund.

Dr Alan Whitehead (Southampton, Test) (Lab): I welcome the Prime Minister's 10-point plan announcement of the proposal to develop 5 GW of low-carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030 and, as the Minister has mentioned, the £240 million net zero hydrogen fund to support that. Is it her intention to deploy that fund to support the production of green hydrogen and not to use any part of it to support production capacity consisting of grey or blue hydrogen?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his support for the 10-point plan, which I think the whole House believes is the right way forward. The £240 million net zero hydrogen fund is, of course, only one element of this, and we are supporting innovation, heat trials, standards, business models and a revenue mechanism to stimulate that private sector investment which is so important. This is going to put the UK firmly at the front of the pack. We will be setting out much more detailed work later in the year when I publish the hydrogen strategy.

Dismiss and Re-engage Tactics

Mick Whitley (Birkenhead) (Lab): What steps his Department is taking to reduce the use of dismiss and re-engage tactics by employers. [912052]

Andrew Gwynne (Denton and Reddish) (Lab): What steps his Department is taking to reduce the use of dismiss and re-engage tactics by employers. [912061]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Amanda Solloway): As I made clear to the hon. Member for Stockport (Navendu Mishra), the use of threats of firing and rehiring as a negotiation tactic is completely unacceptable. We expect all employers to treat employees fairly and in the spirit of partnership. Laws are in place to ensure fair treatment in respect of employment contracts and redundancy matters.

Mick Whitley [V]: Heathrow firefighters, engineers, campus security, baggage handlers, terminal operators and more are taking strike action today against disgraceful fire and rehire abuses by management that have resulted in pay cuts of up to 25% for thousands. Ministers may call these tactics unacceptable, but with greedy bosses and shareholders using covid as a cover for long-held plans to slash wages, what steps are they actually taking to stop Heathrow exploiting its workers in this way?

Amanda Solloway: As previously mentioned, the Department has engaged ACAS to hold discussions to generate valuable evidence about the use of fire and rehire. The Government will communicate our response to the evidence in due course.

Andrew Gwynne [V]: Warm words from the Minister, but fire and rehire is an outrageous tactic that is sadly growing in popularity. The latest large company to jump on the bandwagon is Tesco, where staff at the Livingston depot are facing pay cuts of between £4,000 and £13,000 a year—this while profits are soaring thanks to these same essential workers who have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic to keep families fed. When will the Government do what it takes to stop Tesco and other rogue bosses ripping off their workers? Or will they just wring their hands and wait for a report that they will simply ignore? We want action, Minister.

Amanda Solloway: Having worked for a retailer—Sainsbury's—for 13 years, I would like to acknowledge the hard work that we know all the people in retail do. However, I reiterate that the Department engaged ACAS to hold discussions in order to generate valuable evidence on the use of fire and rehire.

Automotive Sector: Fiscal Support

Justin Madders (Ellesmere Port and Neston) (Lab): What recent discussions he has had with representatives of the automotive sector on the adequacy of Government fiscal support for that sector. [912053]

The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Kwasi Kwarteng): Since becoming Secretary of State, I have met a number of representatives of our highly successful automotive sector to discuss future opportunities for the UK and to emphasise our Government's commitment to the continued growth of the sector.

Justin Madders: As the Secretary of State will know, a decision is due soon on whether a new vehicle will be built at Vauxhall Motors in Ellesmere Port. Does he agree that if the Government are truly ambitious about investment in the post-Brexit world, securing green growth and the levelling-up agenda, they will do everything in their power to make sure that we get the right decision for the Ellesmere Port plant?

Kwasi Kwarteng: I recognise the importance of the Ellesmere Port plant locally and fully appreciate the work that the hon. Gentleman has done to keep it open. I want to see its future secured. We are committed to ensuring that the UK continues to be one of the best global locations for automotive manufacturing. I am happy to meet the hon. Gentleman, should he wish, and I have met representatives from Vauxhall as well.

Support for Victims of Domestic Abuse

Mrs Pauline Latham (Mid Derbyshire) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to help businesses support victims of domestic abuse. [912054]

Imran Ahmad Khan (Wakefield) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to help businesses support victims of domestic abuse. [912068]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Paul Scully): Our recent report on workplace support is clear that employers' policies can play a significant role in helping victims of domestic abuse. We will work with employers to support that role and encourage good practice, which includes employers signing up to the Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse and managers downloading the Bright Sky app by Hestia.

Mrs Latham [V]: Domestic abuse is a heinous crime that destroys lives and families, and it is vital that every part of society works together to prevent it from happening. Will my hon. Friend confirm that his Department is working with businesses to help to build their awareness of domestic abuse and ensure that they notice the warning signs and help workers to access the support that they may need?

Paul Scully: My hon. Friend has been a huge champion of tackling abuse, both here in this country and internationally. As set out in our recent report on workplace support, we will work across Government to raise awareness with businesses and victims' representatives. From a business point of view, it tackles the £1.9 billion productivity stretch, and employers have a duty of care, just as with bullying, stress and mental health. Clearly, wider awareness can save lives.

Imran Ahmad Khan [V]: Several organisations in Wakefield, including Penny Appeal, have joined the Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse, which empowers businesses to take positive action for their employees affected by domestic abuse. This is a crucial step in providing support at a time when the levels of domestic abuse have sadly risen. Will my hon. Friend kindly outline what additional steps his Department is taking to help businesses supporting victims of domestic abuse?

Paul Scully: The Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse has 500 members so far signed up to it, covering 6 million employees. What we can do is work with other colleagues across the House to make sure that we get more signatories to the initiative and more support for employers, as well as employees, and that we can signpost the support where appropriate.

Covid-19: Safety of Meter Readers

Sam Tarry (Ilford South) (Lab): What assessment he has made of the safety of gas and electricity meter readers during the national covid-19 lockdown that has been in place since January 2021. [912056]

The Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth (Anne-Marie Trevelyan): We have introduced safer working guidance so that workers, including gas and electricity meter readers, can continue to work safely during national restrictions. This guidance is kept under constant review and updated in line with the latest scientific evidence.

Sam Tarry: Meter readers can visit between 50 and 200 properties a day, sometimes more in large cities. A large majority of these meter readers and their unions, such as the GMB, do not believe that it is right to enter those properties and put themselves and others at risk for the sake of someone getting an accurate gas or electric meter bill. Will the Minister listen to meter readers up and down the country and call for an end to internal meter readings during lockdown, to protect both meter readers and householders?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: There was an extensive series of engagements to support the drafting process for the safer working guidance, with more than 1,000 users responding. The safer working guidance has had 3.3 million views, and the evidence shows that it is working well and supporting those who are doing the incredibly important work of keeping utility services going. My door is always open, and I would be very happy to discuss any concerns with the hon. Gentleman and his constituents.

Renewable Energy

Alex Cunningham (Stockton North) (Lab): What plans he has to support the development of the renewable energy sector. [912057]

Mark Logan (Bolton North East) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to support the renewable energy sector. [912059]

Simon Baynes (Clwyd South) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to support the renewable energy sector. [912066]

The Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth (Anne-Marie Trevelyan): The UK is a major global market for renewables, and we have world-leading ambitions for deployment. We aim to deliver up to double the renewable capacity at the next contracts for difference round at the end of this year, compared with the last round. We are spending £160 million to support new port and manufacturing infrastructure needed to achieve our 40 GW offshore wind ambition, which will secure local jobs and benefits.

Alex Cunningham [V]: We all know how essential it is to provide our industries with renewable energy at an affordable cost, but it is also essential for the transportation of energy through the national grid so that firms in my area such as CF Fertilisers do not face even greater costs. What will the Minister do to ensure that there

is a first-class regulatory environment for all energy transportation, including a fair system for shorthaul gas still being considered by Ofgem?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: We have ambitious targets for future decarbonisation and the systems that will go with it. We will be publishing an industrial decarbonisation strategy in the very near future, which will help to support businesses as we look at all the issues that the hon. Gentleman raises.

Mark Logan [V]: I declare an interest. I have been listening to too many Elon Musk conversations on what is now all the rage, which is the Clubhouse app. What support can be provided to help Bolton to explore green technology opportunities, especially electric vehicles, boosting our local job market and future growth?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: I am delighted to see my hon. Friend championing the north-west and the opportunities that our green industrial revolution will bring to his area. The north-west is incredibly well placed to benefit from our £1 billion commitment to become a world-leading sector in technology to capture and store harmful emissions away from the atmosphere. We have also launched the green jobs taskforce, which will help us to develop plans for green jobs, including in the new green automotive sector across all regions, and we advise on what support will be needed for people who are in those transitioning industries.

Simon Baynes [V]: Can the Minister comment on the opportunities for companies in Clwyd South and elsewhere in Wales offered by the latest £11 million round of the UK Government's energy entrepreneurs fund, which is dedicated to driving forward new clean technologies?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: Wales's promising clean tech entrepreneurs are urged to bid for the latest £11 million of Government funding, which is going to support between 15 and 20 projects, with successful bidders receiving up to £1 million each. The funding available through the energy entrepreneurs fund is open to all eligible companies across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and I look forward to seeing their submissions.

Workplace Health and Safety Laws

Dame Angela Eagle (Wallasey) (Lab): What recent steps he has taken with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to improve the enforcement of workplace health and safety laws. [912058]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Paul Scully): The Government have invested an additional £14 million to support the Health and Safety Executive's enforcement of health and safety laws. My Department has provided guidance on safer working in response to covid-19 that helps to inform the HSE's monitoring and enforcement activities. This guidance is kept under continuous review.

Dame Angela Eagle [V]: Given the emergence of new, more transmissible strains of covid-19, why has the Minister not updated his Department's workplace guidance with stronger recommendations on ventilation, personal

protective equipment and the increasing requirement for effective surface disinfectants to be used, so that everyone can be kept safe at work?

Paul Scully: The HSE and Public Health England continue to look at the guidance, and they believe that it is robust enough for the new variants. It has been very clear, right from the outset, that ventilation is an important weapon in tackling covid.

Topical Questions

[912009] **Saqib Bhatti (Meriden) (Con):** If he will make a statement on his departmental responsibilities.

The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Kwasi Kwarteng): In my first four weeks as Secretary of State, I have met with more than 100 businesses—virtually, of course—up and down the country. I have been hugely impressed by the positivity, determination and sheer grit that our businesses have shown in spite of the immense challenges they are facing. I am pleased that we can now offer lateral flow testing to businesses with 50 or more employees, providing new support to small and medium-sized enterprises across the UK. As we have seen with the vaccine roll-out, it is thanks to our brilliant scientists and our brilliant science base that more than 12 million people have now received their first dose of a covid vaccine.

Saqib Bhatti [V]: In recent years, the Greater Birmingham and Solihull area has seen the setting up of the highest number of start-ups in the country outside London. Will my right hon. Friend set out his plans to support start-ups in my constituency of Meriden, so that they can continue to set up, thrive and survive after covid?

Kwasi Kwarteng: My hon. Friend is utterly committed to supporting growth and entrepreneurship in his area. I am fully aware that he was a director of business support for four years for the Greater Birmingham and Solihull local enterprise partnership. He will know that our Government continue to back growth and recovery across the UK. I think, in his own constituency of Meriden, we have done this through £90.9 million of covid loan scheme support.

Lucy Powell (Manchester Central) (Lab/Co-op) [V]: Well, I have listened to the Secretary of State's answers so far, and I am afraid that he is all mouth and no trousers. Let's try again, shall we? Businesses face a £50 billion bombshell in April, yet many in hospitality, retail and services will not even be open by then. Councils are sending out business rates bills as we speak and difficult decisions are being made now. Does the Minister agree personally with Labour's plan to extend the business rates holiday for at least six months as well as the furlough while public health measures remain, in order to deal with this bombshell before it blows a big hole in our economy?

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Paul Scully): I am glad that the hon. Lady has been listening to the same businesses that I have been listening to for the last year, as they have talked about the cliff edge that they face and their big fixed costs, whether those are business

rates, VAT or the rent moratorium, all of which we are recognising. We are continuing our conversations with the Treasury, because it is so important that as we reopen the economy, and look to get customers back to a safe and warm welcome to retail and hospitality, we also have a flexible approach to our financial support in order to tackle this difficult period.

[912012] **Darren Henry** (Broxtove) (Con): With local authorities such as that in Broxtove responsible for distributing grants to struggling businesses, will my hon. Friend tell me what flexibility can be provided to allow grants underspent in one area of business support to be used for support in other areas?

Kwasi Kwarteng: Local authorities, as my hon. Friend knows, receive funding to support closed businesses through grants of up to £3,000 for each four-week period of closure. In addition, closed businesses can receive up to an extra £9,000 as a one-off payment for the current period of national lockdown. Local authorities, as I am sure he is aware, are also in receipt of discretionary funding, sharing £1.6 billion of the additional restrictions grant.

[912010] **Dan Carden** (Liverpool, Walton) (Lab): British Gas engineers and staff are key workers who, in addition to their responsibilities heating people's homes, have been delivering food and essentials during the pandemic. Ministers have said that fire and rehire is unacceptable, so will the Secretary of State call on Centrica and Mr O'Shea to stop the bullying tactics of trying to force new contracts on to their workers cutting pay, terms and conditions, and ask them to get round the negotiating table with the union, GMB?

Kwasi Kwarteng: I am very pleased to announce that I and my ministerial colleagues have stated again and again that fire and rehire is completely unacceptable. I was in regular contact with British Gas—Centrica, as it is now called—as Energy Minister, and I have impressed upon it the need to engage with its workforce and treat them with utter integrity and fairness.

[912013] **Andrea Leadsom** (South Northamptonshire) (Con): May I start by congratulating my right hon. Friend on his new job? I very much enjoyed working with him in what is now his Department, and I wish him well.

I have constituents who run a very successful hotel business. They have appreciated all the support given to them by the Government, but they recognise that they are still using every last penny of their reserves to keep their golf course maintained, keep the swimming pool clean and keep the place secure, and they have no income. So can my right hon. Friend tell me, when they ask their bank, as they have, to provide them with rolled-over quarterly interest and the bank says, "We'll do it, but we need to put you under forbearance", is that a regulatory requirement or is it the bank making it even more difficult for them to recover once lockdown ends?

Kwasi Kwarteng: I am very pleased to be responding to my right hon. Friend. I very much enjoyed working with her in the Department and I am pleased that she is taking such an interest in our activities. In answer to her question, I would suggest that this is about policy,

not regulation. The Government expect lenders to be constructive in their dealings with businesses in difficulty. I am glad to hear that in this instance her constituents are getting the support that they need from the bank, but bank regulations on forbearance are a matter for the independent Financial Conduct Authority.

[912011] **John Spellar** (Warley) (Lab): When asset-stripper Melrose was allowed to take over GKN, the then Secretary of State said that Melrose had to honour its commitments to stay UK-based. Now that it has torn that up with its disgraceful behaviour and decision to close Birmingham's GKN Driveline, with the loss of 500 skilled engineering jobs, what is the Secretary of State going to do about it?

Kwasi Kwarteng: As the right hon. Gentleman well knows, my door is always open, and I am very happy to meet him to discuss this issue. I recall that when my right hon. Friend the Member for Tunbridge Wells (Greg Clark) was in my place, it was a very delicate situation, but I am happy to discuss with the right hon. Gentleman ideas on how we can ameliorate it.

[912014] **Kevin Hollinrake** (Thirsk and Malton) (Con) [V]: I draw the House's attention to my entry in the Register of Members' Financial Interests.

In my parliamentary work I have seen a number of examples of council landlords being unreasonable with tenants who are facing eviction or, potentially, insolvency when the right of forfeiture is restored on 31 March. Will my right hon. Friend set out his plans for this, but also send a message to local authorities that they should set a good example when it comes to helping businesses through this crisis?

Paul Scully: I have been continuing to have conversations with landlords and tenants to encourage constructive conversations to see what happens after the moratorium. Those tenants who can pay should pay, while landlords should show forbearance for the medium to long term, and that includes local authorities. In government, whether central or local, we should be setting that example.

[912016] **Carol Monaghan** (Glasgow North West) (SNP) [V]: Since the US imposed tariffs on single malt whisky, the loss of exports has cost the industry more than £500 million. Will the Secretary of State detail the discussions that have taken place with the new Administration and update the House on the progress of those talks?

Kwasi Kwarteng: The hon. Lady is absolutely right: we have to look after the interests of our whisky exporters. It is a key interest. I have spoken to Karen Betts I think twice in my first month precisely on that issue, and I am very hopeful that we can get it resolved.

[912015] **Marco Longhi** (Dudley North) (Con) [V]: Vaccinating our most vulnerable first, and as quickly as possible, is clearly the right strategy. My wife and I volunteered throughout the weekend and witnessed an amazing effort at the Black Country Living Museum, but does my right hon. Friend agree that having secured 400 million doses nationally puts us in a strong position to save the most lives and will, with workplace testing, save our economy from a longer recovery period?

Kwasi Kwarteng: Dare I say it, that was an excellent question, which goes to the heart of what this whole period has taught us. The fact that we managed to procure, develop and distribute so many vaccines has been a great story for not only our science base, but UK innovation. I am sure that it will be studied in years, even decades, to come. Finally, my hon. Friend is absolutely right to say that the surest way of helping our businesses is to ensure that we can reopen our economy in a safe way.

[912018] **Julie Elliott** (Sunderland Central) (Lab) [V]: Hand hygiene and mask wearing are most effective when accompanied by surface disinfection, especially in shared work spaces. Recent changes to the Health and Safety Executive guidance are welcome, but the Secretary of State's Department's guidance needs to be radically updated to provide specific guidance on the EN standard of disinfectants needed, and on the frequency of surface disinfection. Can he commit to doing that as a matter of urgency?

Paul Scully: We always keep the guidance under review. There are twice-weekly meetings with BEIS, the HSE and Public Health England to tackle those issues, and we will certainly take away that specific point.

[912017] **Caroline Ansell** (Eastbourne) (Con) [V]: The Government have provided life support to the hospitality sector, but my hoteliers are flagging that we are moving into a potential perfect storm of deferred payments coming into focus and the support scheme set to close. The weekend's announcement on bounce back loans has been met with huge relief in my constituency for the 1,800 businesses that are in that place. I ask the Minister to look also at extending the 5% VAT rate, furlough and the business rates holiday, so that the hospitality sector in my constituency of Eastbourne, and across the country, can come back all the stronger.

Kwasi Kwarteng: My hon. Friend is right, and I fully appreciate how key the hospitality sector is to her constituency of Eastbourne, which I have visited many times, even before I was elected to this place. The Government have introduced pay as you go measures, as I am sure she is aware, which give borrowers flexibility

when repaying their bounce-back loans. In terms of the other measures that she mentions, I am in constant dialogue with the Chancellor. We are looking at the economy and the situation as it evolves daily—minute by minute, almost—and we hope that we can provide the flexible support that we have in the last year.

[912022] **Dan Jarvis** (Barnsley Central) (Lab) [V]: Here in South Yorkshire, we used the local growth fund to create 2,800 jobs and attract £92 million of investment from world-leading businesses such as Boeing and McLaren. Now that funding has ended, will the Secretary of State work with us on our plan to create 6,000 new jobs and attract £600 million of investment over the next two years? [R]

Kwasi Kwarteng: I am absolutely open and prepared to work with the hon. Member. I visited him in my capacity as Under-Secretary of State in the Department for Exiting the European Union. I think we also met when I was Minister of State. I am very happy to work with him and discuss his ideas about regeneration and growth.

[912023] **Jeff Smith** (Manchester, Withington) (Lab) [V]: The Climate Change Committee says that the UK's contribution to international aviation and shipping emissions should be included in our carbon budgets. As hosts of COP 26 later this year, would this not be a good time to set an example to the international community by doing so?

Kwasi Kwarteng: I am absolutely aware of that issue. It is almost inevitable that we will be asked by the CCC to include those contributions in our budgets. As COP26 hosts, we will obviously want to hold ourselves to the highest standards, in terms of carbon emissions.

Mr Speaker: I am suspending the House for a few minutes to enable the necessary arrangements for the next business to be made.

12.30 pm

Sitting suspended.

Covid-19 Update

12.34 pm

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock): With permission, I would like to make a statement on new measures to keep this country safe from coronavirus. Thanks to our collective efforts, we are turning a corner. Cases of coronavirus have fallen 47% in the last two weeks, and they are falling in all parts of the UK, but we are not there yet. Hospitalisations are falling, but there are still many more people in hospital than at the April or November peaks, and the number of deaths, while falling, is still far too high.

Our vaccination programme is growing every day. We have now vaccinated over 12.2 million people—almost one in four adults in the United Kingdom—including 91.4% of people aged 80 and above, 95.9% of those aged between 75 and 79, and 77.2% of those aged between 70 and 74, who were the most recent groups to have been invited. We have also vaccinated 93.5% of eligible care home residents. We have made such progress in protecting the most vulnerable that we are now asking people who live in England who are aged 70 and over and have not yet had an appointment, to come forward and contact the NHS. You can do that by going online to [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk), or dialling 119, or contacting your local GP practice, so that we can make sure that we reach the remaining people in those groups, even as we expand the offer of a vaccine to younger ages.

These are huge steps forward for us all, and we must protect this hard-fought-for progress by making sure we stay vigilant and secure the nation against new variants of coronavirus that put at risk the great advances that we have made. Coronavirus, just like flu and all other viruses, mutates over time, so responding to new variants as soon as they arise is mission critical to protect ourselves for the long term. We have already built firm foundations, like our genomic sequencing, which allows us to identify new variants, our testing capacity, which allows us to bring in enhanced testing wherever and whenever we find a new variant of concern, and our work to secure vaccines that can be quickly adapted as new strains are identified.

Our strategy to tackle new variants has four parts. First, the lower the case numbers here, the fewer new variants we get, so the work to lower case numbers domestically is crucial. Secondly, as I set out to the House last week, there is enhanced contact tracing, surge testing and genomic sequencing. We are putting that in place wherever a new variant of concern is found in the community, like in Bristol, Liverpool and, as of today, Manchester. Thirdly, there is the work on vaccines to tackle variants, as set out yesterday by Professor Van-Tam. Fourthly, there is health protection at the border, to increase our security against new variants of concern arriving from abroad.

I should like to set out to the House the new system of health measures at the border that will come into force on Monday. The new measures build on the tough action that we have already taken. It is of course illegal to travel abroad without a legally permitted reason to do so, so it is illegal to travel abroad for holidays and other leisure purposes. The minority who are travelling for exceptional purposes will be subject to a specific compliance regime and end-to-end checks throughout the journey here. Every passenger must demonstrate a

negative test result 72 hours before they travel to the UK, and every passenger must quarantine for 10 days. Arriving in this country involves a two-week process for all. We have already banned travellers altogether from the 33 most concerning countries on our red list, where the risk of a new variant is greatest, unless they are resident here. But even with those tough measures in place, we must strengthen our defences yet further.

I appreciate what a significant challenge this is. We have been working to get this right across Government and with airport operators, passenger carriers and operational partners, including Border Force and the police—I thank them all for their work so far—and we have been taking advice from our Australian colleagues, both at ministerial level and from their leading authorities on quarantine. The message is, “Everyone has a part to play in making our borders safe.” I know this is a very difficult time for both airlines and ports, and I am grateful to them for working so closely with us. They have such an important role to play in protecting this country and putting in place a system so that we can securely restart travel when the time is right—the whole team at the borders working together.

Let me set out the three elements of the strengthened end-to-end system for international arrivals coming into force on 15 February. This new system is for England. We are working on similarly tough schemes with the devolved Administrations, and we are working with the Irish Government to put in place a system that works across the common travel area. The three parts are as follows: hotel quarantine, testing and enforcement.

First, we are setting up a new system of hotel quarantine for UK and Irish residents who have been in red list countries in the last 10 days. In short, this means that any returning residents from those countries will have to quarantine in an assigned hotel room for 10 days from the time of arrival. Before they travel, they will have to book through an online platform and pay for a quarantine package, costing £1,750 for an individual travelling alone, which includes the hotel, transport and testing. That booking system will go live on Thursday, when we will also publish the full detailed guidance.

Passengers will only be able to enter the UK through a small number of ports that currently account for the vast majority of passenger arrivals. When they arrive, they will be escorted to a designated hotel, which will be closed to guests who are not quarantining, for 10 days or longer if they test positive for covid-19 during their stay. We have contracted 16 hotels for an initial 4,600 rooms, and we will secure more as they are needed. People will need to remain in their rooms and, of course, will not be allowed to mix with other guests. There will be visible security in place to ensure compliance, alongside necessary support, so that even as we protect public health, we can look after the people in our care.

Secondly, we are strengthening testing. All passengers are already required to take a pre-departure test and cannot travel to this country if it is positive. From Monday, all international arrivals, whether under home quarantine or hotel quarantine, will be required by law to take further PCR tests on day two and day eight of that quarantine. Passengers will have to book those tests through our online portal before they travel. Anyone planning to travel to the UK from Monday needs to book these tests, and the online portal will go live on Thursday. If either of these post-arrival tests comes

[*Matt Hancock*]

back positive, they will have to quarantine for a further 10 days from the date of the test and will, of course, be offered any NHS treatment that is necessary.

Any positive result will automatically undergo genomic sequencing to confirm whether they have a variant of concern. Under home quarantining, the existing test to release scheme, which my right hon. Friend the Transport Secretary has built so effectively, can still be used from day five, but that would be in addition to the two mandatory tests. The combination of enhanced testing and sequencing has been a powerful weapon throughout this pandemic, and we will be bringing it to bear so that we can find positive cases, break the chains of transmission and prevent new cases and new variants from putting us at risk.

Thirdly, we will be backing this new system with strong enforcement of both home quarantine and hotel quarantine. People who flout these rules are putting us all at risk. Passenger carriers will have a duty in law to make sure that passengers have signed up for these new arrangements before they travel and will be fined if they do not. We will be putting in place tough fines for people who do not comply. That includes a £1,000 penalty for any international arrival who fails to take a mandatory test; a £2,000 penalty for any international arrival who fails to take the second mandatory test, as well as automatically extending their quarantine period to 14 days; and a £5,000 fixed penalty notice, rising to £10,000, for arrivals who fail to quarantine in a designated hotel. We are also coming down hard on people who provide false information on the passenger locator form. Anyone who lies on a passenger locator form and tries to conceal that they have been in a country on the red list in the 10 days before arrival here will face a prison sentence of up to 10 years.

These measures will be put into law this week, and I have been working with the Home Secretary, Border Force and the police to make sure that more resources are being put into enforcing these measures. I make no apologies for the strength of these measures, because we are dealing with one of the strongest threats to our public health that we have faced as a nation. I know that most people have been doing their bit, making huge sacrifices as part of the national effort, and these new enforcement powers will make sure that their hard work and sacrifice is not undermined by a small minority who do not want to follow the rules.

In short, we are strengthening the health protection at the border in three crucial ways: hotel quarantine for UK and Irish residents who have visited a red list country in the past 10 days and home quarantine for all passengers from any other country; a three-test regime for all arrivals; and firm enforcement of pre-departure tests and the passenger locator form. Our fight against this virus has many fronts, and just as we are attacking this virus through our vaccination programme, which protects more people each day, we are buttressing our defences with these vital measures, to protect the progress that together we have worked so hard to accomplish. I commend this statement to the House.

12.45 pm

Jonathan Ashworth (Leicester South) (Lab/Co-op): I thank the Secretary State for advance sight of his statement. I again start by congratulating all involved

in the vaccination roll-out. Vaccination needs to reach everyone, and we need to drive up vaccination rates among the over-70s. There have been reports today that over-70s have been ringing up to get an appointment but NHS computer systems are not yet ready to accept appointments over the phone. Will he look into that for us?

What is the plan to drive up vaccination levels in minority ethnic communities? I am sure the Secretary of State is as worried as I am about vaccination rates among diverse communities. I know the Government announced some funding for local authorities to tackle vaccine hesitancy in minority ethnic communities, but a city such as Leicester—my city, and one of the most diverse in the country—was not on the list. Will he rectify that?

At last night's press conference, the Secretary of State said that the way we deal with new variants is to respond to them as they arise, and that the first line of defence is to identify them and stop spread. However, our first line of defence is surely to do everything we can to stop new variants arising in the first place. That means securing our borders, to isolate new variants as they come in. He announced a detailed package today, but he has not announced comprehensive quarantine controls at the borders. Why are more than half of the countries where the South African variant has been identified not on the so-called red list? According to newspaper reports, he wanted to go further, with more extensive quarantine arrangements. I want that as well, and the British public want that as well, so I will work with him to make that happen, so that we can strengthen our borders and fix any holes in this nation's defences.

The Secretary of State knows that mutations occur so long as the virus can replicate and transmit, and the greater the spread, the greater the opportunity. We have the South African variant and the so-called Eek—the E484K mutation—and the B.1.1.7 strain has been identified as well. Is it not the cold reality that the virus is now here for some time, and therefore that, for vaccines to succeed in protecting us, we need to do more to protect those vaccines by cutting transmission chains and spread, especially when lockdown eases? Last year the Secretary of State said, in launching Test and Trace, that it would “help us keep this virus under control while carefully and safely lifting the lockdown nationally.”

But it did not keep the virus under control, did it? How will it be different this time? Will retrospective testing and tracing—the enhanced tracing he outlined for areas where there are variants—be routine everywhere?

Extra testing where there are new variants is of course welcome, but for many who cannot work from home on Zoom calls and laptops, who are poor or low paid, who live in overcrowded housing or who are perhaps care workers currently using up their holiday entitlement when sick so as not to lose wages, a positive test is not only a medical blow but a financial one. Last Tuesday, the Secretary of State boasted of the £500 payment, yet more than 70% of applications for financial support are rejected. By Wednesday, his own head of Test and Trace was pointing out that 20,000 sick people a day do not isolate. Indeed, two months earlier, Dido Harding had already said that people are not self-isolating because they find it very difficult, and that the need to keep earning and feed a family is fundamental, so is it any wonder that infections are falling at a slower rate in the most deprived communities? We need that financial

support that his own scientific advisers have called for and that has been shown to work internationally. If he thinks I am wrong, will he tell us why he thinks Dido Harding is wrong?

We know that this virus can be transmitted through aerosols. Has the Secretary of State looked at installing air filtration systems in public buildings such as schools? Given concerns that the new Kent variant may shed more viral load through coughing and sneezing, will he update the guidance on face masks, as Germany has done, with FFP2 masks required on public transport and in shops? Will he ensure that higher-grade PPE for frontline NHS staff becomes the requirement, as the British Medical Association, the Royal College of Nursing and unions have called for?

Finally, next week is Children of Alcoholics Week, a cause very close to my heart. Indeed, I will be running the London marathon again to raise money for an alcoholics charity—[*Interruption.*] If it is on, I am looking forward to the Secretary of State assuring me that it is going to be on, and perhaps he can run it with me. The number of excess deaths from liver disease is up 11% in the pandemic—a huge increase—and many children are in lockdown in homes under the shadow of alcohol abuse. Will he look at providing more support for those organisations that are helping children through this difficult time of lockdown when dealing with parents with substance misuse problems?

Matt Hancock: I was listening very carefully to the hon. Gentleman, and I think I take that as support for the measures we are bringing in.

On the specific points the hon. Gentleman raises, he is absolutely right that further driving up vaccination rates is critical. I am delighted by the vaccination rates and the uptake of over 90% in all of the groups over the age of 75, and rapidly rising now—above 75% and rising fast—in the 70 to 74s. I agree with him very strongly on the need to keep driving up the uptake of the vaccine. The Minister for Covid Vaccine Deployment, my hon. Friend the Member for Stratford-on-Avon (Nadhim Zahawi), is leading the efforts across the NHS and local authorities to try to make sure that we can increase vaccination rates further. Nevertheless, the take-up has been absolutely superb so far, and there is still more to do.

I will absolutely look into the points the hon. Gentleman made about Leicester. I know that it is close to his heart and a very important matter.

I will commit to the hon. Gentleman to keep the red list up to date. It is important that we take the measures that are necessary to protect this country. There are countries around the world on a so-called green list that have very low rates of infection and no known variants of concern. I am absolutely in favour of keeping the red list up to date, but I also think it is important that we are proportionate when there are countries that do not have a record of variants of concern. However, we will use the fact that we will sequence every positive test from somebody who comes through the border as a global system of vigilance to make sure that we are always looking for those variants of concern.

The hon. Gentleman raised the issue of financial support. I reiterate that the £500 support is available for anybody on low incomes, so people should come forward for testing in all circumstances. I am absolutely delighted

at the level of testing as well. There is now an average of over 650,000 tests a day done in this country, which is obviously a very substantial number.

The hon. Gentleman raised the point about air filtration systems, which are important. I will point him to guidance from the Business Department on air filtration systems and on PPE—we have taken clinical advice and follow the clinical advice on the correct levels of PPE.

Finally, I know that the issue of children of alcoholics is very close to the hon. Gentleman's heart and to those of many colleagues across the House, so I will absolutely look at how we can ensure that the extra funding we have provided in this space continues to support the vital work not just of those in the NHS, but especially of charities that do so much in this space. The invitation to run the marathon with him is a very interesting one. I am not sure I have enough time for training this year, but it is certainly something I would like to do at some point in the future.

Jeremy Hunt (South West Surrey) (Con) [V]: I strongly support the new measures. The higher the number of new daily cases, the more opportunities for variants and mutations to emerge, including ultimately some that may be immune to the vaccine. So does the Health Secretary agree that the central priority now must be to bring down the number of new daily cases, and as we do that, is he planning to introduce enhanced contact tracing for all new cases, including Japanese-style backward contact tracing and genomic sequencing of every new case?

Matt Hancock: We have the biggest genomic capacity in the world by some margin, and when the number of cases comes down, as our genomic capacity continues to expand—we plan to more than double it in the coming months—I hope to get to the position where we can genomically sequence every positive case, yes, but we are not there yet.

The strategy that I outlined to tackle new variants, of which the border measures are an important part, is itself one part of the four conditions that the Prime Minister set out for when we can lift measures. The other three are the successful roll-out of the vaccine, which is going very well, and the fall in the number of hospitalisations and the fall in the number of deaths, both of which, as I said, are moving in the right direction but are still too high. Therefore, this strategy to tackle new variants is crucial. The number of cases is a factor, because that itself determines the number of new variants. The conclusion of all that is that we must all stick to the rules now, and the more we stick to the rules now, the sooner we can get out of this.

Martyn Day (Linlithgow and East Falkirk) (SNP) [V]: The South African variant is a sure warning sign of the risk from other mutant strains that may be out there; combined with the question mark over vaccine efficacy with this variant, it is clear why we need effective border restrictions. Can the Secretary of State tell me why there are 35 countries where the South African and Brazilian variants are present that are not on the quarantine red list? Do the Government have a plan to redress that gap? From a Government obsessed with taking back control over their borders, that omission is surprising.

The Prime Minister has previously said that the UK cannot emulate other island countries, such as New Zealand and Australia, in preventing all unnecessary

[*Martyn Day*]

travel into the country due to the amount of food and medicine that it imports. Today's change of heart is welcome. Can the Secretary of State confirm how these measures will keep the flow of goods and those transporting them open, while restricting travel not related to the import and export of goods?

Matt Hancock: The measures I have outlined today relate to passenger travel. There is, of course, a testing regime already in place for accompanied freight. There is a difference between this country and Australia and New Zealand, and that is that accompanied freight is a significant proportion of our daily imports, including just-in-time delivery, for instance, of food, whereas for islands that are further away from a continent, unaccompanied freight is a much more significant proportion of their international imports. We have to take these practical considerations into account. As I said, we keep the red list of countries under review, and the extra testing measures that I have outlined today will help us with that vigilance so that we can see where variants of concern are and to what degree they are present in other countries around the world.

Peter Gibson (Darlington) (Con) [V]: I thank my right hon. Friend for his announcement today. The people of Darlington and people right across the north-east have made incredible sacrifices to tackle this virus, and I know that they will welcome the tough measures that he has announced for those who seek to avoid quarantine. Does he agree that it is mass testing, vaccinations, following the rules and tough sanctions for those who break the rules that will help us to tackle this virus?

Matt Hancock: I agree with my hon. Friend that a combination of mass testing, vaccinations and tough enforcement is not only right to deal with this virus but, as he says, fair for people who are doing the right thing. This virus attacks us all as humans. It does not treat people differently just because they are better off and might be able to fly to Dubai for the weekend; it treats us all the same, so we should treat people the same. That is one of the reasons why it is important to bring these measures in with strong enforcement, so that they are both tough and fair on people who are working so hard and sacrificing so much to follow the rules.

Stephen Doughty (Cardiff South and Penarth) (Lab/Co-op) [V]: I simply do not understand the logic being used for the red list. Countries where dangerous variants are present are not included, and multiple back doors are left open. Over the past few days, I have watched passenger flights, including a flight from Peru—on the red list—that is currently en route to the Netherlands, which is not on the red list but has substantial connections to the UK, and flights from southern African red-list countries en route to hubs in Addis Ababa, Nairobi and so on, which again have substantial onward connections to the UK but are not on the red list. We have even heard about UK troops in Kenya testing positive for covid today. Will the Secretary of State publish the epidemiological data that is being used to take decisions about which countries are included, and urgently review some of the very serious inconsistencies?

Matt Hancock: The hon. Gentleman raises important points, which are addressed in two ways in what I just announced. First, anybody who has been in a red-list country in the past 10 days must declare it on a passenger locator form. To fail to do so will be an imprisonable offence. Of course, nobody can come directly from a red-list country anyway because those flights have been stopped. That is a critical part of the enforcement of this system.

In addition, the second point that the hon. Gentleman raises is important. There are some countries where a variant of concern is the dominant variant, including in southern Africa and parts of Brazil. There are other countries where there are very small numbers of variants of concern, in the same way as in this country there are thankfully very small numbers of variants of concern. Absolutely, we publish information on a very broad scale. We have to make judgments about what is on the red list, and we will keep it under review.

Different countries have very different levels of genomic sequencing. There are some countries—even developed countries—that have very low levels of genomic sequencing. We have offered to support all countries around the world, so if they want a sample sequenced, we will do it for them to help with this vigilance. The mandated testing arrangements that we have introduced today will help ensure that we can strengthen the epidemiological data on which the judgments about the red list are taken.

Selaine Saxby (North Devon) (Con) [V]: Cases here in North Devon are now down to just 25 per 100,000. What reassurance can my right hon. Friend give me that when the time comes to unlock, the hard work of the people of North Devon will not be undone by an influx of visitors from either home or abroad with new variants? Are options being looked at for local unlocking to enable schools to reopen and some local businesses to restart, given the very low level of community transmission here?

Matt Hancock: I am delighted to see that there are some parts of the country where the case rate really has come down a long way—down to 25. It is important for us to make sure we get the levels down across the country. We have seen before that when there are areas that are low, there is spread from elsewhere in the country. The experience of last summer was that tourists travelling to go on holiday within the UK did not contribute to an increase in levels. It was when levels elsewhere got much higher that we saw the transmission to other parts of the country. It is those judgments that will inform the road map proposals that the Prime Minister will set out on 22 February. I wish I could say more in more detail to my hon. Friend, but it is for the Prime Minister to set that out later this month.

Karin Smyth (Bristol South) (Lab) [V]: The news of the new mutation is obviously of great concern to the people of Bristol, but local public health officials have rapidly set up new testing centres, including five new collect and drop testing centres today. It is a massive effort locally, and hundreds of people have come forward voluntarily since Sunday to be tested. Will the Secretary of State join me in thanking those local public health officials in Bristol and the people who have come forward? Will he join me in encouraging more people in those postcode areas that have been identified to come forward for surge testing to help us understand this virus better?

Matt Hancock: I agree with every word the hon. Lady has said. This is an incredibly important effort by the people of Bristol, especially those in the postcodes that were identified. I want to thank all the public health officials, at Bristol City Council and more broadly, including those in South Gloucestershire, for the work they are doing to tackle the variant of concern, where it is found. Even though the numbers are small, we want to tackle every case we find and really get this under control. As you can see from this exchange, Mr Speaker, and as everybody in Bristol can see, this is a cross-party, cross-community effort in which everybody has a part to play, and I thank the hon. Lady for her leadership.

Suzanne Webb (Stourbridge) (Con) [V]: I welcome today's statement and I am very proud of all my constituents across Stourbridge, Cradley and Lye for the way in which they have fully understood and taken on board the fact that we all have our role to play in defeating this virus. Does my right hon. Friend agree that the constant flip-flopping and reliance on hindsight by the Labour party is nothing more than its seeking only to score political points, rather than reinforcing the Government's message that we all have a part to play to defeat this virus? Those on the Opposition Benches would be well served by following the fine example set by my constituents.

Matt Hancock: What the public want to see, in Stourbridge and across the whole UK, is people working together to defeat this virus. Some of the measures have to be tough, and some are difficult, but it is all done with the goal of getting this country through this as well as we possibly can, so that we can lift as many of these measures as soon as we safely can. That balance between pace and safety is central to the judgments ahead. I want to thank everybody in Stourbridge and say to them that there is no politics in this; the only thing that is important is the safety of the people of Stourbridge.

Rushanara Ali (Bethnal Green and Bow) (Lab) [V]: I am grateful to all those working together—the GPs, Queen Mary University of London, the Royal London Hospital, Tower Hamlets Council, the London Muslim Centre and others—in my constituency to make sure that people get vaccinated. As Members have heard, vaccine take-up is lower among minority communities and some other vulnerable groups. Some 77% of white residents are getting vaccinated, which is great, whereas only just over half of Asian residents and under 46% of black residents in our borough are getting vaccinated. Will the Secretary of State commit to increasing the supply of vaccines to our GP surgeries, as they are saying that this is where they can make a big difference with vaccine take-up? This would make a big difference to the death rates and the dangers that these minority communities face, in my constituency and elsewhere in the country.

Matt Hancock: I want to praise the hon. Lady for the leadership she is showing locally in driving up those vaccination rates. The fewer people who are left unprotected by the jab, the safer we will all be, both individually and in communities in London and across the country. My hon. Friend the Minister for Covid Vaccine Deployment is leading the efforts in this space, and I will make sure he gets in contact so that we can work together to reassure everybody that the vaccine is the right thing for you and the right thing for your community.

Huw Merriman (Bexhill and Battle) (Con): I welcome the roll-out of the vaccine programme, which has been a great success, and I congratulate the Secretary of State. May I ask for a bit of clarity on the statement? He states:

“Under home quarantining, the existing test to release scheme...can still be used from day five”.

Does that mean that somebody can successfully test negative on day five and is then free to interact in the community for three days, but will still have to take another test at day eight and if they fail that test they will have to quarantine again? Secondly, how long is this likely to last for? Obviously, summer travel is very important for the aviation industry. Is this just to last until we have vaccinated 99% of the mortality risk, which should be done by May? Or is it until we tweak the vaccination, in which case this could really have an impact on the aviation industry?

Matt Hancock: On the first point—the point of clarity—my hon. Friend has stated the position exactly correctly. On the second, we want of course to be able to exit from these arrangements into a system of safe international travel as soon as practicable and as soon as is safe, and Professor Van-Tam last night set out some of the details that we need to see in the effectiveness of the current vaccines on the variants of concern in order to have that assurance. If that is not forthcoming, we will need to vaccinate with a further booster jab in the autumn, on which we are working with the vaccine industry.

These are the uncertainties within which we are operating. Hence, for now, my judgment is that the package that we have announced today is the right one.

Munira Wilson (Twickenham) (LD) [V]: Many of us have been urging the Government for about 12 months now to take stronger action at our borders, so the measures announced today are very welcome, but Ministers have been consistently slow on this issue. With the ONS estimating today that, tragically, covid deaths in the UK have now surpassed 125,000, how many of those deaths does the Secretary of State believe could have been prevented by imposing much stricter public health measures at our borders since last March?

Matt Hancock: We have had significant measures at the border throughout. The new, stronger measures are necessary because of the arrival around the world of new variants of concern at the same time as the vaccine roll-out is progressing successfully. We do not want the very successful vaccine roll-out to be undermined, so it is reasonable to take a precautionary approach to international travel now, while we assess the effectiveness of the vaccines. We are clear that they have some effectiveness; the question is to what degree. That is being tested right now.

Neil O'Brien (Harborough) (Con) [V]: Given the incredible success of the UK vaccination programme, it would be terrible to put at risk our opening up by importing new variants like those seen in Brazil. Will my right hon. Friend stand ready to further tighten the measures at the border and the enforcement of quarantine, and does he agree that if we want to see rapid opening up, as we all do, we should be supporting strong measures at the border?

Matt Hancock: My hon. Friend is right, first, that we must keep the red list under review; and secondly, crucially, that strong protections at the border are part of defending and safely allowing the domestic opening up. For those of us who want to see that domestic opening up, ensuring that we have protection from variants that might arise from overseas is an important part, until we can get to a position where we can be confident in vaccine efficacy against all variants, not just against the current variants that are here in large numbers in the UK.

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP) [V]: May I put on record my thanks to the Secretary of State for all that he and his team are doing on this issue? Northern Ireland is the only part of the United Kingdom with a land border. As the Secretary of State is aware, the Republic of Ireland is enforcing the very apparent border in Northern Ireland, for its safety, on its side. It seems, as I said, that there can be a border when it suits. However, I am eager to understand what steps are being taken to ensure, as I highlighted last week, that officials and Government have access to pertinent travel information for those coming to Dublin, to ensure that the United Kingdom, on the Northern Ireland side, is also safe.

Matt Hancock: I spoke to my Irish opposite number, Minister Donnelly, this morning and he has assured me that that data will be provided appropriately and securely; we have been working together to ensure that that happens for some time.

As I said in my statement, we have been working with the Irish Government to ensure that there are appropriate measures, both in the Republic of Ireland and in the United Kingdom, to ensure that the border on the island of Ireland can be kept completely open, as it must, yet we have adequate protection against arrivals of variants of concern internationally. It is the two countries working together, putting in place similar arrangements both in the Republic and in the United Kingdom, that will allow us to deliver that goal, which I am sure we all share.

Felicity Buchan (Kensington) (Con): I am increasingly concerned about the effect of lockdown on the mental health of children; I am receiving so many emails from adolescents and teenagers. Will my right hon. Friend assure me that when he feeds into the 22 February road map, the mental health of children, and indeed their parents, is taken into account?

Matt Hancock: Yes, of course I will.

Hywel Williams (Arfon) (PC) [V]: Yesterday, the number of deaths from covid in Wales passed the grim total of 5,000. Our public health leaders say that the Welsh Government's £500 self-isolation payment is not enough and is indeed an economic driver for people to go to work. Sick pay, on the other hand, is the responsibility of this Government, so will the Secretary of State now commit the Government to increasing the paltry level of sick pay, as suggested, from £96 per week, to enable working people to self-isolate safely?

Matt Hancock: We have put in place the extra £500 for those on low incomes to ensure that everybody can get the financial support that they may need while self-isolating.

Peter Aldous (Waveney) (Con) [V]: I commend my right hon. Friend on his statement. The Norfolk and Waveney clinical commissioning group, local NHS staff and volunteers are to be commended on rising to a challenge which on Sunday resulted in 1,000 people being vaccinated at Kirkley Mill in Lowestoft in very difficult weather conditions. There is a plan to significantly increase the number of daily vaccinations for more sites; so that this can be delivered can my right hon. Friend confirm that there will be a consistent and increased supply of vaccines and that the initial difficulties some have experienced with the national online booking system will be ironed out?

Matt Hancock: Yes, absolutely. I want to thank everybody across Norfolk and Waveney for the work they have been doing to roll out this vaccine. It is a critical part of the country in terms of the covid response, and the work done locally has been absolutely exemplary. I commend my hon. Friend on the part that he has played and the leadership he has shown in Lowestoft in making that happen; the uptake has been superb. I have seen some of the reports locally, and the emotional impact on people of getting vaccinated is absolutely fantastic. I will absolutely take away the points my hon. Friend has made.

Judith Cummins (Bradford South) (Lab) [V]: Despite assurances from the Secretary of State and Ministers, it is now clear that the newly imposed NHS dentistry targets are in fact actively undermining patient access to urgent treatment during the pandemic, as I warned they would. Last week, a whistleblower at the UK's largest dental chain with over 600 practices, mydentist, sent me an internal memo that advised them to prioritise routine check-ups over treatments in order to meet the new targets. Will the Secretary of State look at this urgently and agree to revise these targets to ensure that they do not undermine patient care, as the system as it stands incentivises routine check-ups above those in severe pain?

Matt Hancock: I want to thank our nation's dentists, who have worked incredibly hard to get dentistry services going again. It is very important that we support them and that the financial incentives underpin the need to restart as much as is possible.

It is of course challenging to deliver services given that there are so many aerosol-generating procedures, and I will ask the dentistry Minister, my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St Edmunds (Jo Churchill), to speak to the hon. Lady and perhaps meet her to discuss these ongoing challenges.

Henry Smith (Crawley) (Con) [V]: I support the introduction of targeted quarantine for passengers coming from high-risk covid-19 variant countries. Will my right hon. Friend also commit to regular reviews and even a sunset clause on these regulations, as we seek later in the year to get our economy restarted and support our aviation sector?

Matt Hancock: I do not underestimate the impact that all these measures have had on Gatwick. My hon. Friend represents so many of those who work at Gatwick, and I understand the impact. I was at Gatwick airport on Friday, and the empty departure hall was really quite a sad sight. These measures are necessary, in my view, and I am glad that he supports them, difficult as they

are. We are also acutely cognisant of the economic impact on airports and those who work in them, and I would be happy to keep talking to him about how quickly we can remove these measures safely.

Ms Diane Abbott (Hackney North and Stoke Newington) (Lab) [V]: The whole House has welcomed what the Secretary of State has had to say about the progress in fighting coronavirus, but he will be aware that there is a very real danger that one cohort will be left behind: black and ethnic minority communities. We already know that black people are four times more likely to die from coronavirus, and currently the statistics show that black over-80s are half as likely to be vaccinated as white people. I am conscious that the Minister for Covid Vaccine Deployment is aware of this issue, but will the Secretary of State give the House an undertaking that he will drive forward a whole series of measures to increase vaccine take-up among black and minority ethnic persons? When black and minority ethnic people are on the frontline of the fight against coronavirus as health and social care workers, it would be a tragedy if there was an increased death toll because enough was not being done to encourage take-up of the vaccine.

Matt Hancock: I do not say this lightly, but I agree with every single word that the right hon. Lady said. I want to pay tribute to her, because I have not had the chance in the House to thank all the black MPs who took part in the incredibly moving video to persuade people, who may have understandable concerns, that taking the jab is the right thing to do. She played a pivotal role in that short video, and it is just one small part of the huge effort we need to make, because the fewer people who do not have the protection, the safer we will all be. I am very grateful for her work and her support, and I hope that we can continue to work together to drive uptake among black communities right across this country.

Mr Mark Harper (Forest of Dean) (Con): Policies are often easy to announce and difficult to end. The chief scientific adviser says that covid is with us forever, and it will presumably continue to mutate into new variants forever. I listened carefully to the answer that the Secretary of State gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Bexhill and Battle (Huw Merriman), but I did not hear an answer to this: when is this policy going to end, if ever, because if the virus continues to mutate, surely the risk will be there forever?

Matt Hancock: The risk of mutations absolutely can and will be managed through the evolution of vaccines, in the way that the annual flu jab changes each year and allows us to protect ourselves. While necessary now, these are not measures that can be in place permanently. We need to replace them over time with a system of safe and free international travel; that is where we need to get to. The first task is to vaccinate the population. If we get good news on the impact of vaccination on hospitalisations and deaths for new mutations, we will be in a better place. If we do not get such good news, we will need to use the updated vaccines to protect against the variants of concern.

The scientists inform and advise me that there are, repeatedly and independently around the world, mutations of the same type in the E484K area of the virus, as

mentioned by the hon. Member for Leicester South (Jonathan Ashworth). That gives the scientists a good start in where to target the new updated vaccine—if we have to wait until then—but it may be that we get from the existing vaccines enough efficacy against hospitalisation and death that they work perfectly well to hold this virus down. We just do not know that yet; hence, the precautionary principle applies.

Rachel Hopkins (Luton South) (Lab) [V]: It is hugely important that we keep making progress in tackling the virus and in vaccinations. However, last week I heard from the Catch Up With Cancer campaign, whose research indicates that we would need cancer services to work at 120% capacity for two years to catch up with the existing backlog. I am concerned that the cancer recovery taskforce lacks sufficient resources and scope to achieve the restoration of services and tackle the backlog. Will the Government, in the March Budget, increase the resources available to the taskforce, to expand the overall capabilities of the UK's cancer services to tackle the backlog?

Matt Hancock: We announced in the spending review significant extra funding to tackle the backlog. I am very proud of cancer services throughout the country, which have kept up the work during this second wave in a quite remarkable way, owing to tenacity, working together, flexibility and, of course, very strong infection prevention and control.

Last week I was at the Royal Marsden Hospital, where they are doing 100% of their normal-time operations. That is not true everywhere—the Royal Marsden has the advantage of being, in essence, a cancer-only site, which makes things easier. The thrust of the hon. Lady's question is right—we absolutely must catch up on the cancer backlog—but I am optimistic because people have worked so hard in oncology to keep cancer services going. As the number of covid patients comes down, so we must ensure that the backlog is worked through.

Mr William Wragg (Hazel Grove) (Con): I pay tribute to everybody in Stockport who is part of the massive vaccination effort that is going so well, as it is throughout the rest of country. The original purpose of lockdown was to reduce hospitalisations and keep hospitals from falling over; if that is achieved through a vaccination programme, is it now the Government's intention to use the level of virus in circulation—the number of cases in the population—to determine when to ease lockdown?

Matt Hancock: No. The Prime Minister has set out the four conditions that need to be met and will be saying more about that on 22 February.

Clive Efford (Eltham) (Lab) [V]: I add my congratulations to all those involved in the roll-out of the vaccine, particularly those in my local area who have been working non-stop. Will the Secretary of State say something about international co-operation, particularly in respect of identifying new variants and assisting other countries to stop their transmission? What discussions are taking place with the World Health Organisation and others to ensure that we are keeping track of new variants as much as is practicably possible?

Matt Hancock: That is a critical question, on which I point to three things. First, we have put in place the new variant assessment platform, which uses our genomic capability to be of service to countries that do not have the capability to identify variants and sequence samples, if that is needed.

Secondly, we are working with the World Health Organisation to ensure that its library of variants is as up-to-date as possible. Of course, it is that work from which must flow the assessment of what appropriate updates to any vaccine are necessary, which is how it works with flu. The system is nascent but incredibly important, and I am grateful to the World Health Organisation for its work on that so far. We need to go further.

Thirdly, on the measures put in place today, by testing every international rival—given the nature of the UK, even in these tough times, as an international hub—we will, where we spot positives, be able to sequence them and therefore gather the sequences of coronavirus from around the world. The announcements made today will directly help us to address the question of where variants of concern are arising and therefore help the international efforts to tackle them.

Aaron Bell (Newcastle-under-Lyme) (Con) [V]: I thank the Secretary of State for his statement and join him in praising everyone involved in the vaccine roll-out. It is going incredibly well in Newcastle-under-Lyme; in Staffordshire, we have just passed 200,000 vaccinations given.

Brilliant scientists in the UK and around the world have delivered us these vaccines at an unprecedented pace, and I welcome the news that they are now working on new versions of them to fight variants. However, if we were to embrace even faster methods for evaluating the efficacy of vaccines, such as challenge trials, we could speed up the process even further.

Given the enormous economic cost of lockdowns, every month counts. That should prompt the whole world to re-evaluate our standard methodology for approving vaccines. Could my right hon. Friend set out what steps he is taking to allow new varieties of vaccines to be developed as quickly as possible, if they prove to be required?

Matt Hancock: Yes, we do not rule out challenge studies at all. We are working with Oxford University on such an approach. More broadly, I am up for considering anything that can ensure that a vaccine can safely be brought to bear and support this effort as fast as possible.

I would, though, caution against undue pessimism in this space because the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency has done an amazing job of maintaining very strong safety and efficacy requirements while speeding up every process, constantly challenging the critical path to vaccine approval and asking how it can be sped up while maintaining the very high standards that it should expect. It is continuing that work with potential iterations of the vaccine to ensure that the level of assuredness is appropriate and the degree of checks that an iteration needs to go through is appropriate to the degree of difference from the original vaccine.

For instance, for flu we do not need to go through the full clinical trials process because the underlying platform is known to be safe—we need to demonstrate clinical efficacy. It is that sort of flexible yet rigorous thinking that the MHRA should be very proud of.

Stephanie Peacock (Barnsley East) (Lab): People are at home with the windows closed and the heating on: those are potential conditions for carbon monoxide poisoning, whose symptoms are very similar to those of covid-19. What are the Government doing to enforce legislation on that issue and make the public aware of that silent killer?

Matt Hancock: The hon. Lady raises an important point, which is taken into account in the work that we are doing to push forward high-quality ventilation, which is good for tackling carbon monoxide poisoning and for trying to reduce the risk of the spread of covid.

Mr Peter Bone (Wellingborough) (Con) [V]: I start by thanking the hard-working Secretary of State for yet again coming to the House and updating us on the covid situation.

In north Northamptonshire, we have a particular problem with covid infections—we just cannot get them down. In Wellingborough, we are 25% above the national average, in Kettering 50% above it and, in Corby, more than double the national average, with the highest infection rate in the country. Has the Secretary of State given any consideration to the mass testing of north Northamptonshire so that we can get infections down, rather as happened in Liverpool?

Matt Hancock: I am aware of and also worried about the continued high rates of infections in north Northants, which has not had a particularly bad pandemic thus far but now, at this point, seems to have a stubbornly high infection rate. I am absolutely up for all measures that might help to get it down, including mass testing. I will take that idea away, work on it with colleagues and return to my hon. Friend and his north Northants colleagues with a proposal.

Jonathan Edwards (Carmarthen East and Dinefwr) (Ind) [V]: The pandemic has been particularly difficult for those with a weak immune system; I therefore welcome the fact that UK Research and Innovation has provided funding to support research on vaccine responses in groups of immunosuppressed individuals, such as high-risk cancer patients. When does the Secretary of State expect the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation to have enough data to develop a vaccine-protective strategy for immunosuppressed individuals that details whether any specific vaccine is preferred for this cohort?

Matt Hancock: This is a very important consideration. For those for whom the vaccine is clinically inappropriate, clearly the single most important thing is that everybody else gets the vaccine because that is what can best keep them safe. When we say that the vaccine is “good for you and good for others”, that includes those who are clinically unable to take the vaccine to protect themselves, so everybody around them needs to take the vaccine in order to protect them. More broadly, that work is under way. I will ask the deputy chief medical officer to write to the hon. Gentleman to set out the precise clinical details.

Mrs Heather Wheeler (South Derbyshire) (Con) [V]: I thank my right hon. Friend for his statement. As I have so many constituents who work in the aviation

industry, this is important information. I am thankful for the now ramped-up provision of vaccine centres in South Derbyshire, but how will he ensure that housebound residents receive their jab? There seem to be gaps in communications between primary care networks, district health services and GP surgeries, leaving my constituents unsure.

Matt Hancock: I will look into the specifics of the situation in South Derbyshire and ask the Minister for Vaccine Deployment, the Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, my hon. Friend the Member for Stratford-on-Avon (Nadhim Zahawi), to call my hon. Friend to try to understand precisely the situation in her area. It is absolutely the responsibility of PCNs to deliver vaccines to the housebound. That is working in most parts of the country. I had not heard of any concerns in South Derbyshire, but this is obviously incredibly important because we are talking about some of the most vulnerable people to covid in the country. We must make sure that everybody, including those who are housebound, has the offer of a jab, and that people can get out and make that happen.

Patricia Gibson (North Ayrshire and Arran) (SNP) [V]: New border restrictions to safeguard us from covid will mean a reduction in the amount of travel into the UK, which will of course cause further harm to aviation and travel firms. Will the Secretary of State update us on progress and give us more details about the ongoing Cabinet discussions regarding specific support for aviation and travel firms in the light of these additional measures?

Matt Hancock: Yes; we do not underestimate the impact of these measures on the travel and aviation industries. My right hon. Friend the Transport Secretary is leading the discussions, as he has done throughout, because it is incredibly important that people get the right level of support. It goes to the point made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Forest of Dean (Mr Harper), which is that we need to ensure that we go into these measures with a plan for how we come out of them into a set of secure international travel arrangements, so that people can get moving again.

Jonathan Gullis (Stoke-on-Trent North) (Con): In Stoke-on-Trent, Kidsgrove and Talke I have seen at first hand, while volunteering at the mass vaccination centre in Tunstall, the incredible effort of our local NHS heroes in getting jabs into the arms of up to 1,000 people each day. This is important, as the Royal Stoke University Hospital has been under tremendous pressure in critical care, dealing with capacity 220% above its usual averages. Will my right hon. Friend thank the local health and care heroes across Stoke-on-Trent, Kidsgrove and Talke, and assure us that we will get increased vaccine doses as the supply increases?

Matt Hancock: Yes, absolutely. The effort in Stoke has been absolutely magnificent. I follow it particularly closely because every time I come to this Chamber—it is normally at least once a week—I am grilled by a colleague from Stoke about performance in Stoke. I have been looking at it recently; across Stoke, the hospital, the GPs and the pharmacies have been doing a magnificent

job in the vaccination effort. I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his leadership locally in promoting uptake of the vaccine.

Hilary Benn (Leeds Central) (Lab) [V]: Given the evidence that some of the new variants of covid are much more transmissible, the Royal College of Nursing and the British Medical Association have raised concerns about whether current PPE guidance is adequate. It has been reported that some hospitals are offering staff high-grade PPE, for example FFP3 masks, while others are not, which means unequal levels of protection depending on where staff work. Can the Secretary of State tell us whether the NHS has reviewed the guidance about the standard of PPE to be provided to all staff when treating covid-19 pathway medium and high-risk patients?

Matt Hancock: Yes, I asked for specific advice on this when we saw the increased transmissibility of the B117 strain—the so-called Kent variant. Exactly this question was reviewed. As the right hon. Gentleman would expect of me, I follow clinical advice on PPE guidance and the clinical advice remains unchanged.

Andrew Griffith (Arundel and South Downs) (Con): I thank my right hon. Friend for coming to the House with his statement today. Will he join me in congratulating the Henfield heroes at Henfield Medical Centre? They have already vaccinated more than 1,000 patients, who very much appreciated not having to travel 40 miles to the previous clinic in Storrington. I am grateful that artificial limits on the number of centres per primary care network have been relaxed in rural areas.

Matt Hancock: I pay tribute to everybody at the Henfield Medical Centre doing this incredible work. It is really uplifting being in a health centre. If Members have not been to a vaccination centre as a Member of this House, I would highly recommend it because it is such an uplifting experience. I am really glad that it is being carried out ever closer to home for people as we expand the number of vaccination sites, of which there are now more than 1,400 across England.

Kevin Brennan (Cardiff West) (Lab) [V]: The maximum sentence for a person lying on their locator form will be 10 years in prison. What will the minimum sanction be for that offence? The cost of the hotel, including testing and transport, will be £750 for 10 days. Can the Secretary of State give the House an absolute assurance that that represents good value for money to passengers and that there is no undue profiteering?

Matt Hancock: Yes, absolutely. One of the things that we have been doing in our discussions with hotel groups and others is ensuring value for money as much as possible for passengers. Hence we have managed to get the costs down to £1,750 for an individual traveller in a room alone.

Sir Desmond Swayne (New Forest West) (Con): Will the Secretary of State maintain his war aim of protecting the NHS and eschew those siren voices calling for a desired level of infection in the community? If we depart from a level of hospitalisation with which the

[*Sir Desmond Swayne*]

NHS can cope effectively, we will lose the proper sense of urgency to lift restrictions that are so devastating and costly to us all.

Matt Hancock: My right hon. Friend is right to raise the issue of the level of hospitalisations as one of the key factors and conditions for exit, as set out by the Prime Minister. The good news is that the number of people in hospital with covid is now falling. It is still higher than either at the April peak or at the November peak. The challenge in terms of the number of cases is that, when cases are very high, you are more likely to get a new variant, but, thankfully, cases are coming down very sharply, too.

Yvette Cooper (Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford) (Lab) [V]: Yesterday, the Home Secretary told me in Parliament that 100% compliance checks were now taking place at the border. Yet one passenger arriving at Heathrow yesterday from South Africa via Qatar has reported having no checks on her forms or tests and being just sent on her way through passport e-gates. This is a problem that I raised with the Prime Minister almost a month ago. Travellers have reported throughout that the reality is not matching the Government's rhetoric, so why, when this is so important, does it appear that the most basic checks are still not happening?

Matt Hancock: The Home Secretary is looking into this individual case. The measures that we announced today further strengthen the enforcement to make sure that the rules that are currently in place are enforced more strongly, and indeed that we have brought in a new system of rules to strengthen the safeguards at our border yet further.

Dr Jamie Wallis (Bridgend) (Con) [V]: May I say a huge thank you to everyone on the frontline working hard on the vaccine roll-out in Bridgend and Porthcawl? When it comes to dealing with the transmission of the South African variant, could my right hon. Friend set out what steps he is taking on surge testing so that we can gather more information and effectively monitor any further community transmission?

Matt Hancock: Yes. When we see the community transmission of a variant of concern, we send in extra testing, and sequence all the positives to try to find any other variant of concern nearby. That means going door to door to offer testing, and enhancing contact tracing so that, for anybody who tests positive, we ensure that we test all those they have been in contact with and, in some cases, the contacts of those contacts in turn. That is currently under way in a number of locations, in targeted areas. Of course, I speak regularly with the Welsh Government to ensure that we take the same sort of approach over the border.

Helen Hayes (Dulwich and West Norwood) (Lab) [V]: Vaccine hesitancy is highest among black, Asian and minority ethnic residents, and tackling it is vital to stop the existing covid-19 health inequalities widening and deepening further. My constituency has one of the most ethnically diverse populations in the country yet neither of my local councils, Lambeth and Southwark, was included on the seemingly arbitrary list of councils invited to bid for additional funding to address vaccine

hesitancy. Can the Secretary of State explain why, and will he commit to working with the Communities Secretary to look again urgently at that decision?

Matt Hancock: It is the Minister for the vaccine roll-out, my hon. Friend the Member for Stratford-on-Avon, who is leading those efforts. It is obviously an incredibly important subject, because it matters to us all.

Steve Brine (Winchester) (Con): The Secretary of State said earlier that the virus treats us all the same, which is of course quite right. Sadly, it does not go easy on those who do not take up the offer of a vaccine, so can I ask my right hon. Friend what his thinking will be if, despite all the excellent work going on to support the vaccine hesitant, and there is lots of it, we have fellow citizens not protected? Will he confirm that such a personal decision cannot impact on the ultimate release of our society and our economy?

Matt Hancock: We are not proposing to mandate vaccination, partly for the reasons that my hon. Friend sets out. Anyway, vaccine take-up has been really very high—much higher than expected—which is terrific. In fact, in the latest international surveys that I have seen, the UK has the highest enthusiasm for taking the vaccine—up from about fifth highest a couple of months ago. Our attitude, tone and communications throughout have been purposefully entirely positive about why the vaccine is good for people and for their communities, and how people like them are taking the vaccine. I praise the Government Communication Service, NHS England and local councils, which have worked so hard to drive vaccine take-up as high as it has been.

Vicky Foxcroft (Lewisham, Deptford) (Lab) [V]: To date, Government communication with the 2.2 million people who have been shielding on and off for almost a year has been poor. On their behalf, I ask the Secretary of State a very simple question: will it be safe to stop shielding after they have received their second dose of the vaccine?

Matt Hancock: I am afraid I do not agree with the hon. Lady one bit. We write regularly to those who are shielding and we write to them individually, so I am not going to make a blanket announcement in the Chamber. We will communicate carefully and individually with people who are on the shielded patient list. It is too sensitive to play politics with.

David Simmonds (Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner) (Con) [V]: I commend my right hon. Friend's decision to fund the local authorities of Harrow and Hillingdon, which serve my constituency, to reach out to people who may be reluctant to come forward and get their vaccine. In respect of those who are in our country with an uncertain immigration status, but for whom vaccination is vital for both humanitarian and medical reasons, will he consider a similar approach and fund local authorities, which know their communities best, to reach out to those people, to ensure that they are also part of this great British success story?

Matt Hancock: Yes. We are working with GPs, with community parts of the NHS and also with local authorities to do this. As my hon. Friend may have seen, the Home

Office has stated that the most important thing is that we vaccinate everybody who is present here, whatever their status or paperwork.

Patrick Grady (Glasgow North) (SNP): I am very glad to hear that exchange, because this is a considerable issue in Glasgow, with our large asylum-seeking population. Will the Secretary of State also tell us how his announcements about quarantining will be applied to people who arrive in this country seeking asylum and who probably do not have £1,750 in their back pocket? How will new arrivals be supported in the quarantine process?

Matt Hancock: A new arrival to the UK who has been in a red-list country in the past 10 days and who is not a resident of the United Kingdom or Ireland or a UK citizen will be denied entry and held in hotel quarantine until they can return to the country from which they arrived.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): I am endeavouring to ensure that everyone on the list gets a chance to ask a question, but they will not do so if we do not speed up a bit, because we have a lot more business to come—[*Interruption.*] No, I do not criticise the Secretary of State. If he is asked complicated questions, he has to give complicated answers, so let us have quick and simple questions, then we can have quick and simple answers.

Jack Brereton (Stoke-on-Trent South) (Con) [V]: May I join my neighbouring north Staffordshire colleagues in thanking our health workers for the amazing job they have been doing in rolling out the vaccine? Will my right hon. Friend join me in encouraging everyone in Stoke-on-Trent who is in priority groups 1 to 4 to get an appointment and get their jab before 15 February?

Matt Hancock: Yes. Stoke-on-Trent has been ably and effectively represented in this discussion, and everybody across Stoke deserves praise for the work that they are doing to drive up the vaccination rate. The higher the vaccination rate, the more quickly and safely we can all come out of this together.

Chris Bryant (Rhondda) (Lab) [V]: The roll-out of the vaccine programme has been absolutely commendable. Brilliant! Well done! Locally, it has been really encouraging to see the mass vaccination centres working alongside the GP surgeries, but I am really worried that from this Friday onwards all the local mass vaccination centres will have to close because there will not be any more Pfizer vaccine except for the delivery of second doses, which will not start for another fortnight. On top of that, the number of AstraZeneca doses available locally will fall from 24,000 a week to 8,000 a week, so I am really worried that the next cohort of people are not going to get their vaccinations soon. Is there anything the Secretary of State can do to ensure that we get more vaccines locally by this weekend?

Matt Hancock: I am not aware of the closure of any vaccination centres. Of course, it is a matter for the Welsh Government if they are going to close vaccination centres, but I speak to the Welsh Health Minister regularly and this has not been raised as an issue of concern. Supply is of course the rate-limiting factor, as it has

been throughout the roll-out. Supply continues, but we have to start ensuring that we have those second jabs ready for people. I am not aware of the issue that the hon. Gentleman has raised. It is certainly not a problem across England, where I am directly responsible for the roll-out. So far, this programme has been going so well across the whole United Kingdom, and we have all been working so hard together to make it happen.

Sir Edward Leigh (Gainsborough) (Con): In warmly welcoming what the Secretary of State has said today, the question that I have to ask, like many people, is why we did not do this over a year ago. After all, we are an island. If we had done what the Australians and New Zealanders have done, perhaps we would not have had to close our schools for all this time. I am saying this to support the Secretary of State when he is locked in Cabinet discussions with people who say that we have to protect the travel industry or the aircraft industry. I would say: let us have tough quarantine regimes, like Australia and New Zealand, and tough, enforced local lockdowns like China. Let us get a grip on this rather than just saying that it is more important to keep the travel industry open than our schools.

Matt Hancock: I am very grateful for my right hon. Friend's support in the way that he puts it. I have been talking to my Australian counterparts about the approach that they take, not least because their hotel quarantine has now been in place for some time. The central point that he makes is that once we get cases down through both the measures now, and then the vaccine to keep them down, a tough borders policy can help to keep us free domestically. That is a very important part of this consideration.

Kim Johnson (Liverpool, Riverside) (Lab) [V]: I pay tribute to all organisations in Liverpool working on the frontline to manage this pandemic. Does the Secretary of State believe that the Government are following their own guidance in making over 2,000 Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency workers physically attend the workplace for non-essential work processing provisional licence applications when driving lessons are not possible under current restrictions? Does he agree that no one is safe until we are all safe?

Matt Hancock: My right hon. Friend the Transport Secretary has looked into the issue about DVLA that the hon. Lady raises, and Public Health Wales has been involved in advising DVLA, which is of course based in Swansea.

Stephen Hammond (Wimbledon) (Con) [V]: I congratulate all those in the local health service and volunteers rolling out the successful vaccine programme in Wimbledon. I agree that we need effective border security. However, my right hon. Friend said earlier that new variants could emerge anywhere, so could he allay my concern that our efforts might be better spent on ensuring effective, rigorous and enforced home quarantine for all rather than setting up a hotel regime that will only protect against red-list countries?

Matt Hancock: The rigour and the security of both home quarantine and hotel quarantine are important. It is a matter of the degree of risk, and that is why we

[*Matt Hancock*]

have attempted to strike the balance that we have. However, what is not in balance is the need for rigorous quarantine both for those coming from red-list countries and those coming from all other countries who quarantine at home. It is important that this takes place, whether it is at home or in a hotel, and hence the stronger enforcement measures.

Barbara Keeley (Worsley and Eccles South) (Lab) [V]: One of my constituents is a long-term in-patient in the spinal injuries unit at Southport Hospital. He is 70 years old and is tetraplegic. Despite there being covid cases on the ward, he has not yet received a vaccine, and staff tell his partner that they have no idea when they will be able to offer one to him. Vulnerable patients in units like this may be there for months or years. What is the Secretary of State doing to ensure that all long-term in-patients, including my constituent, get the vaccine at the same time as they would if they were an out-patient?

Matt Hancock: Yes, that is exactly the principle on which we are proceeding. I pay tribute to the work that the hon. Lady does in this area and in always speaking up for those who are in in-patient care. It is very important that we make sure that there is equal and fair support for all according to clinical need, and that will be addressed in the next phase of the roll-out, once we have ensured that the offer to all those in categories 1 to 4 is achieved by next Monday.

Laura Farris (Newbury) (Con) [V]: I put on record my thanks to everybody working at Newbury racecourse for leading a fantastic vaccination programme for my constituency. I welcome my right hon. Friend's statement about very high rates of take-up of the vaccine. What has the take-up rate been among those under the age of 70 who have been offered it so far? What conversations has he had with the vaccine Minister about dispelling one of the most persistent myths that has been raised with me by young women—that the vaccine could negatively affect their fertility?

Matt Hancock: There is no evidence at all that the vaccine negatively affects fertility. There are many myths about vaccines, and I am very glad that they have largely been rightly ignored by the British public when they are inaccurate. The way we try to tackle such myths is by putting out as much positive, accurate, objective information from objective sources as possible, both on the NHS website and through the chief medical officer and deputy chief medical officers answering questions whenever possible. I am glad that my hon. Friend has raised that issue. I will ask one of the deputy chief medical officers to write to her, and we will publish that letter to provide the further reassurance that she asks for.

Mr Ben Bradshaw (Exeter) (Lab) [V]: What exactly is the Secretary of State's exit strategy from this quarantine policy? Is he, for example, planning airport testing, GPS tracking and covid passports, like other European countries, to avoid the total collapse of our vital travel sector?

Matt Hancock: I refer to the answer I gave to my right hon. Friend the Member for Forest of Dean (Mr Harper). Absolutely, testing is a very important part of this, as I set out in the statement.

Joy Morrissey (Beaconsfield) (Con) [V]: I know that my right hon. Friend is committed to securing our borders. Will he therefore consider commissioning and funding airlines and airports directly to run these new Department of Health and Social Care passenger and border restrictions? Airlines and airports such as BA and Heathrow have the experience, market innovation and incentive to deliver safe travel for Britain. Will my right hon. Friend meet me and representatives from the airline industry so that together we can deliver secure borders but a global Britain?

Matt Hancock: That is exactly our goal, and we have been working very hard with the carriers and airport operators to put this new scheme in place. There is further work to do in the days ahead, and no doubt after its initial introduction on Monday. What I would say very directly to my hon. Friend, the airline industry and the airports is that I know this is very difficult and tough. It is absolutely vital that we all work together constructively, positively and with the spirit of innovation that she describes to put in place a robust system that uses all possible technology to ensure that we have the basis of a future safe global travel arrangement. It is about both securing the borders now and ensuring that we can get global travel going for the long term.

Apsana Begum (Poplar and Limehouse) (Lab) [V]: Last week, the London director of Public Health England, Professor Kevin Fenton, said that London's Asian communities have been the hardest hit by the covid-19 second wave. It is being felt deeply in my constituency, and I pay tribute to those on the frontline in my constituency who have been helping to drive up the vaccine uptake, and those serving in our mortuary and funeral services. I am sure the Secretary of State agrees that the Government need to learn quickly from the impact of the first and second waves on minority communities, but that must be informed by evidence, especially to ensure the effectiveness of any strategy to deal with vaccine hesitancy. Will he and his colleagues ensure that data about the vaccine roll-out and mortalities in the second wave is published regularly in a meaningful format and disaggregated by ethnicity?

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): Order. Before I call the Secretary of State to answer the question, I give notice that we ought to be stopping this statement now, but I have seven more people who wish to get in. Can you please just cut your bits of paper in half and ask a question? It is not fair to everybody else, and the people who are sitting at home are not getting the atmosphere. We have got to do this quickly. We do not need speeches, just questions. If people take more than 20 seconds, I will cut them off.

Matt Hancock: The answer is yes.

Dr Rupa Huq (Ealing Central and Acton) (Lab): The jury is still out on whether every vaccine can eliminate every covid variant, but we know that vitamin D builds immunity to all viruses. The Secretary of State promises a four-month free supply for the vulnerable, but how come nobody has heard of it? Will he commit to widely advertising it and its benefit to all Brits?

Matt Hancock: Yes, indeed I have, and I have written to more than a million people about the availability of vitamin D. Indeed, I know that that offer is being taken

up, because there are Members of this House who have received their free vitamin D, taken a photograph of it and sent me the photo.

Paul Bristow (Peterborough) (Con) [V]: The ministerial team and our NHS have done a phenomenal job of vaccinating our most vulnerable and our frontline health and social care workers, but my right hon. Friend—

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): Order. We have had that bit. We just need the question.

Paul Bristow: My right hon. Friend will be aware that autistic people and those with learning disabilities are vulnerable to covid-19, with a death rate 4.1 times higher than the general population. Will the Secretary of State use his influence to make sure that the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation properly considers the right time for autistic people to be prioritised for vaccination?

Matt Hancock: Yes, I will. My hon. Friend rightly raises a very important subject. I will make sure that that is properly taken into account.

Carla Lockhart (Upper Bann) (DUP) [V]: I thank the Secretary of State for his statement. There will be significant concern among the population of Northern Ireland that entering the UK could continue through Dublin, putting people in my constituency at additional risk of new variants. Does the Secretary of State agree that this is not behaviour becoming of a good neighbour? In fact, it is quite shameful and irresponsible for the Government of the Irish Republic to refuse to share arrivals data with the UK. Furthermore, if this continues, does he agree that the hard border currently being enforced by the Irish Republic, restricting travel from north to south, will have to be enforced by the Police Service of Northern Ireland to stop entrance into Northern Ireland from across the border, to protect the UK?

Matt Hancock: No, I do not agree with the hon. Lady. I reassure every one of her constituents and all citizens across Northern Ireland that we work closely with the Government in Dublin to ensure that data is shared properly and that both Governments have an appropriate system to safeguard our borders against the challenges that we face while allowing free travel within the common travel area.

Chris Green (Bolton West) (Con): I welcome my right hon. Friend's commitment to making a contribution to the road map on 22 February on the understanding of the impact on mental health of children and families. Will he commit to publish that in advance, to make sure that parents know that all of their concerns are being addressed and that they have an opportunity to make a contribution to it?

Matt Hancock: I will look into my hon. Friend's suggestion.

Daisy Cooper (St Albans) (LD) [V]: The head of the Government's own test and trace system admitted that up to 20,000 people per day who are asked to self-isolate are not doing so. Will the Secretary of State please confirm, after 10 months of being asked for it, when he

will come up with a plan to fix the isolation system, so that those who need to self-isolate have the pastoral and financial support they need to do so?

Matt Hancock: We have put in place that support, including £500 for all those on low incomes. Everybody who is asked to self-isolate needs to self-isolate to break the chains of transmission.

Mr Robert Goodwill (Scarborough and Whitby) (Con): What lessons can we learn from Israel which, uniquely, is ahead of us in this race to protect its people? For example, when we reach group 10—under-50s who have not already been injected—should we prioritise those who have not been exposed to the disease and who are not bursting with antibodies, so that we actually protect more people? Incidentally, the Israelis are also injecting 16 and 17-year-olds. Are there any lessons to be learned from that?

Matt Hancock: I talk to my Israeli counterpart regularly, and I am impressed by the effort that Israel has delivered on to vaccinate its population. I am very happy to look into the detailed points that my right hon. Friend raises.

Caroline Lucas (Brighton, Pavilion) (Green) [V]: Projections show that some countries in the global south will have to wait until 2023 to achieve widespread vaccination because pharmaceutical monopolies are creating artificial restrictions. Given that no one is safe until everyone is safe, will the Secretary of State use his influence with Cabinet colleagues to ensure that the Government change their position and back proposals from India and South Africa to address pharmaceutical monopolies and help ensure that the world can produce enough vaccines for every country as soon as possible?

Matt Hancock: The hon. Lady would get a better hearing if she started on this subject by congratulating AstraZeneca, the British player in this vaccine race, on the fact that it is rolling out its jab with no profit at all. It is doing that in order to be able to vaccinate as many people around the world as fast as possible, at an affordable cost. That should be our starting point. There would be no vaccines if it was not for the global pharmaceutical industry. I pay tribute to all those working in the pharmaceutical sector. There is no way that we would have these jabs were a policy followed that disparaged the pharmaceutical sector in the way she proposes or in the way the Labour manifesto proposed at last election. Instead, we should come together to support industry, scientists, the NHS and Government. It is a massive team effort.

Dr Luke Evans (Bosworth) (Con) [V]: For phase 2, will the Health Secretary commit to having mental health workers at national vaccine sites?

Matt Hancock: I will absolutely look into the suggestion that my hon. Friend makes, which is all about making sure that we reach out to people at a moment when everybody, or almost everybody, is going through a process together—and I hope it is everybody. It is a very interesting proposal, which I will take away and hopefully speak to my hon. Friend about in the days to come.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): There—we did it, and only seven minutes over time. I thank everybody for going relatively fast, and especially the Secretary of State, who has answered 60 questions, which is pretty good going.

Victims of Crime and Anti-social Behaviour, Etc (Rights, Entitlements and Related Matters)

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

2.12 pm

Peter Kyle (Hove) (Lab): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make provision about the duties and responsibilities of the Victims' Commissioner and about the Victims' Code; to make provision about the rights of victims of persistent anti-social behaviour; to require local police forces to prepare victims' services plans and take steps in connection with victim representative bodies; to establish a duty to report suspected child exploitation by those working in regulated activities; to establish a right of appeal by victims against a decision to cease a criminal investigation; to make provision for reviews of open or reopened homicide cases; to make provision about court procedures relating to vulnerable victims and witnesses; and for connected purposes.

There is agreement across the House that victims of crime should be more empowered and better supported. Indeed, I should recognise that the current Justice Secretary has promised to deliver a Bill of his own. So did his predecessor, and so too did his predecessor's predecessor. They were promises to Parliament, but promises were also made to the public. The last three Tory manifestos pledged a law for victims. The challenge we face is not getting Government to admit that there is a problem; it is getting them to do something about it.

This is a deadly serious issue with deadly serious consequences for delay. In the time that has passed since the Tories first promised a victims Bill, there have been 1 million sexual offences and 350,000 rapes. Because of the broken promises of this Government, none of those victims of terrible crime benefited from the statutory rights that they have been promised. We know a Bill is on Government's to-do list, but it is not on their priority list. It is for Labour, which is why we have produced the Bill before us.

The Bill's origins lie in work undertaken by Claire Waxman, the victims' commissioner for London, and my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Holborn and St Pancras (Keir Starmer). Their pioneering legislative work for victims is reflected in today's Bill.

Confidence in our system of justice is at an all-time low for victims. Trial failures due to victim issues are at an all-time high, trebling since 2015. Victims are increasingly dropping out of criminal proceedings. When they look to the future, they see no justice in sight and no hope of closure, so they give up. To these victims, failed by Government, no justice is better than the agony of false hope. Just as bad is the fact that too many victims say that their experience of the criminal justice system was even more traumatising than the crime itself—surely the most damning indictment imaginable of current policy.

Victims have had codified rights since 2003, which have been reviewed, updated and extended several times, including during the current Session. Government have committed to putting those rights on to a statutory footing. The Labour party agrees that that is important, and clause 6 of part 3 of the Bill does that. But the Bill goes much further, because victims need more than rights: they need the tools to uphold them.

I have never met anybody working in any part of the criminal justice system who does not care about victims. From first responders to High Court judges, people

have empathy for victims of crime—they care—but individual empathy all too often fails to translate into organisational recognition of victim needs. People are not the problem; the system is, and perverse incentives run through it like letters in a stick of rock.

By giving powers that matter to victims, modernising our justice system to reflect the value and needs of victims and inserting consequence for failure into the system, this Bill makes victims unignorable. Right now, under this Government, victims and their needs are routinely ignored. A code of rights exists, but what happens if it is ignored? Nothing. If we did what the Government aspire to do, which is to simply put the code into statute, what will happen if the code is ignored? Still, nothing. Laws only matter if there is a consequence for breaking them, and the same must be true for a victims law.

That is why clause 5 of part 3 of the Bill will create a register, held by the Victims' Commissioner, on to which all individuals named as responsible for a breach of the victims code must be placed. Any part of the criminal justice system seeking to make an appointment in the top decile of salaries must consult the register to see whether any applicants have previously failed to uphold victims' rights. We do not bar recruitment, but doubtless it will be taken into account. The message is clear: for the first time, there will be consequences for those who ignore victims. For the first time, failing victims will have a career-limiting impact.

For rights to have meaning, people need to know that they exist. Today, all too often, that simply is not the case. Some 80% of people who suffer crime make their way through the criminal justice system totally unaware that there is a code of rights. There is no fixed point in time when a victim is informed of their rights—there should be, but when? Alleged perpetrators are read their essential rights at the point of arrest, but the victim is not informed of their rights at the point of becoming a victim. That imbalance needs addressing. The Bill introduces a requirement that victims must be informed of their essential rights at the “earliest possible opportunity”. The clear expectation of the Bill is that the moment of first response is usually the appropriate time to inform victims that they have the right to information and support and a comprehensive set of legally enforceable rights to support them as victims. Those who think that this is too soon must answer the following question: if the moment of becoming a victim is not the right time for someone to discover that they have legally enforceable rights—that they have power—then when is? After a week, a month or, as it is now for most victims, never?

A powerful code of rights needs a powerful commissioner to hold the system to account. In Dame Vera Baird we have a fearless commissioner, and the Bill seeks to boost further the commissioner's power and authority. The Labour party does not fear statutory bodies with independence; we believe that they strengthen our democracy. That is why the Bill shifts reporting from Ministers to Parliament,

gives the Justice Committee the power of veto over future commissioner appointments and grants extended freedoms to investigate the criminal justice system to ensure code compliance.

The Bill also gives power directly to victims. For them, things will be different. No longer will they need an MP to authorise a victim's complaint to the parliamentary ombudsman, an inexcusable barrier that partly explains why fewer than 20 victims have lodged complaints over the past three years. That is an insulting number, given the scale of code violations. Persistent victims of antisocial behaviour will for the first time be embraced by the code, which will empower people to stand up against those who play havoc with the civility everyone has the right to expect from their neighbours and from within their community.

Right now, only a minority of victims understand their rights and only a fraction will ever exert them. The system ignores infraction, so over time it has become normalised. With this Bill we modernise our system of justice to take into account the rights and the need of victims. Not only will the measures in this Bill lessen the impact of crime on victims, but they will help improve the quality of justice itself, by delivering victims in their role as witnesses into courtrooms empowered with knowledge, rights and support. It is not radical—we do not tear down old liberties—but it marks the only significant step forward for almost two decades. We insert career-limiting consequences into a system that currently ignores victims with impunity. We empower victims with the knowledge of their rights from the moment they become victims. We make it easier for those rights to be understood and asserted, and more straightforward to appeal should the need arise. We give victims an enforcer with teeth in the shape of a commissioner with the independence, power, and resources to hold our criminal justice system to account on a victim's behalf. And we provide a criminal justice system that better reflects the aspirations of our society for a justice system that offers dignity and support to those who suffer at the hands of criminals and not one that, as is too often the case today, prolongs the agony.

Question put and agreed to.

Ordered,

That Peter Kyle, Keir Starmer, Angela Rayner, Mr David Lammy, Nick Thomas-Symonds, Rachel Reeves, Valerie Vaz, Mr Nicholas Brown, Jess Phillips, Holly Lynch, Wes Streeting and Yvette Cooper present the Bill.

Peter Kyle accordingly presented the Bill.

Bill read the First time; to be read a Second time tomorrow, and to be printed (Bill 256).

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): I will now briefly suspend the House in order that the Chamber can be prepared for the next item of business.

2.22 pm

Sitting suspended.

Social Security

2.25 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Will Quince): I beg to move,

That the draft Social Security Benefits Up-rating Order 2021, which was laid before this House on 18 January, be approved.

There is no question but that this has been a challenging time, and the coronavirus outbreak has caused financial hardship and disruption for many across our country. That is why, since the start of the pandemic, we have mobilised our welfare system like never before to provide a comprehensive package of support worth over £7 billion, providing an essential safety net for those who need it.

My Department has risen to the challenge, utilising the speed and agility of the universal credit system to deal with the huge increase in people needing our support. There is little doubt that had we relied on the legacy benefit system, we would have seen queues down the streets outside our jobcentres and long delays, leaving families facing financial disruption without support. Crucially, through our universal credit system, we have managed to pay over 90% of new claimants on time and in full.

That has meant that universal credit and the Government's investment in the welfare safety net have been there to help catch many of those affected by the pandemic. That has been hugely important for the 3 million more people who have made a benefit claim since March last year. I think it is right once again to publicly thank the thousands of work coaches in jobcentres up and down our country, who have responded at speed and scale to ensure that we have supported people in their hour of need. Now they are working tirelessly to deliver our plan for jobs.

As the House knows, the Chancellor introduced the £20 per week uplift to universal credit and working tax credit as a temporary measure in March 2020 to support those facing the most financial disruption. That additional support increased the universal credit and working tax credit standard allowances by up to £1,040 for a year.

I understand that that subject is the elephant in the room; I know that the House is eager to know about the future of the £20 uplift to universal credit. The uplift sat, and continues to sit, outside today's annual uprating order and is therefore not directly relevant to today's proceedings, but I have to say that the Labour party is simply wrong in its use of emotive language that the Government plan to cut universal credit in April. In fact, the only talk of cutting universal credit in April has come from the Opposition parties. I gently say to them that they should be very careful with their use of emotive language and what they say in this House, because scaremongering in this House has real-world consequences, which the Department sees every day in claimant behaviour.

David Linden (Glasgow East) (SNP): The Minister will be aware of the cross-party Select Committee on Work and Pensions report published this morning, which speaks of the need to extend and make permanent the universal credit payment. Does he think that his Conservative colleagues on the Committee who authored that report are scaremongering when they talk about the damage that would happen as a result of not continuing that past April?

Will Quince: I will of course study in detail the report from the Select Committee, chaired by the right hon. Member for East Ham (Stephen Timms), and look closely at the recommendations made, but when there is emotive language about things such as cuts to universal credit in April that are frankly not true, that drives adverse claimant behaviour, which we as a Department see day in, day out. For example, we see people who would be eligible for universal credit delaying their claim, so they claim not at the point at which they are eligible but when their money has run out and they have hit crisis. And for example, there are hundreds of thousands of people on legacy benefits who we know would be better off on universal credit, but they do not make a claim. Why? Because of the scaremongering and scares from the Labour party.

Stephen Timms (East Ham) (Lab): I do not quite understand the point that the Minister is making. As it stands, Government policy is to reduce universal credit by £20 a week from April. Surely it is perfectly legitimate for Members of this House to draw attention to that.

Will Quince: I thank the right hon. Gentleman for that intervention, but it was absolutely clear that the uplift of £20 per week was a temporary measure for one year, and we have also been clear that the Chancellor has yet to make a decision and that all options are on the table.

I have said this before, but it is important to stress the point: discussions remain ongoing with Her Majesty's Treasury and a decision on the future of the £20 universal credit uplift will be taken by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in due course. The Chancellor has been clear that all options are on the table and that he will take into account the assessment of the economic and health situation as the best way to build on the successful support that the Government have put in place and provided for those on low incomes and in need throughout this year, through our plan for jobs and winter support package. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has an unenviable task—there is no question about that—but I point out to the House that he has a proven track record of stepping up to support the poorest, most vulnerable and most disadvantaged in our country throughout this pandemic. I have no doubt that he will continue to do so. The scaremongering is not helpful.

We must not forget that the more than £7 billion of additional funding to strengthen our welfare safety net was just one part of a much larger package of support measures for individuals, which has dovetailed with DWP-led support. Those measures include the coronavirus job retention scheme; the self-employment income support scheme; increases to the local housing allowance; local council tax assistance; the local welfare assistance scheme; the covid winter grant scheme; the protection for renters; and the support and protection for homeowners. Despite our delivering an unprecedented package of support since March and the crucial support that we continue to roll out through our jobcentre network throughout the country, we know we must continue to maintain the strength of our welfare safety net, particularly to protect those experiencing financial hardship for the months to come.

The Government propose, in the draft order, to spend an extra £2.7 billion in 2021-22 on increasing benefit and pension rates. With this spending we are upholding

our commitment to the country's pensioners by maintaining the triple lock, increasing pensions by 2.5% and therefore spending on pensioner benefits by £2.2 billion; helping the poorest pensioners who rely on pension credit; and ensuring that working-age benefits, including essential support for disabled people and carers, maintain their value in relation to prices by increasing them by 0.5%. That is in addition to the comprehensive support package already in place to support those affected by the pandemic.

The Government remain committed to providing families and pensioners throughout our nation with a helping hand, should they need it. We will do so by once again increasing the levels of benefits for the next financial year. I commend this order to the House.

2.33 pm

Seema Malhotra (Feltham and Heston) (Lab/Co-op): I speak today on behalf of my hon. Friend the Member for Westminster North (Ms Buck), who is unable to be with us.

This country has been tested over the past year and our communities have seen struggle in many ways. The pandemic has also held up a mirror to our country's resilience and to household resilience. I join the Minister in thanking the work coaches and other civil servants across the country for all that has been done in the DWP to support those in need.

It is right that the uprating order will increase working-age benefits, disability support and the state pension this year, but the Minister will know that the Conservatives froze working-age benefits between 2016 and 2020, and finally increased them by 1.7% last year. However, unemployment support was still at its lowest level in real terms since 1992 prior to the emergency uplift, a policy that has left families struggling to make ends meet.

Labour supports the Government's decision to honour the triple-lock state pension commitment this year, which will see the basic state pension and the new state pension rise by 2.5%. The Secretary of State has decided to uprate the personal or standard allowances of universal credit, income support, housing benefit, jobseeker's allowance, employment and support allowance, and disability carer and other working-age benefits in line with prices, but that comes after this decade of cuts. Excluding coronavirus-related increases, the majority of working-age benefits were between 9% and 17% lower last year than they would have been if benefits had been updated by CPI since 2010; that is according to the House of Commons Library.

I want to highlight in my remarks three important omissions from the order. The Minister has referred to the first of them; I think he spent so much time talking about the withdrawal of the uplift because it is a matter of concern to colleagues on both sides of the House—and I do mean both sides of the House. It is disingenuous of him to say that we are scaremongering when all we are doing is highlighting the concern felt by families up and down the country and by many groups that I will also mention in my comments today. He and his Government have yet to say what is happening to this lifeline for families in need—a lifeline through lockdown and as lockdown starts to be lifted. Indeed, there are reports today of the Chancellor and the Prime Minister arguing about what should be happening to the uplift.

The Minister will know of the extra costs that families are facing, including from increased food costs for

children at home, the use of small local shops, the need for home schooling materials and increased utility bills. The 0.5% increase on last year's universal credit level that he has proposed will be academic for those who are set to see a cut—and it is a cut—to their universal credit of £20 a week from April. If the Government are seriously thinking about economic recovery, cutting universal credit is like pulling the rug from under the economy's feet. This £20 a week is not saved by families; it is spent in shops and businesses across the country, stimulating the economy. And we all agree that this pandemic and the unemployment crisis will not be over by April this year. The reason people want to know about what is happening with the uplift is so that families can plan ahead for what is to come.

The Resolution Foundation has also highlighted the income shock that comes with a move to universal credit, with a third of new claimants reporting a drop in their income of at least 40% compared with a year ago. Citizens Advice has told us that three quarters of the people it is helping who are on uplifted benefits would have a negative budget if the £20 uplift was cut. Trussell Trust research shows that one in five UK claimants reported it very likely that they would be forced to turn to a food bank. The Child Poverty Action Group warned that this move could see another 200,000 children pushed into poverty.

Older people are paying the price, too. The number of those aged 50 to 64 who are out of work has risen by more than 175,000 since the start of the pandemic. This age group is at particular risk of long-term unemployment, and many will be forced to take early retirement before they can afford to do so. Angela in Sunderland told me that she was made redundant four weeks before her partner suffered a life-threatening illness. She became his carer, but the couple, in their 50s, have run out of savings. She is having great difficulty finding work and has drawn on her private pension to cover bills. The cut to universal credit would push Angela and her husband into further financial difficulty, at the worst time. So the Minister and his Government should do the right thing and secure our economy by cancelling the cut to universal credit from April, not least because when Labour forced a vote on the issue he abstained; almost 11,000 people in his constituency as well are on universal credit.

I also want to talk about legacy benefits, because it is discriminatory and unfair that the £20 a week uplift was never extended to those on legacy benefits, many of whom are carers or disabled. There is simply no excuse for it. This injustice has been raised repeatedly by Labour and other parties, and action has been called for by the Chair of the cross-party Work and Pensions Committee, my right hon. Friend the Member for East Ham (Stephen Timms), who is in the Chamber today. Indeed, a Committee report today highlights a recent survey by the Disability Benefits Consortium of disabled people claiming legacy benefits. It found that two thirds of disabled claimants have had to go without essential items at some point during the pandemic, and almost half report being unable to pay rent and household bills.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, along with 50 other organisations, has called on the Government to match the increase in legacy benefits, as part of their "Keep the lifeline" campaign. The Government claim that the legacy systems would take too long to update, but that is not a reason; it is an excuse. We are now nearly

[Seema Malhotra]

11 months into the pandemic, so what excuse do the Government have now for that blatant unfairness?

The order also fails to uprate the benefits cap, which remains at the same cash level since November 2016. That means that families will not see any inflation-linked increase to underlying benefits that they are entitled to. The Minister knows what that means. December's figures show that 170,000 families are seeing their benefits reduced by £246 per month on average, and 85% of those families include children. Ending the cap would put much-needed cash in the pockets of Britain's poorest families, helping them through the crisis without a devastating increase in household debt.

Similarly, the local housing allowance has been frozen in cash terms for 2021-22, and for which the intention is to carry the freeze forward into subsequent years, as hinted at by the Secretary of State in a written statement in December. It means that the Government are refusing to make even the bottom 30% of local rents affordable to private tenants.

In a compassionate society, we need a fair and supportive social security system that helps build resilience, supports people seeking work and helps families through difficult times. A quarter of UK families had less than £100 in savings when the crisis began, and the pandemic has hit families' incomes hard.

Labour is supporting today's increase to working-age benefits, disability support and the state pension, but the Minister has heard our views today on the major omissions, and if he will not act today, he must act soon and heed the warnings from those on the frontline. They are working with families who are doing the right thing in very hard times and asking simply that their Government be on their side.

2.42 pm

Sir Roger Gale (North Thanet) (Con) [V]: I thank my hon. Friend the Minister for the measured way in which he introduced the order, and I join him in thanking the staff of the Department for Work and Pensions and the jobcentres for the extraordinary way in which they have managed to handle a very difficult situation. I am particularly grateful to those working in the jobcentre in Margate, with whom I am in regular contact, and the regional DWP centre in Chatham. I have found myself working most weekends and sending emails on Sunday, only, to my surprise, to find them responded to almost immediately, which means that those staff have been working all the hours that God sends as well. I am sure that all hon. Members on both sides of the House would like to pay tribute to those people, who have worked so hard on behalf of our constituents.

As my hon. Friend said, some three quarters of a million people have been added to the register since last March. It must be the case that many of those will be ladies and gentlemen who have never found it necessary to claim benefit in their lives before. A lot of those will be small business people—the self-employed, or people who have lost their job because a firm has gone under and they could not be furloughed. Those people have found themselves claiming universal credit and depending on every penny of that money, which in almost all cases, probably, is far less than the amount that they and their family have ever in their lifetime received to live on.

My hon. Friend referred to something that, although it is not strictly speaking part of the social uprating order, is the elephant in the room—or rather, the elephant that is not in the room. When the Chancellor introduced the uplift of £20 last April, he made it very clear that it was temporary and that it was for a year. We can all do the maths; we understand that a year from last April means this April. I agree with my hon. Friend the Minister that it is scaremongering to suggest that somehow that assistance is going to disappear overnight at the end of April, because we all know perfectly well that that is not the intention. As the Minister said, the Chancellor has gone out of his way to throw lifeline after lifeline to people who have been facing serious financial difficulties as a result of the pandemic.

What I am looking for now is further assistance. Many of the three quarters of a million people and others who are currently having to rely on benefits will fairly swiftly drop out of the system because they will rebuild their businesses, get back into employment and back to earning the kinds of income that they need to support their families, and very often to support other families through employment as well, but I am afraid that that is going to take time. The idea that this can be done in three or six months has to be cloud cuckoo land.

I obviously do not expect an answer from the Minister this afternoon, as this is a discussion that will have to be held in Cabinet with the Chancellor of the Exchequer as well as the Department for Work and Pensions, but I believe that, at the very least, we need another year's extension to the £20 uplift to make it absolutely certain that those who have momentarily lost their feet can find their feet again, get back on those feet, get back into employment and start to rebuild not only their lives but the economic life of the nation. I hope very much that the Minister will take that message away, discuss it with his hon. Friends and seek to ensure that the absolute minimum further period for the uplift will be one year. Thank you very much indeed.

2.46 pm

David Linden (Glasgow East) (SNP): Before I get to the substance of my remarks on the order before us, I want to take a moment to pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Airdrie and Shotts (Neil Gray), who previously served as Scottish National party work and pensions spokesperson. More than just an exceptional five-a-side football player, he was a passionate advocate of social justice long before he entered this House, and although I am sad that he will soon be leaving this Parliament, I very much hope that Westminster's loss will be Holyrood's gain as he seeks to represent the finest town and football club in our national Parliament.

In taking on this role of shadowing the DWP, there are many things on which I will disagree with the United Kingdom Government in terms of policy and ideology, but I am very much on the same page as the Minister in paying tribute to our work coaches and DWP staff, who are the finest in the land, as I see at Shettleston jobcentre in my constituency.

Let me turn to the order before us. To be blunt, after a decade of Tory cuts to social security spending and with millions facing hardship, current social security provision simply does not go far enough to support people in a decent and caring society. These policies are

part of a wider austerity agenda that continually attacks the most vulnerable in society. We see it time and again: the two-child limit, and the associated rape clause; and the benefit cap. The list gets bigger, yet the Union dividend for Scotland gets smaller. The structure and support of our social security system says a lot about us as a society and how we treat the most vulnerable when they need that safety net the most. Right now, this Tory Government are failing enormously to guarantee the future certainty of social security payments in the coming months. Ministers must therefore listen to the widespread calls to make the £20 uplift to universal credit and working tax credit permanent, and indeed extend this to the legacy benefits.

The crux of this issue for us in Scotland is that 85% of welfare expenditure and income replacement benefits remain reserved to the United Kingdom Government here in London. As we find ourselves in the middle of a pandemic facing not only a public health crisis but an economic crisis, Scotland should not have to wait and merely hope for the UK Government to reject austerity and help the poorest in our communities. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation highlighted the devastating effect of years of Tory austerity and welfare cuts on many families across Scotland, with levels of destitution rising by 35% between 2017 and 2019. Today's uprating does not make up for four long years of benefit freezing prior to the pandemic. The proposed uplift also fails to take account of the financial hardship that many families are facing as a result of the pandemic. Research by the Trussell Trust found that nearly a quarter of a million parents worry that they will not be able to properly feed their children if the £20-a-week boost to universal credit is whipped away in April. I do not think that the Minister would be suggesting that the Trussell Trust is scaremongering.

A case from our citizens advice bureau in the west of Scotland reports a client with a young baby facing financial difficulties as a result of unexplained deductions to her benefits. That client's deductions are around £50 a month, meaning that any removal of the uplift will push her into more severe hardship. I do not think that the Minister would be suggesting that the citizens advice bureau in the west of Scotland is scaremongering. Indeed, at a national level, Citizens Advice Scotland reports that, without the universal credit uplift, more than seven in 10 people receiving complex debt advice from citizens advice bureaux will be unable to meet their basic living costs. I do not think that the Minister is suggesting that Citizens Advice Scotland is scaremongering.

Throughout the pandemic, we in the SNP have urged the UK Government to make permanent the £20 uplift to universal credit. However, it is not only the SNP demanding urgent action; these calls are coming from right across the political spectrum. In its report published only this morning, the Work and Pensions Committee said:

“We stand by our recommendation—made in October 2020—that the increase in Universal Credit should be maintained, with annual inflation-based increases.”

It went on to say that

“if the Chancellor cannot yet commit to making the increase permanent, he should at the very least extend it for a further 12 months.”

I do not think the cross-party Work and Pensions Committee, which includes a majority of Conservative MPs, is scaremongering.

A cross-party report published last week by the all-party group on poverty urged the Government to retain the uplift and to suspend the benefit cap. I do not think the all-party group on poverty, co-chaired by the hon. Member for Thirsk and Malton (Kevin Hollinrake), is scaremongering.

The Prime Minister's assurance that the £20 uplift will remain in place until at least April is simply not good enough. People are now facing a cliff edge in April, because the UK Government have failed to act and, as usual, have let the issue run on until the eleventh hour. Analysis by the Scottish Government has made it clear that removing the £20 uplift will have a devastating impact, forcing a further 60,000 people in Scotland, including 20,000 children, into poverty.

This £20 uplift has helped 2.5 million households across the UK during the pandemic, but the effects of the pandemic will be long lasting, with many industries suffering and countless people facing redundancies, so it is clear that this uplift needs to remain. The British Government have a moral duty to ensure that people have enough money to get by, so I argue that making this small increase permanent would be a big step towards doing that.

Patrick Grady (Glasgow North) (SNP): I congratulate my hon. Friend on his appointment to his new post. Is it not the case that lots of families are, for the first time, experiencing what it is like to be on universal credit? There will be a double whammy for those who have come on to universal credit over the course of the past year and then face this cliff edge of the further reduction. It is actually increasing the long-term cost to the Government, society and the economy if people are not properly helped back on their feet from the pandemic.

David Linden: My hon. Friend hits the nail on the head. Far too often during this pandemic—whether in response to the public health aspects of the pandemic or, indeed, to the economic aspects of it—everything the Government have done has been about trying to get to the next day. It has been about trying to get a quick win and just get through the day, but unless we see a strategic thought-through process from the Government, we will continue to see these problems reinvent themselves.

Alongside increasing universal credit at the outset of the pandemic, the UK Government enhanced local housing allowance to cover the lowest 30th percentile of market rents. Both these actions effectively reversed the effect of George Osborne's freeze on the benefit introduced in 2016. The benefits freeze is a prime example of what the Tories believe to be acceptable social security policy, but the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has made it very clear that the benefits freeze has been the biggest contributory factor in exacerbating poverty levels among working families.

Although there was a welcome increase to universal credit during the pandemic, there was sadly no increase to legacy benefits such as employment and support allowance and income support. Without this increase, those who are claiming legacy benefits face unprecedented financial challenges related to the pandemic, and this further risks worsening the financial situation for those

[David Linden]

claimants who are already facing difficulties. That specifically includes those with disabilities who cannot and should not be left behind by this Government who already have a pretty woeful record when it comes to penalising those with a disability. Increasing the value of the legacy benefits would also protect people from having to make complex and very difficult decisions about whether they would be better off moving to universal credit. The Government should ease pressure on households receiving legacy benefits by applying an uplift to mirror increases to the standard allowance within universal credit.

Before I conclude, I want to make reference to the two-child policy and rape clause. The Minister is probably wincing at the reference to the rape clause—indeed, he recently wrote to my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow Central (Alison Thewliss), pleading with her not to call it that. Presumably, Ministers would prefer it to be given its Sunday name: the non-consensual-sex exemption. If the Minister is embarrassed by the reference to the rape clause, I suggest that it is not the wording that should embarrass him, but the very essence of a policy that is surely the most barbaric ever to come out of Whitehall.

The Westminster austerity agenda continues to punish some of the most vulnerable people in our communities and make their lives a misery. The order before the House today is a mere formality; for as long as Scotland remains chained to Westminster, my party and I will always speak up for the most vulnerable and make the case for a decent, generous and robust social security system. But there is no escaping the fact that until Scotland is independent we are forced to accept the majority of social security policy from a Westminster Government we did not vote for—whose support, at best, could only be described as meagre.

2.56 pm

Stephen Timms (East Ham) (Lab): I am pleased to follow the hon. Member for Glasgow East (David Linden) and I congratulate him on his appointment.

This order is an annual routine, but this year is different: the number claiming universal credit has more or less doubled since last March; we are still in a global pandemic; and the order would dramatically cut the universal credit standard allowance. We have already been reminded by my hon. Friend the Member for Feltham and Heston (Seema Malhotra) that for four years, from 2016 to 2020, people claiming around half the benefits covered by this order had their incomes frozen: they were no longer connected at all to the cost of living.

In 2018, the House of Commons Library estimated that, this year, working-age social security spending would be £37 billion less than in 2010 in real-terms 2018-19 prices. The Resolution Foundation says much the same, coming up with a figure for social security spending that is around £34 billion lower in 2023-24 than if the 2010 system had remained in place. People claiming universal credit and working tax credit had a temporary increase of £20 a week. That costs about one sixth of the real-terms cut in annual working-age benefits since 2010—less than 3% of overall pandemic support.

The Minister was right to say that people are scared at the prospect of losing the £20-a-week increase. I think he was kind of hinting—saying, “Well, don’t worry;

it is not really going to happen.” But the answer to that problem is not to suggest that other Members of the House should not be talking about the issue; it is for the Government to make a clear statement that they are not going to go ahead with their current policy, which is to cut the benefit in April. I hope we do not have to wait until the Budget, which is still another three weeks away, before we have an announcement about what exactly the Government’s policy is.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation says that withdrawing the temporary increase will risk sweeping half a million more people, including 200,000 more children, into poverty. In its report this morning, which has been referred to, the Work and Pensions Committee unanimously, on a cross-party basis, called on the Chancellor, as others already have in this debate, to extend the increase for at least a year. We are joined in that call by lots of organisations, as well as by the right hon. Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Sir Iain Duncan Smith), who I see in the Chamber, and the right hon. Member for Preseli Pembrokehire (Stephen Crabb), both former Secretaries of State; by many other Government Members—we have just heard from the right hon. Member for North Thanet (Sir Roger Gale); and by the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee, chaired by the noble Lord Forsyth.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation quotes a woman in London saying:

“That £20 is often the difference between light and heat or no light and heat. If you don’t have gas, you can’t cook.”

That is what many people have been up against during the pandemic. That support must not be withdrawn next month.

The report also looked at the idea that has been floated of removing the increase but giving instead a lump sum—perhaps £1,000, equivalent to a year’s worth of the increase. The Committee is strongly opposed. It is a very bad idea, and the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions made it clear to the Committee last week that she rightly opposes it. Citizens Advice told us that “having a stable regular income is the best way to support people to budget and manage their money.”

The attraction for the Treasury, of course, would be the hope of withdrawing the increase without people noticing. It would not work.

People claiming benefits other than universal credit and working tax credit have seen, as we have been reminded, no increase at all. In our report in June, as the hon. Member for Glasgow East reminded us, we recommended increasing legacy benefits by the same amount. The report said:

“that does not mean that the Government should simply ignore the needs of those people who are claiming—through no fault of their own—benefits which rely on outdated and complex administrative systems. Those benefits include support for disabled people, people with health conditions, for carers... We recommend that...the Department should immediately seek to increase the rates of relevant legacy benefits by the equivalent amount.”

Since then, the Government have steadfastly refused. The Prime Minister told the Liaison Committee that it is because the Government

“want everybody to move on to universal credit.”

However, until two weeks ago, people receiving severe disability premium were prevented by law from doing so.

It has been argued recently, against the increase in legacy benefits, that the universal credit rise was to help people claiming for the first time, rather than those already claiming, but that was not what the Chancellor said in announcing the increase on 20 March 2020. He said that it was to

“benefit over 4 million of our most vulnerable households”—the 4 million claiming universal credit and working tax credit at the time. All the other equally vulnerable households, and many more vulnerable than those 4 million, have had no extra help at all. This order increased disability-related benefits by 0.5% at most.

Should disabled people have had some extra help during the pandemic? The Secretary of State told the Select Committee last week that she was “not aware specifically of extra costs that would have been unduly incurred”

by disabled people during the pandemic. I spoke to a constituent—a disabled single parent with two daughters, one of whom is disabled. She used to search for bargains in local markets and supermarkets. During the pandemic, she has had to stay safe and not do that. She pays £1.50 or £2 for what used to cost her £1. She feels very hurt that she has had no extra help for those extra costs. Others have to pay supermarket delivery charges of £4 or £5 a time, and another £4 if they buy less than the minimum £40 order. That is a big chunk out of an income of £74.70.

The Select Committee’s coronavirus survey last year showed that people claiming disability benefits have substantial additional costs, such as extra cleaning and carers’ protective equipment. Last week, the Disability Benefits Consortium, in a new survey of disabled people claiming legacy benefits, which my hon. Friend the Member for Feltham and Heston referred to, found that 82% have had to spend more than normal during the pandemic and two thirds have had to go without essentials at some point over the past year. That is the evidence that the Secretary of State said last week that she had not seen. It is very clear, and I hope the Minister will reflect on it.

Unpaid carers have borne an extraordinary burden during the pandemic. Carer’s allowance is going to rise under this order by 35p per week. Carers UK is calling for it to increase by £20, like universal credit.

The standard minimum guarantee in pension credit will be raised, which is welcome, but take-up of pension credit remains much too low. The Minister for Pensions wrote to the Committee last week with an estimate of 63% for pension credit take-up. The charity Independent Age has called today for a new written strategy on pension credit uptake, including trial automatic enrolment. It estimates that the cost to the Government of those eligible for but not receiving pension credit is “£4 billion a year in increased NHS and social care spending.” That is a powerful reminder that scrimping on social security imposes large additional costs elsewhere.

The British Association of Social Workers has pointed out that the start of real-terms working-age social security cuts in 2010 marked the start of a big surge of children being taken into care, imposing very large new costs on the Exchequer. We need to ensure that the social security system has the resources to do the job that all of us agree it should do. That means maintaining the £20 a week rise in universal credit for at least another year, and ensuring that legacy benefit claimants can, at last, get extra help as well.

3.6 pm

Debbie Abrahams (Oldham East and Saddleworth) (Lab) [V]: I am a regular in social security debates. Over the last 10 years, it has affected me deeply to learn how millions of our citizens are being treated by the state. I thought that our social security system was meant to provide a safety net and support for us if something bad happened in our lives, and many of the 3 million new universal credit claimants, including more than 7,000 in my constituency, will have that thought too. Our social security system should be there for all of us in our time of need, just like the NHS, providing security and dignity in retirement and the support needed should we become sick or disabled, or if we fall out of work, to protect us from poverty whether we are in or out of work.

The reality, as we have been hearing, is somewhat different. In the past, I have talked about the escalating levels of poverty. They are primarily a result of the four-year benefit freeze, but others have mentioned, around the benefit cap, a whole host of cuts that the previous coalition and Conservative Governments introduced. As we heard from my right hon. Friend the Member for East Ham (Stephen Timms), the equivalent of £37 billion has been taken out of working-age social security support since 2010.

I have talked about the 4 million or so children growing up in poverty, which affects not just how hungry or cold they may be on cold days such as today, but their cognitive development, how they will do at school, their very futures and even how long they will live. The free school meals fiasco was just that: a fiasco. Yet still the Government sit on their hands and do the bare minimum, as report after report says that the situation is getting worse.

The Government say that work is the best route out of poverty. I say, “Well, why were more than 8 million families living in poverty before the pandemic, including 3 million children, and why will four out of five of those families still be in poverty 10 years later?” The Government say, “We had to clear up your mess from the financial crisis.” I say, “Well, we’ll have to clear up your mess after the mismanagement of this pandemic, including your failures in adopting recommendations for pandemic preparedness from 2016.”

Poverty and inequality are not inevitable; they are political choices, and we will make very different choices. This is about political ideology. In spite of all the Government’s talk about levelling up, they have studiously ignored every reasonable proposal from charities and others—even from their own Back Benchers.

Take the recent Work and Pensions Committee report on the five-week wait for the first universal credit payment. With approximately 6 million new universal credit claimants—nearly double last March’s figure—we undertook an extensive inquiry into how the debt, rent arrears and psychological distress that new UC claimants face could be avoided. Our recommendations included introducing a starter payment, not a loan, to cover the wait for the first payment. We also recommended that the Department for Work and Pensions work to define and identify vulnerable claimants who may be at risk, and that it work more closely with other agencies in this regard, so that vulnerable people get the right joined-up support. Unfortunately, the Government rejected all our recommendations—every single one. Levelling up should not just be about infrastructure projects.

[Debbie Abrahams]

This is the first time the House will have heard about the death of such a vulnerable claimant, Philippa Day. Nearly two weeks ago, the coroner reporting on the inquest into Philippa's death issued a prevention of future deaths notice against the Department for Work and Pensions and Capita after he found 28 failings. This is the fifth prevention of future deaths report to be issued to the DWP since 2013. Philippa was 27 when she died in October 2019 after going into a coma having taken an overdose of insulin. She had known mental health problems as well as having type 1 diabetes, and she had been battling with an application for the personal independence payment after being on disability living allowance. Her money was stopped in January 2019 and, in huge debt, she overdosed in August 2019. The coroner stated:

"Given the sheer number of problems in the handling of Philippa's claim I am unable to conclude that each of these was attributable to individual human errors. The following deficiencies in the system's ability to process PIP claims without causing unnecessary distress to claimants were evidenced...Although the decision to take an overdose was doubtless multi-factorial in origin, the combined impact of successive destabilising incidents caused by the problems in the handling of her benefits claim was, in my finding, the predominant factor, and the only acute factor, which led to her decision to take an overdose."

Philippa's was not the first death of a vulnerable claimant over the past 10 years, and I fear that it will not be the last. I am afraid that the response of the Work and Pensions Secretary to my questions on this has not been good enough. There has to be an independent inquiry into these deaths.

Not only have the Government hollowed out support for working-age people, making it far from adequate, but all too often the culture is one of disregard and even punishment rather than support, and 2021 will continue to be tough on people. As others have said, at the very least the Chancellor needs to maintain the £20 per week uplift to universal credit and working tax credits for at least a year, and it must be extended to legacy support, which is often used by disabled claimants. As Professor Sir Michael Marmot said recently, we need to recognise the key drivers of the UK's high and unequal death toll from covid, including the existing levels of poverty and inequality, and address these by building back fairer. When I asked the Prime Minister about this, he said that he would, and I am going to hold him to that commitment.

3.13 pm

Steve McCabe (Birmingham, Selly Oak) (Lab) [V]: The number of people claiming universal credit has doubled to around 6 million, while job vacancies remain far below the pre-pandemic levels and unemployment is set to reach a five-year high. It hardly seems a propitious moment to be reducing any benefits. I have to say that, much as I like the Minister, it sounds to me a little like doublespeak for him to claim that calling the reduction of an existing payment a cut is somehow fraudulent and a terribly unacceptable use of emotive language.

The latest Trussell Trust survey of 1,000 people in receipt of universal credit shows that one in five people think it is very likely that they will need support from a food bank if the uplift is removed. Nearly a quarter of a million parents fear not being able to properly feed their children if the uplift is removed, and seven in 10 people on universal credit since early 2020 say that they use the

uplift to buy absolute essentials. It is for those reasons that I support the Work and Pensions Committee's call to maintain the uplift for a further year at the very least.

It has been estimated that keeping the increase could cost around £6.4 billion, but as the Select Committee argues, that should be seen in the context of the Treasury's own claim that it has spent £280 billion on coronavirus support measures this year. In that context, 2% is hardly outrageous. The expenditure that the Minister announced today needs to be viewed against the 2019 Office for Budget Responsibility report on the impact of the 2015 Budget, which cut £9.1 billion from welfare spending.

It is worth repeating that the £20 a week uplift was never extended to those on legacy benefits, and therefore it excluded many carers and disabled people and those on jobseeker's allowance. Apparently, the justification is that it would have taken too long to update the legacy systems. I have heard some excuses in my time, but I doubt many people will find that a persuasive reason for excluding quite so many people. It would be helpful to hear how the Minister thinks the Government are helping carers and the disabled to meet the additional costs incurred through no fault of their own, such as the cost of PPE.

There are aspects of today's announcement that I welcome. I particularly support the decision to honour the triple lock and the increase in the guaranteed minimum pension credit, but it would be so much better if the Minister could address the elephant in the room, rather than risk undermining the positive steps he is attempting to take.

3.17 pm

Wendy Chamberlain (North East Fife) (LD): It is hard to believe that more than four months have passed since we considered the Social Security (Up-rating of Benefits) Bill last autumn, and I welcome the annual process used to ensure that social security benefits and pensions are uprated. However, like others who have spoken in the debate, I must put on record my disappointment at the decisions taken. We are just weeks away from the new financial year, and it might seem hard to believe for some Members, but for millions of people across the country, that represents a terrifying reality.

There is still total uncertainty about what will happen to the universal credit uplift of £20 a week. Under the statutory instrument, the Government plan to take away £1,000 a year from the least well-off families in Britain. This is not scaremongering. The uplift may have been for one year, but people's situations are arguably more precarious than they were a year ago, so this is quite simply the wrong thing to do. It is the wrong thing to do morally, and it is the wrong thing to do economically, because this money will not be stored away; it will be spent and reinvested back into the economy.

The support that the uplift represents is vital, yet the Government have spurned opportunity after opportunity to make it permanent or to at least extend it. They could have done it during the Secretary of State's publication of uprating totals back in November, and they could have done it when the latest national lockdown was announced at the beginning of the year, but they did not. Then the Government abstained on the Opposition day motion in the name of the Leader of the Opposition, which puts us in a bizarre situation where Parliament

has approved a motion calling for the uplift to be made permanent, yet the Government plan to do nothing about it. The idea of non-binding motions may be familiar to those of us who occupy this place, but in terms of communicating the will of the House to our constituents, I find that an abdication of responsibility from those on the Government Benches. During all that time, millions of families have had to live with the uncertainty of not knowing what their income will be come April. The Government need to provide support, but they also need to provide certainty.

I welcome the report published last week by the all-party parliamentary group on poverty, chaired by the hon. Member for Thirsk and Malton (Kevin Hollinrake), calling for the uplift to be made permanent. As the hon. Member for Feltham and Heston (Seema Malhotra) said, support for that exists across the House. That is what the Government have to do. Otherwise, they will be letting people down at exactly the time when our safety net is meant to support them.

The report also calls for an uplift in legacy benefits, which I wholeheartedly echo and which has been recommended by the Work and Pensions Committee, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and many others. I do not think we in this place have given enough attention to the issue of people in receipt of legacy benefits. Many of my constituents who receive these benefits were very disappointed to see that they had been excluded from any uplift. It is not right. If we accept that universal credit claimants should receive an uplift, there is no reason why that should not have been extended. Instead, the only uplifts offered for legacy benefits are the inflationary ones detailed in the statutory instrument today. That means, for example, that someone who receives ESA and is in a work-related activity group will receive 35p per week extra, and someone who receives carer's allowance will see a 30p per week increase. Many of my constituents regard these increases, at a time of such hardship for many of them, to be derisory. I urge the Government to consider uplifting legacy benefits. It is a question of fairness. The Minister, in his opening remarks, suggested that Opposition scaremongering is responsible for those on legacy benefits being deterred from making UC claims, but surely at such an uncertain time it is understandable that people choose to stick with what they know and what they have.

Mark Tami (Alyn and Deeside) (Lab): Does the hon. Lady agree that people are also exposed to loan sharks and others who know how vulnerable people are at this time and prey on them?

Wendy Chamberlain: I thank the right hon. Gentleman for his intervention and agree absolutely: when people are desperate, they turn to whatever options are available to them and that stores up more difficulties for the future.

I turn now to the uplifting of pensions. It is right that the Government have taken steps, such as in the Social Security (Up-rating of Benefits) Act 2020, to ensure that the commitment to the triple lock is maintained. As I said during the passage of that Act, not only does the triple lock provide an important means to ensure that pensioners are properly supported in retirement, but it is a matter of intergenerational fairness. Small increases year on year now ensure that the generation who are currently just entering the workplace will also receive that support when it is time for them to retire.

This is a timely opportunity to discuss pensions, for important research was published today by the charity Independent Age—this was referred to by the Chair of the Select Committee, the right hon. Member for East Ham (Stephen Timms)—detailing that older people miss out on £88 million a year from the warm home discount because they do not claim pension credit. Some 650,000 pensioners who are eligible for pension credit do not claim it. I hope the Minister in his winding-up speech will address what the Department for Work and Pensions is doing to promote engagement and increase uptake of this important benefit.

The final area I want to refer to where there is an inherent sense of unfairness is the frozen pensions of overseas pensioners in certain countries. I have recently met people affected by this issue. They have found it hard to survive on a frozen pension and this is especially the case during the coronavirus pandemic. There is a moral case to expand the pensions uplift to overseas pensioners during the pandemic.

I welcome the recent report of the all-party group on frozen British pensions, which is chaired by the right hon. Member for North Thanet (Sir Roger Gale), who spoke earlier in the debate. The report tells of a British citizen, a 96-year-old veteran called Anne Puckridge, who served in all three branches of the armed forces. She moved to Canada in 2001 so that she could be close to her family. Despite all that, and despite her national insurance contributions, she finds herself receiving a state pension of £72.50 a week. Of course, because of the 15-year rule, she is denied proper representation in this place, and I look forward to the Government bringing forward legislation, as they committed to do in their manifesto, to scrap the 15-year rule. She is in a strange and arbitrary situation where, had she moved a bit further south, over the border, into the United States, she would be eligible for a fully uprated state pension, because we have an agreement with the US. Does the Minister see the unfairness in that?

The all-party group has found that the Canadian Government are willing to engage on this issue and have made a formal request to the UK Government about the potential for reciprocal arrangements. I hope the Minister will be in a position to update us on what discussions he and the Pensions Minister, the Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the hon. Member for Hexham (Guy Opperman), have had about this. I hope the Minister will address three key questions on this issue. When do the UK Government plan to respond to the Canadian Government? What is the process moving forward on coming to an agreement? What is that response likely to be? I urge them to reach an agreement. It would clearly be transformative for very many. I look forward to hearing from the Minister on this issue during his winding-up speech.

3.23 pm

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP) [V]: It is always a pleasure to follow right hon. and hon. Members, and indeed learned Members, and I look forward to the Minister's response. He is very intent on and interested in his portfolio.

Article 6(2) sets out that the full rate of the state pension is to be amended from £175.20 to £179.60. I would be most obliged to understand that consideration has been given to the fact that this additional £4.40 per

[*Jim Shannon*]

week would just about cover the cost of the BBC TV licence. I make this point because today a number of constituents have contacted me about the BBC TV licence. We have all got our reminders about it today, as indeed have many pensioners. Pensioners must now pay, never mind the cost of living increases. Surely we would be better placed to increase this before that reaches final approval.

Again, this is not the Minister's portfolio—it is not his direct responsibility—but I would respectfully and gently ask: has he had any opportunity to talk with a Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Minister about perhaps approving free TV licences for those over 70 years old, because there are many who fall into that category? I am always very mindful at this moment in time that we have had an increase in poverty in all age groups, in particular families and those who are elderly.

I have some concerns about the uplifts in benefits. The most vulnerable in receipt of PIP are seeing uplifts, under article 16, of anywhere from 10p per week to a grand amount of 45p per week. I am not against the increase, but before I could consider voting for the motion I would like an understanding of how the cost of living increase is factored into this. I think it is important that we understand how these increases, while in many cases nominal, have the cost of living factored into them.

In Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland protocol is seeing individual products increase by more than this—it is something that I would be aware of and my colleagues would be aware of—never mind a whole week's shop-worth. While these provisions exclude Northern Ireland, perhaps an outline of the rationale can be given as to the uplift amount.

On the state pension uprating, as pertains to part 2, article 10, maternity pay has an uplift of 77p. It is difficult to comprehend, as this would not even pay for a litre of milk. Again, I say respectfully and genuinely to the Minister: is he able to explain the rationale to expectant parents who, when hearing of the uplift, will believe that their life is to be made easier, only to understand that these uplifts will cost more to process than the actual increase to a family?

Every one of us, as elected representatives, is very aware of those in poverty. We have been confronted with a greater number of those who are subjected to poverty in all spheres of life, but more so due to the pandemic, and all the stats and figures indicate that that is the case. So when it comes to increases in pensions and benefits, I think the rationale for how they are considered and how they are agreed is something that we all wish to understand better.

When we take into consideration the difficulty that lockdown babies are facing with their social skills and the need for parents to be able to afford to take them out to baby classes as soon as it safe to do so, it seems that their maternity pay uplift will not help them increase the quality of life for their child. I know that the Minister is keen to ensure that they are helped, affected and assured, but again, my constituents ask me: just how does it work?

Has consideration been given to the effect of the pandemic on maternity leave? I referred to that just a few minutes ago. I think it has been the extra that has

pushed people very much to the breadline. I am aware that, in my constituency, among many of the people who are under pressure financially, there are more referrals to the food bank in my constituency. The one in my constituency was the first food bank in the whole of Northern Ireland. Over this last period—the Christmas period—it handed out 870 individual assistances to those people. That again tells me that there is real financial pressure. I would ask: has consideration been given to the effect of the pandemic on maternity leave and is that a consideration that we can make at this stage?

I conclude by saying to the Minister that I ask these questions genuinely and respectfully, but I do feel, on behalf of my constituents, that I need an answer.

3.29 pm

Will Quince: I begin by thanking all those who have spoken and taken part in the debate, which covered many important topics. Given the time constraints, I will not be able to cover off all the points raised, but as I said in my opening speech—I will just focus on this for one moment—the statutory annual review of benefits does not include a decision on the £20-per-week uplift to universal credit, which was announced by the Chancellor as a temporary measure in March last year. I repeat, because this is important, that the Chancellor has been clear that all options are on the table. He will take into account the assessment of the economic and health situation when considering the best way to build on the successful support that the Government have provided to those on low incomes throughout this year so far.

I make no apology for using the word “scaremongering”. I understand some of the points that Opposition Members made, but there is a big difference between lobbying for additional Government support and using emotive language and politicising an issue. I gently remind the House that it was this Government who introduced the temporary £20-per-week uplift to universal credit; it was not a measure that Opposition parties were calling for. This Government have not flinched throughout this pandemic in supporting the poorest, the lowest paid and the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, and I have no doubt that the Chancellor and the Government will continue to do so.

Members raised concerns about legacy benefits. First, let me say that I appreciate that many people face financial disruption due to the pandemic. That is why the Government put in place an unprecedented package of support, totalling more than £280 billion, to protect jobs, help families and strengthen our welfare safety net. Just to give a bit of the broader context on welfare spending, in 2021 we will spend more than £100 billion on benefits for working-age people. That is £100,000 million—around £1 in every £9 that the Government spend; double our Defence budget. We spend more on family benefits than any other country in the G7, at more than 3% of GDP. We make no apologies for the fact that we will continue to reform our welfare system so that it encourages work while supporting those who need help—an approach based on the clear evidence that work offers families the best route out of poverty.

Stephen Timms: Does the Minister accept the evidence that disabled people have seen significant cost increases in the course of the pandemic?

Will Quince: I understand the point that the right hon. Gentleman has made. I know that his report goes into some detail on this issue. I gently remind the Chair of the Select Committee that universal credit is about £2 billion more generous than the legacy benefits system it replaced and is part of a broad package of support. Over and above the £20 uplift available for those on universal credit, those in receipt of legacy benefits may be entitled to other measures. It is important that they go on to the gov.uk benefit eligibility checker to check their eligibility before applying, because as the right hon. Gentleman knows, there is no path back to legacy benefits once someone has made a universal credit application. It is important to stress that universal credit is part of that broader package of measures worth more than £280 billion throughout the course of this pandemic. Yes, of course we recognise that people across the country have faced additional costs throughout this pandemic. That is exactly why the Chancellor stepped up with that £280 billion package, including an extra £7 billion in welfare support.

The Opposition spokesman, the hon. Member for Feltham and Heston (Seema Malhotra), said that we should heed the words of those on the frontline. I totally agree and encourage her to visit her local jobcentre at the earliest available opportunity to speak to work coaches, because then she will hear what they think about universal credit and how they believe it has been the tool that not only has enabled us to support an extra 3 million people throughout this pandemic but has allowed them to incentivise, support and empower people into work.

Seema Malhotra: I have visited my local jobcentre and keep in close touch with it. I hope that the Minister also listens to what I said about what the Trussell Trust, Citizens Advice and the Child Poverty Action Group have been saying, because that is important, and they will probably want a response from the Minister on those points.

Will Quince: I work very closely and meet with all the organisations that the hon. Lady references, but work coaches are an important reference point. They all say

without hesitation, when I visit jobcentres across the country, that universal credit is an incredible tool—a powerful tool—to help support and empower people back into work. That is why it is so absurd that the Labour party wants to scrap it.

Several Members raised pension credit and its uptake. I have no doubt that the Pensions Minister will be willing to meet hon. Members to discuss that further, because I know that he has done a considerable amount of work in that area.

The uprating order will ensure that working-age benefits increase in line with inflation, which represents a cash increase of £500 million for working-age benefits. That includes those benefits that contribute towards extra costs arising as a result of disability or a health condition, and pensioner premiums in income-related benefits.

To conclude, I will summarise the benefit increases that the Government are implementing to support those most in need. We are increasing the basic state pension and the new state pension by 2.5%. That will deliver on our manifesto commitment for the state pension triple lock. We are increasing the pension credit standard minimum guarantee in line with the cash increase in the basic state pension to support the poorest pensioners. We are increasing working-age benefits in line with prices; we are increasing the universal credit work allowances so that claimants can earn more before their payments are reduced; and we are increasing benefits to meet additional disability needs and carer benefits in line with prices. I commend the order to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That the draft Social Security Benefits Up-rating Order 2021, which was laid before this House on 18 January, be approved.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): I will suspend the House for three minutes in order that the Chamber can be prepared for the next item of business.

3.36 pm

Sitting suspended.

Pensions

3.39 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Guy Opperman) [V]: I beg to move,

That the draft Guaranteed Minimum Pensions Increase Order 2021, which was laid before this House on 18 January, be approved.

I welcome the new shadow Ministers to their posts. You wait ages for a new shadow Minister, Mr Deputy Speaker, and then two come along in a matter of weeks. I welcome the hon. Member for Reading East (Matt Rodda) to his new post. I worked in detail with his predecessor, the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Jack Dromey), who was a wonderful colleague to work with, so my new opposite number has big shoes to fill. I wish him well. Likewise, I welcome the hon. Member for Glasgow East (David Linden) to his new role as the Scottish National party shadow spokesman. I thank the hon. Member for Airdrie and Shotts (Neil Gray) for his work both with and against the Government over many years.

Guaranteed Minimum Pensions Increase Orders are an entirely technical matter that we attend to in this place each year: an order is required by section 109 of the Pension Schemes Act 1993. This statutory instrument provides some inflation protection for the guaranteed minimum pension part of an occupational pension that was built up between 1988 and 1997. This year, that part will be increased by 0.5%, in line with the consumer prices index assessment that took place between 1 October 2019 and 30 September 2020. I commend this statutory instrument to the House.

3.41 pm

Matt Rodda (Reading East) (Lab): I thank the Minister for his generous introductory comments and for setting out the Government's proposed approach. I thank DWP staff and, indeed, all those supporting pensioners for their work at this difficult time.

Britain should be the best country in the world in which to grow old. One of the first responsibilities of Government is to ensure that there is a proper state pension, as a central part of the welfare state, and that people are able to look forward to a decent income in retirement. That is why we support the triple lock.

This statutory instrument addresses the needs of a particular group of state pensioners—those who paid into the state earnings-related pension scheme—and offers them an increase in line with inflation. Labour supports the measure and will not oppose the Government's proposals; nevertheless, I wish to put those proposals into a wider context.

First, we should bear in mind the fact that huge numbers of pensioners in the UK rely on the state pension for their income. Figures from the Office for National Statistics show that in recent years we have seen the highest proportion of pensioners who are reliant solely on the state pension since the 1990s. In that light, it is clear that decisions made in this House about the state pension, including SERPS, have wide-ranging repercussions for people's quality of life in retirement and should not be taken lightly.

As Labour has pointed out before, today's retirement landscape is a challenging one, and we will have to work hard to find new ways to meet those challenges, including

by ensuring that there is real regulation of profit-making consolidation vehicles for defined benefit pension schemes, which are often referred to as pension superfunds. They are currently subject only to an interim regulatory regime announced by the Pensions Regulator this summer.

We also need to create the conditions to support defined benefit schemes more widely. Part of that work involves listening carefully to experts and organisations on the funding requirements of both open and closed defined benefit schemes. We received assurances from the Government during the final stages of the Pension Schemes Bill in the other place, and an important dialogue will take place over the coming months to ensure that the emerging regulatory framework works for all schemes.

Furthermore, although we welcome the approval of the new pensions dashboard as a great opportunity for people to see all the information about their pension in one convenient location, it is vital that we protect consumers from the risk of exploitation. As the shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, my hon. Friend the Member for Stalybridge and Hyde (Jonathan Reynolds), told this House when the dashboard was being discussed in relation to the Pension Schemes Bill:

"The last thing we want is for people to make bad choices, prompted, for example, by market disruptions or unscrupulous operators, until they are more accustomed to that level of access."— [*Official Report*, 16 November 2020; Vol. 684, c. 106.]

I reiterate his call to safeguard the public dashboard by giving it a head start and keeping commercial transactions off the dashboard until protections can be guaranteed.

Labour also believes that there must be accessible and transparent fee information on the dashboard. We have seen how complexity can make it difficult for those saving for their pensions to understand transaction costs. We should now take the opportunity to fix this problem. In the same light, the Government must do more to end pension scams. Although progress has been made, we must none the less stamp out this behaviour, as the consequences of people falling victim to scammers can be utterly devastating and can turn their lives upside down.

I welcome the growing interest in the assessment and disclosure of climate risk in pension investments. This is a very important issue and we must not rest on our laurels. Pension funds represent trillions of pounds in value and, as such, have huge potential for good if properly directed.

It is important to see today's announcement in terms of what it means here and now as many pensioners face a hard and difficult winter due both to the coronavirus and the current very cold weather. Over 1 million pensioners who are entitled to pension credit are not claiming it, with very serious consequences, including tens of millions of pounds-worth of linked support for home heating being denied to those who have not claimed. The story is similar for pensioners who are entitled to a free TV licence. I challenge the Government to do much more to make people aware of pension credit entitlements and to encourage far greater take-up.

It is also important to raise the issue of those with concerns about their occupational pensions. For example, in the immediate term, what assessment have the Government made about the viability of Arcadia's pension scheme and the impact that the sale of the high street businesses will have on staff and pensioners?

While this motion might appear on the surface to be a technical measure that affects only a proportion of pensioners, it is important that we understand the context in which we pass it. I hope that the points I have made emphasise how important it is that in the longer term we consider the pension system as a whole when making any decision that has the potential to affect so many people. As Members of this House, we make decisions that shape not just the lives of millions of current pensioners but the lives of millions of hard-working people who are yet to retire. If we are to make Britain the best place to grow old in, then we must work hard to address the issues that we have discussed today.

3.47 pm

Sir Roger Gale (North Thanet) (Con) [V]: I rise as chairman of the all-party parliamentary group on frozen pensions. That is a body that ought not to exist at all, but unfortunately its presence is necessary and has been for some time.

It is to the eternal shame of successive Governments that there is a group of United Kingdom citizens living in Canada, Australia, South Africa, the West Indies and other far-flung places who are entitled to United Kingdom pensions and have seen those pensions frozen since they left the UK for foreign parts. That is wholly unacceptable. These people are men and women who have, in very many cases, served their country long and honourably. They are former members of the armed forces and former diplomats. They are people who have given public service and have paid their way in the United Kingdom, and then, in later life, moved to live with families overseas.

As we heard briefly in the previous debate, a United Kingdom pensioner living in Canada will have their pension frozen, sometimes for many years; the case of Anne Puckridge has been cited. A few hundred yards across Niagara Falls, in the United States, that same pensioner would have their pension uprated in line with inflation, in the same way, as we have heard today from the Minister, that other pensions in the United Kingdom are quite properly uprated. This situation persists because successive Governments have sheltered behind the opinion that, because there is no reciprocal arrangement with another country, it is not necessary for the United Kingdom to pay the full pension. That has led to the disgraceful circumstance where, in Canada, for example, the Canadian state finds itself having to top up the funds payable to a United Kingdom pensioner in order to enable them to live. That is, as I have said, a shame upon our society.

During the past year, the all-party group researched the circumstances of the many pensioners living overseas. It sought the advice of the Canadian, the Australian and other Governments and sought the opinion of parliamentarians and the Speakers of their Houses. Shortly before Christmas, we published our findings. That report is a damning indictment of what the Government of the United Kingdom have allowed to prevail for far too long.

The Canadian Government specifically have indicated very clearly that they wish to enter into a reciprocal agreement with the United Kingdom. In a background note to a parliamentary question, a Government document says that

“officials have received a letter from the Canadian federal Department responsible for leading the negotiation of Canada’s international

social security agreements. The letter seeks to conclude a social security agreement between Canada and the UK. Officials have acknowledged the letter.”

It is a matter of record that the Canadian Government have sought to break the ice. They have made the move and have offered to negotiate a reciprocal agreement with the Government of the United Kingdom. In a written answer on 3 December, the Pensions Minister acknowledged that these representations had been made and indicated that a full response would be forthcoming. That was in December. We are now two months further on. I want to know, please, from the Minister this afternoon what proposals are being brought forward by the Department for Work and Pensions and the Government of the United Kingdom to enter into serious, meaningful and substantive negotiations with the Government of Canada, so that, at the very least, that wrong can be put right. I would like to think that that will be a step towards proving that this Conservative Government are taking steps to right the wrongs of the past.

3.53 pm

David Linden (Glasgow East) (SNP): Let me start by expressing my thanks to the Minister for his kind words at the beginning of his speech; it is much appreciated and I look forward to working with him in this new role.

Last week, people across the British Isles rightly came together to mourn the passing of a remarkable gentleman, Captain Sir Tom Moore, a war veteran who served his country and lived to see his 100th birthday. Honouring pensioners and valuing them for their contribution to our society is something that the UK does very well with words, but perhaps less so with actions, and that is particularly the case when it comes to pensions. It is an inescapable fact that the United Kingdom has one of the worst state pensions in Europe, which shows just how much the British Government value older people who have worked their entire lives, paid their taxes, and now find themselves struggling to get by on the relatively low state pension, compared with their peers on the European continent.

As the right hon. Member for North Thanet (Sir Roger Gale) outlined, the situation is even worse for pensioners who have moved abroad. Older people who have chosen to join family members overseas have found that their pension has been frozen at the same rate as it was when they first became entitled to it, or indeed the date on which they left the UK and were already in receipt. The reason I spoke about Captain Sir Tom Moore is that frozen pensions particularly adversely impact veterans who live overseas.

Bernard Jackson exemplifies the injustice of Britain’s frozen pensions. Bernard fought in world war two and participated in the D-day landings as a wireless operator in the Royal Air Force. He moved to Canada with his wife, to their dream home. Sadly, after his wife died, Bernard was forced to return to the UK because he could not live on his frozen UK state pension of just £48 per week. He served his country in its darkest hours yet he was forgotten by the UK Government, with that neglect forcing him to leave his dream home. After his return to the UK he continued to campaign against the injustice of frozen pensions, to ensure that nobody else would suffer as he did. Sadly, he passed away in March 2020.

[David Linden]

For those of us who have been following the injustice of frozen pensions there has been an encouraging proposal from the Government of Canada to implement a reciprocal agreement and end the injustice of frozen pensions for the 150,000 UK pensioners who live there. I would argue that it is now incumbent upon the British Government to open negotiations with Canada and rectify that moral injustice, because failure to do so, leaving UK nationals abroad in poverty, would send an awful signal for what is now meant to be global Britain.

It is not just overseas pensioners who face injustice when it comes to UK pensions policy. Women here at home continue to be impacted by the changes to the state pension age. Like other parties, we in the SNP support the principle of equalisation of the state pension age, but we have long had concerns about the way in which it has been done. The WASPI women have been left high and dry by a British Government who continue to adopt an ostrich policy when called upon to provide fair transitional arrangements. So we in the SNP will always call for the WASPI women to be supported, and remind Ministers that it is not too late to act on that.

One other area of pensions policy that I want to raise is that of pension credit take-up, particularly during the pandemic. It was incredibly disappointing that the Minister, when appearing before the Work and Pensions Committee last week, confirmed that the DWP had discontinued its take-up campaign, despite countless reassurances from the Government that it would continue. The Government talk a good game about trying to increase the take-up of pension credit, but talk alone is not enough, so I would ask the Minister in summing up to outline exactly what the Government's strategy is to increase take-up. Do they even have one, and if so, will the Minister publish it?

In summary, the uprating of the state pension in line with the triple lock is welcome, but the WASPI women, and pensioners living overseas, will not feel the benefit of that. As I said at the beginning of my remarks, the British Government are good at warm words for pensioners, but words alone will not keep our pensioners warm in their houses this winter.

3.58 pm

Stephen Timms (East Ham) (Lab): I wish to raise concerns specifically about the guaranteed minimum pension, which is the subject of the order. Concerns have been raised by the public with the Select Committee. The ombudsman investigated complaints from two people, and concluded that there had been maladministration in introducing the new state pension system in 2016 over its impact on people with a guaranteed minimum pension. The concern being raised in correspondence since is that the problem identified by the ombudsman still has not been properly addressed.

The ombudsman concluded:

“DWP was aware the pension changes could negatively affect people with long periods of contracting out who were due to reach State Pension Age shortly after the new State Pension was introduced...DWP failed to provide clear, accurate and complete information through its pension forecasts, impact assessments and other literature...despite being warned by both the National Audit Office and the Work and Pensions Select Committee that better communication was needed for those with long periods of contracting out...some individuals were not aware that they might need to consider seeking independent financial advice and might need to make alternative provision for their retirement.”

The concern is still being raised that those problems are not yet being properly addressed.

Last August, the permanent secretary at the DWP replied to a letter from the Committee on that subject. He confirmed that compensation of £500 and £750 had been paid to the two people who had raised the complaint with the ombudsman, as the ombudsman had recommended. I asked for an update on responding to being found guilty of maladministration. In response, the permanent secretary wrote that the ombudsman

“also recommended...that we invite others who believe they have suffered a similar injustice as the two individuals to come forward to have their cases considered.”

That was the ombudsman's recommendation. The permanent secretary wrote:

“We propose to respond...by publishing a factsheet on GOV.UK and I attach a draft. We are currently awaiting the”

ombudsman's “comments on this.”

The ombudsman will have to decide whether publishing a factsheet meets its recommendations—I must say that I have my doubts—but it certainly falls well short of what the Work and Pensions Committee previously called for. It said:

“Government should not rely on general awareness campaigns or happenstance in promoting that understanding. It should focus on identifying the individuals affected, assessing their potential losses, and communicating with them.”

The permanent secretary also wrote that, in addition, the ombudsman

“recommended that their reports into the matter were shared with the Select Committee and we have sent your office copies of these documents today.”

The report was finalised on 30 September 2019, and it was sent to the Committee on 28 August 2020, and that was only in response to my request for an update.

I also asked how much the Department knew of the negative impact of the policy on individuals and how it was communicated to Parliament. The permanent secretary wrote:

“As was clear from publication of the Government's White Paper in January 2013, it was an intrinsic feature of the new State Pension that the old regime of additional State Pension and contracting out, along with its various forms over the years, would be replaced by a new, simpler single-tier system. It was a fundamental feature of the changes that the withdrawal of additional State Pension meant also the withdrawal of GMP indexation.”

The ombudsman's report highlighted that the White Paper did not say that those who had reached state pension age and could no longer add qualifying years would lose out from the changes. The White Paper gave the impression that people would be able to offset the increase in national insurance contributions that they will pay over the rest of their working lives. It implied that people will offset losses through additional national insurance contributions.

The permanent secretary also wrote:

“A detailed account of the change was provided in a response to a”

parliamentary question

“on 6 January 2014 and is attached for reference”,

but that answer does not make it clear that some people would lose out. Even if someone affected had seen that answer, which is unlikely, it would not have helped them to understand the impact on their own pension.

The permanent secretary wrote:

“More generally, the policy, and how it was communicated, was examined by the Work and Pensions Select Committee in its investigation into Understanding the new State Pension in 2016. In addition, the NAO reported on the policy in the same year.”

However, both those events took place after the legislation had been passed, not before. Both concluded that the DWP provided insufficient information to people about potential negative impacts.

The ombudsman, I believe, is right that

“DWP should have acted on the feedback they received through the Work and Pensions Committee and NAO reports. By failing to do so, DWP were not open and accountable and failed to seek continuous improvement...this amounts to maladministration.”

The ombudsman found that the DWP had failed to make its external communications clear and that

“there were some individuals who might financially lose out over the long term from the transition of the second state pension to the new State Pension—specifically in relation to the ending of indexation in relation to the second state pension/Guaranteed Minimum Pension.”

It also concluded that there is an injustice to members of the public who were not aware of the possible negative impacts of the removal of the second state pension and its relationship with the GMP. Up to 2 million people have reached state pension age since 2016. DWP literature has not told them that the 2014 reform could harm them over time. The Department has not fully acknowledged the negative consequences to the pension reforms over the long term. Its literature reassures people that notional losses will be offset and that they will not lose out, but that will not be true for some. The ombudsman says:

“The DWP’s actions, therefore, may have provided false reassurance and reduced the incentive for these people to find out about their future pension situation. This is an injustice for those who wished to plan for the future and might have been negatively affected.”

In addition to compensating the individuals and communicating with the Committee, the ombudsman recommended:

“Within three months of this report, review and report back to us on the learning from this investigation, including action being taken to ensure that affected individuals receive appropriate communication from the DWP about their state pensions. In particular, the DWP should ensure that their literature clearly and appropriately references that some individuals, who have large GMPs and reach State Pension Age in the early years of the new State Pension, may be negatively affected by the changes. The DWP should advise individuals to check their circumstances, and should provide instructions for how to do this; Within three months of this report, review and report back about how other individuals who believe they have suffered an injustice as a result of the maladministration we have found can raise any concerns with the DWP and have them considered”.

Neither of those things has happened so far. It will soon be two years, let alone three months, since the ombudsman published that report. I have given the Minister notice of this question. Can he explain to us how the Department now plans to fulfil its obligations?

There is no doubt that the Department’s claims about the state pension reforms were misleading. They misled members of the public, potentially seriously, and denied them the opportunity to act to safeguard their position. Can the Minister assure us that the Department has learnt its lessons and that similar mistakes, covering up damaging impacts of its policies on some claimants, will not be repeated in the future?

4.7 pm

Wendy Chamberlain (North East Fife) (LD): As the Minister set out, this is a technical piece of legislation that has to be approved every year, and ensures that those who accrued pensions from contracted-out defined benefit schemes between 1988 and 1997 will receive increases in line with inflation. This will provide a positive impact to those people for whom that applies. I thank the right hon. Member for East Ham (Stephen Timms), Chair of the Select Committee, for raising his concerns. I entirely agree that it is incumbent on the Government proactively to reach out to those who may have missed out on moneys due to error or omission on the part of the Government or the Department.

There may now be fewer defined benefit schemes than there were 30 years ago, but many will not reach maturity for decades to come. That will also be the case for many of the people on DB schemes between 1988 and 1997, who will have many years left to work. We have recently spent time deliberating the importance of defined benefit schemes during the passage of the Pension Schemes Bill. I was pleased to see the Minister in the Lords provide reassurances on the Government’s plans for defined benefit schemes. The next steps lie with the regulator—after the Queen grants Royal Assent to the Bill, of course. Therefore, like the shadow Minister, I would be grateful if the Minister updated the House on what discussions have taken place with the regulator regarding defined benefit schemes and what timescales he estimates for the measures in the Bill, such as collective defined contribution schemes, to come into force.

4.9 pm

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP) [V]: I welcomed in March 2016 the Government’s announcement that those reaching state pension age between 6 April 2016 and 6 December 2018 would receive a fully indexed public service pension for life. I further welcomed the Government extending those arrangements in January 2018 to those reaching state pension age by April 2021. The Government are currently consulting on a further extension of the full indexation policy, and I look forward to seeing the outcome of that, especially in the light of the McCloud judgment.

The right hon. Member for North Thanet (Sir Roger Gale) and the hon. Member for Glasgow East (David Linden) referred to frozen pensions. As the Minister will be aware, the 2020 report by the all-party parliamentary group on frozen British pensions revealed that the Australian and Canadian Governments have been calling on the UK to end this policy for many years. Since then, the Canadian Government have formally requested a reciprocal social security agreement covering the uprating of pensions with the UK. Some would refer to this as an immoral frozen pension policy. For the 150,000 UK pensioners affected who live in Canada, the impacts of this policy can be devastating. Since Canada pays Canadian pensioners residing in the UK their full pension, the agreement would simply provide UK pensioners in Canada with the same rights as their counterparts in the UK.

Other Members have referred to this, and I feel that it is important to put it on the record. One such pensioner is 96-year-old world war two veteran Anne Puckridge, who served in all three armed forces but receives a meagre £72.50 a week of the £134.25 a week state pension she is owed, all because she moved to Canada

[*Jim Shannon*]

at 76 to be closer to her family. Peggy Buchanan, who served the UK at Bletchley Park, where she helped to break the German Enigma codes, is also denied her full UK pension because she now lives in Canada. As the right hon. Member for North Thanet said, had Peggy's family settled 2 miles further south in the USA, her pension would not be frozen.

The unjust frozen pension policy that denies half a million UK pensioners who paid into the system their full UK state pension is a national shame that has been allowed to continue by successive Governments for decades. It is not right that UK pensioners are punished with a frozen pension for moving to Canada, often to be close to family or due to health reasons. I am always mindful of the close ties between these countries. As someone who, at the young age of 18, emigrated to Canada and then returned again, I know of the close cultural, historical and social ties that the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has with Canada.

The recent inquiry by the all-party parliamentary group on frozen British pensions found that one in two frozen pensioners receive a UK pension of £65 per week or less. Many veterans and former public servants who have given so much to this country are now struggling on a frozen pension. The Government of Canada have now presented an opportunity to rectify a moral injustice that sees thousands of UK pensioners in Canada denied the full UK state pension that they paid into. I believe that every UK state pensioner should receive a full uprated UK state pension, regardless of where they live.

I wish to clarify that this legislation will enable us to continue to do right by those who have worked hard all their lives in the expectation that they will be treated fairly and will not be a stopgap to simply put off doing the right thing for another four years. It has to be remembered that every year we put off doing the right thing is a year in which many die without receiving what they have been entitled to. Surely we must bring forward legislation to address this in a more comprehensive way, and I look forward to that happening soon, now that the consultation has ended. I look forward to the Minister's response, as I believe that many issues still need to be sorted.

4.14 pm

Guy Opperman [V]: I would like to thank all colleagues for their contributions. This is a debate on the Guaranteed Minimum Pensions Increase Order 2021, and there was limited discussion of that, but there was widespread discussion of many other aspects of pensions legislation, some of which related to the previous debate.

The shadow spokesman, the hon. Member for Reading East (Matt Rodda), raised many particular policies that he wishes to campaign on, and I welcome those efforts. He will discover that many of the policies that he raised were issues that were debated, discussed and in fact legislated on by the Labour Government of 1997 to 2010. Indeed, the Chair of the Work and Pensions Committee, the right hon. Member for East Ham (Stephen Timms), was the Pensions Minister in, I believe, 2008 and held my job in a previous Labour Government.

The shadow Minister raised a number of issues in respect of DB support, climate change and pension scams. Clauses 123, 124 and 125 of the Pension Schemes Bill take forward those three issues. We have set out,

both in the White Paper and in the legislation, the extensive work that we are doing to support DB on an ongoing basis, and I have worked extensively over the last three to four months with many of the proponents of open DB schemes and many of the organisations that wish to continue the support. We have also worked very hard with the Pensions Regulator, and that work continues on an ongoing basis.

The shadow Minister is right to raise climate change as a vital issue. We believe that we have made pensions safer, better and greener. The clause 124 regulations will be forthcoming. Indeed, we have already brought forward the response to the consultation in respect of the taskforce on climate-related financial disclosures, which makes us the world's first country to legislate for TCFD in respect of climate change and pensions.

Finally, on pension scams, clearly the shadow Minister is aware of the extensive discussion and debate that we had before the Work and Pensions Committee last week, and the extensive work that we have done to address the pension transfer problem, which is the key area that the DWP can address. I believe that we will be able to legislate and regulate, and have the power this autumn to ensure that those transfers are stopped, as I set out in much greater detail at the Work and Pensions Committee.

My right hon. Friend the Member for North Thanet (Sir Roger Gale) raised an issue both in the previous debate and in this debate in respect of overseas pensions. He will know that, sadly, the policy on uprating of UK state pensions paid overseas has been the policy of successive Governments of different political persuasions for over 70 years, since world war two. I do not have good news to tell him, I am afraid. There is no intention that I am aware of for this Government to change that policy.

The hon. Member for Glasgow East (David Linden) made his first contribution as shadow Minister and I, again, welcome him to his place. I look forward to visiting Scotland, when the pandemic allows, to campaign at length leading up to May. In respect of the key issue that he raised, I gave extensive evidence to the Work and Pensions Committee a week or so ago on pension credit. There is much that we are trying to do to progress that, whether in the form of Government communications or our work with the BBC. The fact of the matter is that pension credit is a benefit introduced by the Labour Government that has never achieved more than 70% of take-up. All Governments, including this Government and myself, want greater take-up of pension credit, and we are definitely doing everything possible to try to increase it.

The Chair of the Work and Pensions Committee addressed in detail a particular point on the Guaranteed Minimum Pensions Increase Order and the history of that legislation. He addressed the ombudsman's findings relating to two individuals. Concerns have been raised regarding the way that the permanent secretary has dealt with correspondence to the Work and Pensions Committee and/or the ombudsman. I was not aware of that issue until yesterday. Clearly it is for the permanent secretary to respond. On the quality of the original policy formulated from January 2013 by Steve Webb, the Liberal Democrat Pensions Minister, I cannot comment at this stage, but I reject any criticism of a policy that was clearly scrutinised and legislated for by both Houses before it was implemented.

The hon. Member for North East Fife (Wendy Chamberlain) raised open DB. I assure her that we continue to work extensively with the Pensions Regulator on those issues. Although I welcome the comments of the hon. Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon), I do not think that I can amplify any of the other matters thus far. With those comments, I commend the draft order to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That the draft Guaranteed Minimum Pensions Increase Order 2021, which was laid before this House on 18 January, be approved.

Anthony Mangnall (Totnes) (Con): On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. Yesterday, in the urgent question to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on shellfish, I forgot to make reference to my entry in the Register of Members' Financial Interests, so I am now putting that on the record.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): I thank the hon. Gentleman for giving notice of his point of order and for putting the matter on the record at the earliest opportunity. I think we will leave that there.

I will now suspend the sitting in order for Members to safely leave and others to come into the Chamber.

4.20 pm

Sitting suspended.

4.22 pm

On resuming—

Mr Deputy Speaker: Exceptionally—I think this may be the first time, therefore very exceptionally—we are going to have a technical suspension for 10 minutes. Everybody please be here no later than 4.33 pm.

4.23 pm

Sitting suspended.

Trade Bill

Consideration of Lords message

After Clause 2

PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS AND TREATIES

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): We now come to the message from the House of Lords on the Trade Bill, which is to be considered in accordance with the order of 19 January. We begin with the Government motion to disagree with the Lords in their amendment 1B, with which it will be convenient to consider the other Government motions and amendments on the notice paper.

Anthony Mangnall (Totnes) (Con): On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. Is it in order for the Government to group the amendments in such a way as to deny Members votes on specific amendments?

Mr Deputy Speaker: As I said in my introduction, all of this is being done under the provisions of the programme motion agreed by the House on 19 January. The questions to be put at that time are governed by Standing Order No. 83G, which does not allow for questions to be put on motions or amendments moved other than by Ministers. It is therefore not possible to have a Division on certain amendments that have been tabled, but I can assure the hon. Member that everything is in order.

4.34 pm

The Minister for Trade Policy (Greg Hands): I beg to move, That this House disagrees with Lords amendment 1B.

Mr Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider the following:

Lords amendments 2B and 3B, Government motion to disagree, and Government amendments (a) and (b) in lieu.

Amendment (i) to Government amendments (a) and (b) in lieu.

Lords amendment 6B, Government motion to disagree, and Government amendments (a) to (c) in lieu.

Greg Hands: We move ever closer to getting the Trade Bill on to the statute books. I recognise that we are very limited in our time for debate, so I will get straight into the details. I will deal with parliamentary scrutiny, followed by standards, followed by human rights and genocide.

I begin with Lords amendment 1B, on parliamentary scrutiny. Parliament of course plays a vital role in scrutinising our trade policy. We currently have robust scrutiny arrangements that allow Parliament to hold the Government to account. The Government have provided extensive information to Parliament on our free trade negotiations, including publishing our objectives, which are also shared with the devolved Administrations, economic scoping assessments and the Government's response to the public consultation prior to the start of each set of talks. We have also shared the text of each deal with the relevant Committees in advance of their being laid before Parliament under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010. The Committees then have the option to produce independent reports on

[*Greg Hands*]

each agreement. Furthermore, if Parliament is not content with a free trade agreement that has been negotiated, it has powers under CRaG to prevent ratification by resolving against ratification indefinitely, acting as an effective veto.

Mr Jonathan Djanogly (Huntingdon) (Con): My right hon. Friend says that Parliament can indefinitely delay ratification. That is, in practice, almost impossible under existing procedures, would he not agree?

Greg Hands: No, I do not agree. I think the previous Labour Government designed the CRaG process specifically with that in mind—that Parliament would have an effective veto on a trade agreement through the CRaG process by continuing to resolve against ratification indefinitely. That is my understanding of what an effective veto would look like.

In respect of facilitating debate on free trade agreements as part of CRaG, the Government have clearly stated that we will work to facilitate requests, including those from the relevant Select Committees, for debate on the agreement, subject to available parliamentary time. The Government have a good record on this. Debate took place last year on the Japan free trade agreement, alongside six other debates on continuity agreements.

I will address the amendment tabled by the Government in response to Lords amendment 6B, on standards. Although we are in agreement that our continuity deal programme has not reduced standards, I fully understand the House's desire to ensure that standards are safeguarded. The Government therefore tabled an amendment that will provide a cast-iron statutory guarantee that the trade agreement implementing power in the Trade Bill will not be used to dilute standards. This amendment guarantees that the clause 2 power cannot be used to implement any continuity trade agreement if that agreement is not consistent with existing statutory protections in the areas of human, animal or plant health, animal welfare, environmental standards, employment and labour rights, data protection and the protection of children and vulnerable adults online.

The amendment also provides that clause 2 implementing legislation must be consistent with maintaining UK publicly funded clinical healthcare services. In other words, we are living up to our promises that trade will not lead to a lowering of standards and that the UK's protection in these areas will continue to lead the pack. I hope that all sides can now unite around this amendment, safe in the knowledge that we are not lowering standards through the back door. I thank hon. Members for their engagement on this issue and encourage all colleagues to join me in voting in favour of the Government amendment.

I now turn to Lords amendments 2B and 3B, on human rights and genocide. With regard to Lords amendment 2B, on human rights, parliamentary Committees have the ability to produce reports on any agreement that the UK negotiates with a partner country.

Sir Edward Leigh (Gainsborough) (Con): I do not know whether the Minister heard my saying in the last debate that I am worried about the courts dealing with this in the absence of a defendant. However, I also

expressed my worry about vexatious motions against our allies—Israel, Turkey, Saudi Arabia. How can the Minister assure me that there will not be a series of vexatious motions coming to this parliamentary Committee? Can we ensure that the Committee's terms of reference are tightly drawn, so that it can actually deal with clear cases of genocide?

Greg Hands: At the moment, I am speaking about human rights—I am coming on to genocide in a moment—but I totally appreciate my right hon. Friend's question. It would not be proper for me as a Government Minister to seek to dictate how a Select Committee might approach its business; I think we have to have a level of trust in our Select Committees to approach this question sensibly and logically.

Sir Iain Duncan Smith (Chingford and Woodford Green) (Con): The answer to this question is very simple. Ministers cannot direct Select Committees. Select Committees will go where they think it is necessary. So with this amendment, Select Committees will feel completely free to look at anything, regardless of what the Government say that the bar is on that. That is the answer to this question.

Greg Hands: I thank my right hon. Friend, but there is a crucial difference here. Yes, the Select Committee runs itself. It can make calls for evidence and produce a report, and we would expect it to report quite quickly if there were credible reports of genocide, so the Select Committee writes the motion, but there is still the protection that the matter then goes to a vote of the whole House. I find it hard to conceive that a vote of the whole House in which the Government had a majority would determine something along the lines suggested by my right hon. Friend the Member for Gainsborough (Sir Edward Leigh) or my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Sir Iain Duncan Smith). I find that hard to conceive. I think we should have more trust in our Select Committees.

Going back to human rights, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office already publishes an annual human rights and democracy report, so there is no need for Lords amendment 2B

Turning to Lords amendment 3B on genocide and the amendment tabled by my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford and Woodford Green, it is the Government's firm view that expanding the role of the UK courts in the manner envisaged is inappropriate and would carry harmful unintended consequences. First, it would be unlikely to work. Genocide is notoriously hard to prove, with a higher legal threshold. If a judge were unable to make a preliminary determination on genocide, which is highly probable, it would be a huge propaganda win for the country in question, effectively allowing that state to claim that it had been cleared by the UK courts.

Ms Nusrat Ghani (Wealden) (Con): Will the Minister give way?

Greg Hands: I will take perhaps a final intervention from my hon. Friend.

Ms Ghani: I find it hard to believe that, if a country was investigated for genocide, that could in any way be seen as a propaganda event. It is not for us to determine

how that decision is taken. The Government repeatedly say that that is for the courts, so we should allow the courts to come to a determination on the basis of evidence. We should never believe that people will not put a case forward to the courts because it might fail. That is just nonsense.

Greg Hands: I have to say that I disagree with my hon. Friend. I also think that the proposal made in the amendment tabled by the Chairman of the Justice Committee, my hon. Friend the Member for Bromley and Chislehurst (Sir Robert Neill), is a superior process, which I am going to outline. So I disagree with her point, if I may respectfully say that.

As I was saying, if a judge were unable to make a preliminary determination on genocide, it would be a huge propaganda win for the country in question, effectively allowing that state to claim that it had been cleared by a UK court. That would be an awful result, and I encourage the House to think strongly about the implications of that before supporting this amendment. Rather than helping persecuted people, we would be setting their cause back. Further, any determination would be subject to appeal, which would create a more drawn-out process than that envisaged by the amendment.

Sir Iain Duncan Smith: Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Greg Hands: I am not going to give way, because I am conscious of the fact that I have already been speaking for nine minutes and I have given way four times.

Secondly, the amendment raises serious constitutional issues and blurs the separation of powers. Inserting the courts into a decision-making process that is rightly a matter for the Government and for Parliament would disrupt the delicate constitutional balance we have in this country between the Executive, Parliament and our independent judiciary. As outlined in an article for PoliticsHome last week by the Chair of the Justice Committee, my hon. Friend the Member for Bromley and Chislehurst, it is the role of Government to formulate trade policy and conclude international treaties, including trade deals. Parliament already has a critical role in this under the terms of CRAg, which enables it to scrutinise treaties prior to ratification and effectively block them if it chooses. Fundamentally, it is right and proper that Parliament takes a position on credible reports of genocide relating to proposed free trade agreements rather than, in effect, subcontracting responsibility to the courts to tell us what to think.

4.45 pm

We absolutely agree with the Lords and with my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford and Woodford Green that there should be a debate in Parliament on the issue of genocide relating to bilateral free trade agreements. Such a process is precisely what Lords amendment 3B envisages. However, the Government firmly believe that it is for Parliament, not the courts, to determine what Parliament debates. That is why the Government support the approach set out in the amendment tabled by the Chair of the Justice Committee and signed by the Secretary of State. It proposes that if a relevant Select Committee publishes a report stating that there exist credible reports of genocide occurring in the territory of a state with which we propose a bilateral

FTA, the Government have a duty to act. First, we will respond in writing, setting out the Government position. If the Committee is dissatisfied with that, the Government will then make time for a debate and vote in the House of Commons on a substantive motion.

Tim Loughton (East Worthing and Shoreham) (Con): Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Greg Hands: I am going to make more progress—sorry, I will not give way further.

The wording of that substantive motion will be provided by the Committee. A similar process would ensue in the other place to take note of the report. The process that I have outlined would be triggered in each case by the publication of the Select Committee report.

Ms Ghani: Will my right hon. Friend take a short intervention?

Greg Hands: I am not going to take further interventions—there is only an hour for this debate.

It is up to Committees how they report, but such a report could come about in response to evidence produced by their own inquiries or to a finding of genocide by a competent criminal court, whether international or domestic. Such an approach rightly puts Parliament, not the courts, in the driving seat on this issue, which is who generates a debate in Parliament. Our policy on the legal determination of genocide has not changed. It has long been the Government's position that genocide determination is a matter for the relevant court, which includes international courts and domestic criminal courts. However, whether to have a debate in Parliament should be a matter for Parliament.

I hope the House agrees that the amendment tabled by the Chair of the Justice Committee is a reasonable middle ground: it delivers the result envisaged by the Lords amendment—that is, to have a parliamentary debate—and the amendment tabled by my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford and Woodford Green, but it does so through Parliament, not the courts. It allows Parliament to act quickly and decisively on the issue of genocide and, crucially, places a specific duty on the Government to act on the Committee's concerns. It does so without upsetting the delicate separation of powers and without judicial encroachment. It ensures that Parliament has a clear role and that the Government have a clear duty when credible reports of genocide are raised with regard to a proposed bilateral FTA partner. I hope that Members from all parties will come together in support of the amendment tabled by the Chair of the Justice Committee.

Emily Thornberry (Islington South and Finsbury) (Lab): At the outset, I thank the hon. Members for Wealden (Ms Ghani) and for Huntingdon (Mr Djanogly), the right hon. Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Sir Iain Duncan Smith) and the many others from all parties who, like our colleagues in the other place, who have worked with great persistence, and always in good faith, to achieve the right outcomes today.

Do you know what, Mr Deputy Speaker? It was 52 years ago this week that the House of Commons debated the introduction of Britain's very first Genocide Act, which made genocide a distinct offence in our country and gave our courts the power to determine

[Emily Thornberry]

when it had been committed. When one looks back at that debate, it really strikes one that, were it not for some recognisable names, one would not know which MPs were Labour, Conservatives or Liberal, such was the unity in the House on the issue. Such obvious pride was taken by all Members in being part of a decision, taken by the British Parliament and led by the British Government, that would resonate around the world.

I fear that today, the atmosphere and outcome of our debate may be very different. Any future generations who choose to look back will ask themselves why on earth the Government of the day were playing procedural parliamentary games on an issue as serious and momentous as the genocidal crimes being committed against the Uyghurs in China. Rather than dwell on the shameful, shabby, shifty behaviour of the Government Whips in seeking to prevent a straight vote on the genocide amendment, let me instead address the key point of substance in the amendment that the Government have put forward to wreck it.

In the space of the last three weeks, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the Trade Secretary have all stated on the record that the courts can determine what is and what is not genocide. The hon. Member for Bromley and Chislehurst (Sir Robert Neill) himself, the Chair of the Justice Committee, wrote an article, which has already been quoted. Let me quote another bit of it, in which he said:

“Successive governments have said that the attribution of genocide is a matter for judicial determination.”

Yet he and the Government are now proposing an amendment that would remove the courts from that process entirely and hand the responsibility instead to the Select Committees, which have already said publicly that they do not have the capacity to make such judgments. In other words, the Government wish to take a strong, substantive and historic new process for attributing genocide through the courts and acting on those rulings through our Parliament, and replace all of that with a weak, flawed and, frankly, entirely forgettable adjustment to the existing powers of Select Committees, and that is not good enough. I hope that Members on all sides will reject what I am afraid has to be said is a shameful wrecking effort, and vote instead for the original amendments 2B and 3B.

The Government’s other wrecking amendment today, on non-regression of standards, is equally flawed and equally contemptuous of Parliament’s will. It has been, I am afraid, very deliberately drafted to apply only to the continuity trade agreements already signed by the Government over the past two years, not to the trade agreements that the Government are negotiating with the likes of America and Australia today. In other words, the amendment would act retrospectively to prevent our standards for food safety, animal welfare, NHS data and online harms being undermined by the deals we signed two years ago.

Anthony Mangnall: Will the right hon. Lady give way?

Emily Thornberry: I am not going to take any interventions, because my view is that we have so little time, I think it is only fair just to continue. [Interruption.] I have made it clear that I am not going to take any interventions.

The amendment the Government have tabled is one whereby we are just talking about continuity agreements, not about agreements to come. Those deals are deals such as the ones we signed two years ago with Lesotho or with Liechtenstein, and this will have no bearing whatever on any trade deal that we negotiate in the next two years with Washington or Canberra. That is the level of contempt with which the Government Whips are treating the House of Commons today. So again, I would urge Members on all sides to reject this ridiculous wrecking effort, and vote instead for amendment 6B.

In closing, I think we can all do something today even more powerful than rejecting those wrecking amendments and standing up to the shameful tactics employed by the Government Whips. We can draw the only logical conclusion from today’s events—namely, that if we do not act to guarantee the rights of Parliament to scrutinise and approve the Government’s decisions on trade, then we leave ourselves entirely at the mercy of the Government Whips, who have shown today that they will stop at nothing to deny us a voice and deny us a vote.

We have it in our power today, by backing Lord Lansley’s amendment 1B, to guarantee Parliament a vote on all future trade deals and take responsibility in this House for ensuring that our standards and our values are not undermined by the deals that we do abroad. It is a very simple idea, and in the absence of a straight vote on what I would call the Alton amendment, passing the Lansley amendment would be the very best safety net that we could put in place to prevent the agreement of trade deals with countries that commit genocide and the very best rejoinder that we could provide to anyone who would seek to suppress the will of this Parliament. If we can achieve that outcome, we can turn this from a day of shameful, shabby, shifty tactics to a day of pride for our democracy and a day of promise for the Uyghurs.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): There is a three-minute limit on all Back-Bench contributions from now.

Sir Iain Duncan Smith: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. That is a very short time, so I will do my level best to get my three points across.

I just want to say something about the procedure today. Of course, we would not be sitting here if it was not in order for these proceedings, but there are different ways to be in order, and the reality of bundling together all these things into one motion—an amendment tabled by the Government—means that of course there is no way we will get to vote on the Lords amendment on genocide. I simply point out that fact. It reminds me that this little dispute is a little bit like the Handforth parish council one, and it is always a good idea to read the Standing Orders. I have read them, and they tell me what has happened: the Government have deliberately blocked this. I am sorry, but that is what this is. No point of order on that one; that is the reality. I simply say to my hon. Friends that I have been here long enough, and this is beneath them. I wish they had thought again, and I hope they do not try this one again.

I respect my right hon. Friend the Minister for Trade Policy enormously, as he knows, but I must pick up on a few points that he made, as I did table an amendment. First, he extols the virtues of the Government amendment and attacks the idea that the courts could make the judgment, as that would impinge on our position as

a Parliament. Yet literally yesterday, in answer to a parliamentary question about whether genocide was a matter for the courts, the Foreign Office said:

“It is the policy of the UK Government that any judgment on whether genocide has occurred is a matter for competent courts rather than Governments or other non-judicial bodies.”

I ask my right hon. Friend: what is a Select Committee? Is it a judicial or a non-judicial body? If it is a non-judicial body, the Government amendment puts the power in the hands of a non-judicial body. What are we doing? We are running in circles just to avoid the reality.

My point is that we have been a little insulting about judges in the amendment that my right hon. Friend is talking about. I have my own differences with judges, but I remind the House that when we need an impartial taking of evidence and judgment—Savile, Grenfell, Hillsborough or any of the other cases—we turn not to Select Committees but to a judge. Why do we do that? First, because we assume that they are impartial and secondly, because they are trained to take and deal with evidence. We are not; we are partial—that is why we are here. We have Select Committees and we have prejudices, and that is the point.

Tim Loughton: Why does my right hon. Friend think that the Minister claims that a Select Committee, which already has the power to investigate all sorts of things in this House, is in some way superior to a judicial determination by a court? Only this week, Sir Geoffrey Nice, a distinguished QC who prosecuted Milošević, said that under the International Criminal Court Act 2001, UK courts are competent to prosecute the offence of genocide. The provision is there—we should surely be using it, not dismissing it.

Sir Iain Duncan Smith: That is why, I say gently to my right hon. Friend the Minister, in my amendment I deliberately locked in the idea that if the Government want to sift this by looking at Select Committees first, that is fine, but I think they should have the power to refer it to a court if the evidence is overwhelming and they want that final impartial judgment. However, he did not mention that at all.

I come back to amendment 3B. We bent over backwards to answer every single question that the Government laid on the last time we debated this. Under the amendment, the courts cannot strike down trade deals anymore. The Government set the terms of the referral and the level of evidence required to pass the barrier. All that is handed back to Ministers. All the court will do is decide on genocide, and then it is up to Ministers and Parliament to decide what to do. We do not even tell Ministers in this amendment that they should do anything other than at some point come back and ask Parliament. That seems completely reasonable and puts the power in the hands of Parliament.

We have a very limited amount of time, and I am very sad today that the Government have chosen not to allow us to vote on the amendment. I am not voting on my amendment either. I oppose the Government's amendment because, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Gainsborough (Sir Edward Leigh) suggested, I think it will lead to much more vexatious complaint and all sorts of human rights stuff piling through.

Today should have been a chance to stand tall—to send a signal to those without hope all over the world, whether the Uyghurs or the Rohingya. Instead of providing a beacon of light and hope, we have today gone into the dark corridors of procedural purdah. We need to emerge.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): Order.

Drew Hendry (Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey) (SNP) [V]: Lords amendment 1B covers one of the most glaring omissions from the Bill and it simply serves to underline the ideologically driven and confusing motives of the Government, who have already dealt so much damage to people, families and businesses right across Scotland and the other nations of the UK—and for what? It is supposedly for undiluted parliamentary sovereignty, yet the Government have not seen fit to give Parliament a role in setting the agenda on trade negotiations. That is extraordinary. It is damning of this Government, given the scrutiny arrangements that other Parliaments have around the world, including the EU's, where they have control over both mandates and the progress of negotiations. The UK has now sunk to the bottom, relative to what is undertaken elsewhere.

5 pm

Parliamentary scrutiny in the UK being thrown overboard brings me to the now treacherous waters of the so-called “sea of opportunity”. The Tories tell us that it is on the horizon, yet with every self-harming action they embark on it gets further away. Now it is on the other side of the planet as the UK splashes about trying to grab any bit of flotsam and jetsam to plug the hole in their waterline caused by their own Brexit torpedoes. The Government have formally begun the process of accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, and that is fair enough. We in the Scottish National party have always been clear that we support free trade. Indeed, it is exactly why we want Scotland to rejoin the EU, which, the Minister may recall is the world's largest single market. It is the one that has a larger international free trade network than any other bloc. Pursuing free trade agreements has to be supported, but the CPTPP has deep and extensive burdens, some of which our citizens should be very wary of.

The investor-state dispute settlement clauses threaten the independence of the national health service and, once again, key sectors such as agriculture need to be concerned about competition. The National Farmers Union has argued for a straightforward, transparent and explicit process requiring parliamentary agreement of trade deals prior to ratification, and it is wise to do so, having experienced the shambles and subsequent harm caused by the botched Brexit trade agreement. The NFU supports the Lords amendment, saying that it avoids creating an environment where previous frustrations with the impositions of laws and regulations by faceless bureaucrats are simply replaced in the eyes of farmers by those of faceless negotiators, undermining trust in and support for our independent trade policy. As a further example, the Government's own estimates for UK GDP growth from a free trade agreement with New Zealand actually predict a fall, albeit a small one. We do not pass verdicts on negotiations being undertaken with any of these partners in principle, but it is absolutely necessary, given what is at stake, that Parliament does not simply find itself with a “take it or leave it” decision when trade agreements come back to the House.

This Tory Government have failed time and time again, despite the many opportunities to do this, to put protections for the NHS into trade agreements as a statutory requirement. Consequently, it has no protection. Let us think about that, at this time when so many have

had cause to depend on the NHS, and its doctors, nurses and staff. The reason for people to be grateful that they are there is bigger than ever before, yet this Tory Government are not even prepared to give that commitment. As this is being kept on the table, people have a right to ask why. It is impossible not to conclude that the sole reason is to use it as a bargaining point. Donald Trump may be gone, but his Tory partners are still here and still refusing to protect the NHS. Trump previously let the cat out of the bag when he said quite clearly that the

“NHS on the table in US-UK trade deal”.

So the Government fail to give peace of mind to those who are worried about their future and the future of our NHS, to those who work in it and to those who need it. Those concerned will see this Government approach negotiations and will have almost complete uncertainty about the Government’s intent, red lines or objectives, but there is an alternative and it is not too late to prove that wrong. Let us see this Lords amendment carried, as it would give that surety that the NHS is at least subject to Parliament’s decisions. Without this safeguard or any of the others that the Government have voted down, the NHS will always be on the menu. Given the monumental effects on society and the communities we serve, modern democracies should always have full scrutiny of trade agreements, from the scope of the negotiating mandate right through to the implementation. Without this Lords amendment, the CRaG provisions amount to little more than a “take it or leave it” choice to the House. That is and always should be absolutely unacceptable.

Lords amendment 3B deals with genocide and is a welcome step towards a wider discussion of how the UK seeks to act pre-emptively in preventing atrocities around the world. With respect to the effect of this amendment, the Government will claim that the amendment is, in some way, problematic—they have given their response on that already—but in that case people have the right to expect them to come forward with their own proposals for dealing with this. Instead, what we see today is that they have tried to gerrymander the votes on this to avoid further scrutiny. They really are a disgrace. Why not take the opportunity to ensure that our trade policy is always compliant with our moral and legal responsibilities under international law, and that deeply held values and convictions can always be brought to bear on public policy through ensuring that the resources and power of Government are always pulling in the same direction? It can only be that they are determined to keep the door open for regimes with immoral human rights records.

The SNP backed measures to outlaw such deals last month and we will support these efforts again notwithstanding the simple fact that, even here, there should be much greater ambition on the Lords amendment. The principle, however, of revoking a trade deal with a state committing such heinous crimes is beyond reproach and I commend it to those on the Government Benches who, I know, are carefully considering this amendment.

It is clear that, in continuing to ignore the needs of the people of Scotland, this Government are simply proving the point that, as each day follows another, the only way to make sure that Scotland’s families, workers, businesses and communities will get the protection and the global outlook they want and deserve is through Scotland becoming an independent country and taking these decisions for themselves.

Sir Robert Neill (Bromley and Chislehurst) (Con): I yield to no one in my detestation of genocide and I yield to no one in my admiration for the domestic courts of the United Kingdom. Despite the good intentions of Lords amendment 3B, it has to be faced that it has a fundamental flaw, in that it brings the domestic courts of the United Kingdom into areas where, constitutionally, they have never sought to go.

When we refer to the competent courts in relation to genocide, it is abundantly clear from the convention and subsequent legislation that we refer to the international courts and, in certain circumstances, the criminal courts of the United Kingdom in relation to individuals who are within their jurisdiction. That is wholly different from what is proposed in Lords amendment 3B, which brings the civil courts of the United Kingdom into a wholly novel area of jurisprudence, linked only to one specific issue, which is genocide in contemplation of a trade deal, not more generally.

The decisions on trade deals are constitutionally entirely matters for Parliament. That is why, despite the best endeavours and intentions of the amendment, I cannot support it and why I brought forward the amendment in lieu in my name, supported by three former Law Officers of the Crown. This would enable Parliament to express a clear view and would, inevitably, in real political terms, enable it to block a trade agreement with a genocidal state, because no Government could ignore that, but it would do so at the end of a parliamentary process. This would then give the appropriate Select Committee greater powers than Select Committees otherwise have, because they will be entitled not only to demand as a matter of law that the Government table the motion that they require if they are dissatisfied with the Government’s response, but to write the wording of the motion. This goes further than the powers that Select Committees have at the moment. That would be most important, as it would enable us to have a proper lock on the matter. We must not allow the courts to be dragged into an area where they have not themselves sought to go. We saw the wholly unfair and unjust criticism of our courts in cases such as the Miller litigation. To place them in this situation, where they will be obliged to step beyond what is the normal constitutional balance, would not be fair on them. They would not be in an easy position to come to a determination, as has been pointed out. Above all, it would inevitably be inviting them to trespass into areas that are highly politically contentious.

I want to have a means of scrutinising future trade deals. That is why I have much more sympathy for Lords amendment 1B than I have for Lords amendment 3B, because that would give a means of dealing with it. Lords amendment 3B is misconceived because of that misunderstanding in relation to what a competent court is and the need not to stretch that beyond our constitutional practices—

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): We will leave it there, Sir Robert.

Imran Hussain (Bradford East) (Lab) [V]: Genocide and grave human rights abuses are the most horrific and wicked crimes a state can commit, and those who perpetrate such crimes should be held accountable by this Government and the entire international community. Let me be absolutely clear: they are not internal issues, as Ministers often claim, but international issues. The Government should therefore be using the trade deals

they negotiate with other countries as a means of strengthening our human rights commitments, as I advocated during the passage of the Bill last year.

Yet despite so many Members from across the House agreeing that trade deals should at least uphold our human rights obligations, Ministers have shown that they believe otherwise, defeating by the slimmest of margins the amendments that would have prevented them from signing trade deals with genocidal states, and proposing today a counter-amendment that is a pale imitation of what we should be doing as a country. In acting this way, they risk further emboldening those who continue to commit serious crimes against humanity. We have, sadly, already seen where refusing to take strong action against the Burmese military for their genocide of the Rohingya, for example, leads.

The bottom line is that we should not be signing any trade deal with any state that is committing any crime against humanity. Turning a blind eye and doing business with the very regimes that torture, abuse and kill others will sign away any moral authority that we have to call ourselves defenders of human rights, to enforce sanctions against abusers, or to advocate for stronger protections. However, while the Government's previous vote against the amendments and the amendment they propose today are bitterly disappointing, they are sadly not surprising. On far too many occasions, I have urged them in Parliament to act against those committing human rights abuses and genocide, including in Kashmir. I have repeatedly called for action to protect Kashmiris from the persecution, oppression and injustice that they face on a daily basis at the hands of the Indian armed forces, only for Ministers to utter warm but meaningless and hollow words while the sons and daughters of Kashmir continue to suffer.

Trade is one of the few tools that we have left, in an interconnected, globalised world, to pursue a foreign policy based on protecting human rights. We must therefore take strong action in this Bill to show that we value human rights and that we will stand up for the many persecuted and oppressed peoples around the world.

Jeremy Wright (Kenilworth and Southam) (Con) [V]: Let me start with the amendments on genocide. The revised amendment 3B deals with some of the deficiencies of the original, but not, I am afraid, all. I still have the concerns that I have expressed previously about how the judicial process that it sets out will work in practice and about what a High Court judgment in such cases will really mean. I also think that the concerns that others have expressed about the effect of a finding that genocide has not taken place are well founded.

This may be strange thing for a former Attorney General to say, but I wonder whether we are getting too hung up on the judgments of courts. It is true, of course, that Governments have routinely relied on the courts to make a formal finding of genocide when guilt must be proven to a required legal standard, but we are discussing trade negotiations, not criminal convictions. In that context, if we have good evidence that genocide or anything like it is being committed by the country with which we are proposing to do a trade deal, we should retain the right not to do that deal with it, whether there is a formal judicial determination of the specific crime of genocide or not.

That is why I support the amendment in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Bromley and Chislehurst (Sir Robert Neill). Under that amendment, the trigger

for a parliamentary vote is not a court ruling, with all the difficulties and pitfalls that brings, but rather the much lower bar of credible reports of genocide. That means that, unlike under amendment 3B, we can decide to refuse a trade deal with a country we believe has engaged in genocide despite the absence of a court ruling that it has done so. That is, in effect, a higher standard of human rights protection than that proposed in the amendment from the other place.

The judgment of Parliament on potential trade deals is important, and it is important that our judgment is exercised at the appropriate time in the negotiating process. For me, that means that Parliament should have its say when a negotiating mandate is being drawn up, not solely when the deal is done. However, I have two problems with Lords amendment 1B, which provides for that.

5.15 pm

The first is the argument I have previously accepted that this Bill is not the place to determine how new and subsequent trade deals should be dealt with. However, the Government have done some of that themselves in their amendments in lieu of Lords amendment 6B and the read-across to future trade deals. By the way, I warmly welcome the content of those amendments, not least because they reward the determination of the noble Baroness Kidron and others in the other place in adding the protection of children and vulnerable adults online to the list of those areas where existing protections should be maintained.

My second concern is with the reference in Lords amendment 1B to the consent of devolved Administrations to trade deals developed in a reserved area of policy, as opposed to the full consultation that is clearly appropriate. Other than that, I support that amendment and would have voted for it this afternoon, and I hope that the Government will move in its direction.

Angus Brendan MacNeil (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP) [V]: It is good to have this debate, although I am afraid it is a bit too short, as I think most Members would accept.

When it comes to trade deals, Parliament really needs to debate beforehand. One of the things we know from the little interaction we have had with negotiators is that it is much better for them to know what Parliament is thinking; it strengthens their hand in negotiations to understand what they might get through Parliament at the end of the day. That is hugely important. It is also important for them to hear the concerns of 650 people who represent the geographical area that the trade deal will be a huge, integral part of and will affect. I would caution that what happened before Christmas, with the rush of the European trade deal, is a lesson that Parliament should think and not rush.

There is, of course, within any Executive—any Government—a feeling that they do not want scrutiny, they do not want to discuss, and they do not want to pause, reflect and think again, but for the good of everyone concerned, they should do that. Parliament treats itself as a sausage factory; it gets things done and through, and that is the end of it. However, at the end of the day, as the shellfish exporters, the poultry exporters and many others in the UK know, once Parliament has washed its hands of it and walked away, other people have to deal with the text at hand. They cannot deal with that text very well if it has not been thought about, reflected upon or given due scrutiny.

[Angus Brendan MacNeil]

In Parliament, we talk a lot about trade deals, but do we realise the GDP size we are talking about? That is something we can lay out beforehand. Leaving the European Union will cost the UK about 4.9% of GDP. The best of the upcoming trade deals that we are looking at will make only a fraction of that back—with New Zealand and Australia, probably about a fiftieth of it. Are people aware of that?

During the negotiations on the Japan trade deal, the International Trade Committee could not get access to the right level of negotiators. It was only at the end that we understood the pass we were sold on tariff rate quotas, where the UK accepted playing second fiddle to the European Union; after the European Union had dined with Japan, the UK could then perhaps go to the table for the crumbs. We were not aware of that at all during the negotiations. Parliament has to look a bit harder. We have to trust our Select Committees, improve access, and have debate beforehand and afterwards. As for the point that Parliament has much power with the CRAg process, frankly, that is just not true.

The best the Government could do at this stage would be to adopt Lord Lansley's amendment 1B. That would be a huge help from the point of view of the Select Committee and Parliament, and the Government should have the humility to do that.

Dr Liam Fox (North Somerset) (Con): I wish to make only three brief points. First, the House of Commons is the appropriate place to scrutinise the elected Government's independent trade policy. That is why I am against Lords amendment 1B, because it actually gives powers away from the House of Commons. The amendment requires the House of Lords to give its permission for the elected Government to even have discussions on our future trade policy. I cannot believe that the Labour party's position is to give the House of Lords a veto on what an elected Government in the House of Commons should or should not be able to do. I wonder sometimes whether this House is having some sort of collective democratic nervous breakdown, because it seems always to want to give its powers away to someone else.

As I said last time, I do not believe that the courts should have a say on the elected Government's trade policy, either—whether prospectively or retrospectively—or on what we debate in Parliament. When it comes to the issue of genocide, what matters is what we do about credible accusations of genocide. We should not be waiting for judicial confirmation through the Trade Bill. We can assess evidence, assess intelligence and listen to eyewitnesses ourselves. Frankly, if we want to take action in response to the Chinese Communist party's treatment of the Uyghur people, we should do so. We have given ourselves new powers. But the Trade Bill is not the appropriate place to deal with that issue.

On the impact, we are talking not about stopping trade with China or stopping companies doing trade deals with suppliers in China—the use of sloppy language that fails to distinguish between trade deals and free trade agreements, which are a different legal entity entirely, does not help the quality of the debate—but we do have a perfect right to take into account any state's behaviour when it comes to a future free trade agreement, and our ability to do so is limited. I campaigned to leave

the European Union because I wanted powers brought back from Brussels, but I wanted them brought back to this place, not given straight back to the Executive to exercise on our behalf. When I was Secretary of State, I wanted to see Parliament given a vote on new trade agreements, as the previous Speaker would have attested. I still believe that that is most appropriate at the beginning, at the setting of the mandate, because if Parliament can agree then on the direction of travel, we are less likely to have the sort of misinformation that we had on the transatlantic trade and investment partnership and the ridiculous scare stories that we heard from the SNP spokesman today. If we do not have the ability to vote at the beginning of the mandate, it makes the CRAg process less credible.

The Government are making a rod for their own back. Today we have an opportunity to give power back to the House of Commons—not the House of Lords, not the courts, not the Executive. We should show a little bit of courage and faith in our own institution.

Ms Nusrat Ghani: Today was intended to be a historic vote on a simple question: can we give effect to the Government's own policy that genocide determination is a judicial matter, allowing us to assess whether our trading partners are committing that most heinous of crimes? Yet that most serious question—the destruction, rape, sterilisation, brainwashing and killing of an entire group of people from the face of the Earth—cannot be answered today. We have been denied a vote on the genocide amendment, which was improved to meet the Government's objections—an amendment so powerful that it secured a majority of 171 in the other Chamber—and was on course to win the backing of the House today.

I am appalled at the parliamentary games played over such a grave issue, but we will not let the principle go away. We will do everything we can to ensure that we are not trading with genocidal states. Let us remember that it is the Government's position, not mine, that genocide is for the courts. The Foreign Secretary said last month, "Whether or not it amounts to genocide is a matter for the courts". The Prime Minister, last month, said that "the attribution of genocide is a judicial matter".—[*Official Report*, 20 January 2021; Vol. 687, c. 959.]

Why, then, is a meaningless amendment being backed that demotes this to the level of a Select Committee—and it has been rejected by a Select Committee—and deliberately excludes the Uyghurs and China? We are outsourcing genocide determination to the UN, which is handcuffed by China and Russia. Why not bring that back home? Why not take back control, in line with the Government's own policy?

Sir Iain Duncan Smith: Will my hon. Friend reflect that the Government's complaints that the previous amendment was flawed were taken into consideration such that under the current amendment the court would make a preliminary determination only, and it would be for the Government and Parliament to decide what to do about it at any stage?

Ms Ghani: Indeed. Some colleagues have said that we have bent over too much and that there is too much power with the Executive, but we have separated the power: the courts determine genocide, Parliament opines and the Executive are in charge.

We are unsure what the objections are now. I tabled a question to the Government to ask who determines genocide, and the response was:

“The determination as to whether a situation constitutes genocide is factually and legally complex and should only be made by a competent court following a careful and detailed examination.”

That means that any Select Committee paper would be rubbished.

The values of our country do not include enriching ourselves on the back of slave labour or using our new-found post-Brexit freedom to trade with states that commit and profit from genocide. Britain is better than that. Last week, the Board of Deputies of British Jews highlighted the plight of the Uyghurs and the chilling similarity to Nazi Germany: 2 million Uyghurs are in prison camps. The late Rabbi Sacks was once asked where God was when the holocaust took place. He responded that the real question was: where was man?

Let the record show that, on this day, men and women in this House were ready to vote on the genocide amendment, to lead the world in standing up to tyrannical regimes that commit genocide, to honour our vow of “never again”, to ensure that we are never complicit in genocidal trade, and to put Britain on the right side of history. Today, we were denied that vote, and this House was denied its say.

Chris Bryant (Rhondda) (Lab) [V]: This country should never trade with any country where genocide is being practised. We are as guilty as others when we seek to perpetuate that kind of trade. It is appalling that all five signs of genocide incorporated in the genocide convention are now present in China in Xinjiang province, and that President Xi is personally implicated.

It is no use us clasping our pearls, signing holocaust memorial books or weeping about genocide in the 1930s if we are not prepared to do every single thing that we possibly can today to protect the vulnerable. That means wielding every single instrument, national and international, commercial and diplomatic, to protect the victims of abuse. We failed for far too long because we delayed in the 1930s and ended up having to go to war. Their humanity is our humanity; we are involved in their lives and in their deaths.

China already makes it impossible for us to act in an international court or any international body, so of course we should use the UK courts. I say to the Chair of the Justice Committee that Lord Hope of Craighead made it absolutely clear that a preliminary determination of genocide should be located within the High Court precisely because it is not a criminal process. That is the whole point of the amendment. It should be the courts, not politicians, that make these decisions because they know how to sift evidence and are able to require witnesses and evidence to be brought before them.

I saw the amendment that has been presented, supposedly by the Chair of the Justice Committee, last week; it was very definitely a Government amendment long before it appeared on the Order Paper. It is as tawdry a piece of parliamentary jiggery-pokery as I have seen in my 20 years in the House. Select Committees already have every single one of the powers that are supposedly being given to us by the amendment. The Government already dismisses every single substantive motion agreed by the House if they just do not like it. They did so on

the Yazidis, when the House’s view was unanimous, and they did so on the Foreign Affairs Committee reports on the Rohingya.

By constructing the amendment in the way they have, the Government have deliberately denied the House a clear vote on genocide and how we would like to tackle it in relation to trade. The bottom line is that the Government seem to do everything in their power to prevent us as a nation from standing clearly and unambiguously against human rights abuses in China, and up with this we will not put.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): To finish no later than 5.31 pm, I call Katherine Fletcher.

Katherine Fletcher (South Ribble) (Con): Let me cut right to the chase: free trade is too important to end up with consequences being felt elsewhere. The Lords amendments are noble. I agree: China risks perpetrating atrocities of oppression, torture, sterilisation and the incarceration of people just because they have the cheek to want to be a different type of person or think something different. Its ideology and its ideas are failing, and the people will rise up.

However, I fear that the Lords amendments would have unintended consequences. Genocide in other countries is hard to prove in our courts. It is hard to get witnesses to come to speak. We have no power to compel hostile Governments to appear before our courts. What happens if a judicial procedure or a court finds that there is not enough evidence to prove genocide? Cue the lies, manipulation and crowing that would come from a dictatorship. “Fake news” is what they would describe from their machine. “The British courts have cleared us,” would scream the headlines. Who have we helped then? Nobody. Parliament can investigate and vote. We can and should decide, and I will be supporting the Government amendment proposed by my hon. Friend the Member for Bromley and Chislehurst (Sir Robert Neill) and the Secretary of State.

5.30 pm

Greg Hands: I was happy to take interventions earlier, but I will try now to respond to the points raised in the debate. First, I want to clear up the question about parliamentary procedure that a few Members have raised. As you will know, Mr Deputy Speaker, it is a long-standing convention for amendments to be packaged during ping-pong in this way. “Erskine May” states that

“the practice has developed in the later stages of the exchanges between the Houses of grouping together as a ‘package’ a number of related amendments for the purposes of decision as well as debate.”

Secondly, the right hon. Member for Islington South and Finsbury (Emily Thornberry) talked about the standards amendment only being backward-looking. She is relatively new to the Bill. I have been involved with the Bill for four years—too long, some might say. The whole Bill is about continuity trade agreements; that is the point. I also note that she has not always been so strong on China. In her very first contribution as the shadow Secretary of State for International Trade on 12 May 2020, she asked the Secretary of State whether the trade talks she was pursuing with the United States “would constrain the UK’s ability to negotiate our own trade agreement with China”—[*Official Report*, 12 May 2020; Vol. 676, c. 111.]

[Greg Hands]

So there we have it—the Opposition are clearly quite keen on a trade agreement with China.

As for the SNP, the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey (Drew Hendry) says again that he supports free trade and rejoining the European Union, and again he praises EU trade agreements, but as we all know, the SNP has not supported a single one of those EU trade agreements. It is against Canada, it is against Korea, it is against South Africa, and it abstained on Japan.

We have heard excellent, heartfelt contributions from my hon. and right hon. Friends. We heard passionate arguments in particular from my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford and Woodford Green (Sir Iain Duncan Smith) and my hon. Friend the Member for Wealden (Ms Ghani), and from those who know the court systems well: my hon. Friend the Member for Bromley and Chislehurst (Sir Robert Neill), my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Kenilworth and Southam (Jeremy Wright) and my hon. Friend the Member for South Ribble (Katherine Fletcher).

The point is this: it is a matter for Parliament to decide what should come before it. That is why the Select Committee is the right and proper place for this, not the courts. The Government share Members' concerns when it comes to Xinjiang. That is why the Foreign Secretary announced stepped-up measures last month, including ones relating to trade and supply chains. But today's debate is not about whether there is a genocide in Xinjiang. It is about who triggers a debate in Parliament on whether there are credible reports of genocide.

As the former Attorney General, my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Kenilworth and Southam, said, the amendment in the name of the Chair of the Justice Committee is more human rights-friendly than the Alton amendment because it allows Parliament to look at credible reports of genocide—it does not have to prove whether there has been a genocide—which will lead to a vote on whether we should be carrying out trade talks with that country. That is a much better position, and I therefore urge all Members to back that amendment.

5.34 pm

One hour having elapsed since the commencement of proceedings on the Lords message, the debate was interrupted (Programme Order, 19 January).

The Deputy Speaker put forthwith the Question already proposed from the Chair (Standing Order No. 83G), That this House disagrees with Lords amendment 1B.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): I remind the House that, following Mr Speaker's recent announcement, where second and subsequent Divisions take place on the same item of business, the doors will normally be locked after five minutes, rather than eight—that is, after eight minutes on the first Division and after five minutes for each subsequent one.

The House divided: Ayes 351, Noes 276.

Division No. 227]

[5.34 pm

AYES

Adams, Nigel
Afolami, Bim
Afriyie, Adam

Ahmad Khan, Imran
Aiken, Nickie
Allan, Lucy

Amess, Sir David
Anderson, Lee
Anderson, Stuart
Andrew, Stuart
Ansell, Caroline
Argar, Edward
Atherton, Sarah
Atkins, Victoria
Bacon, Gareth
Bacon, Mr Richard
Badenoch, Kemi
Bailey, Shaun
Baillie, Siobhan
Baker, Duncan
Baker, Mr Steve
Baldwin, Harriett
Barclay, rh Steve
Baron, Mr John
Baynes, Simon
Bell, Aaron
Benton, Scott
Beresford, Sir Paul
Berry, rh Jake
Bhatti, Saqib
Blackman, Bob
Bone, Mr Peter
Bowie, Andrew
Bradley, Ben
Bradley, rh Karen
Braverman, rh Suella
Brereton, Jack
Bridgen, Andrew
Brine, Steve
Bristow, Paul
Britcliffe, Sara
Brokenshire, rh James
Browne, Anthony
Bruce, Fiona
Buchan, Felicity
Buckland, rh Robert
Burghart, Alex
Burns, rh Conor
Butler, Rob
Cairns, rh Alun
Campbell, Mr Gregory
Carter, Andy
Cartlidge, James
Cash, Sir William
Cates, Miriam
Caulfield, Maria
Chalk, Alex
Chishti, Rehman
Churchill, Jo
Clark, rh Greg
Clarke, Mr Simon
Clarke, Theo
Clarke-Smith, Brendan
Clarkson, Chris
Cleverly, rh James
Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey
Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse
Colburn, Elliot
Collins, Damian
Costa, Alberto
Courts, Robert
Coutinho, Claire
Cox, rh Sir Geoffrey
Crabb, rh Stephen
Crosbie, Virginia
Daly, James
Davies, David T. C.
Davies, Gareth

Davies, Dr James
Davies, Mims
Davies, Philip
Davison, Dehenna
Dinenage, Caroline
Dines, Miss Sarah
Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
Donelan, Michelle
Dorries, Ms Nadine
Double, Steve
Dowden, rh Oliver
Doyle-Price, Jackie
Drax, Richard
Drummond, Mrs Flick
Duddridge, James
Duguid, David
Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
Dunne, rh Philip
Eastwood, Mark
Edwards, Ruth
Ellis, rh Michael
Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
Eustice, rh George
Evans, Dr Luke
Evennett, rh Sir David
Everitt, Ben
Fabricant, Michael
Farris, Laura
Fell, Simon
Fletcher, Katherine
Fletcher, Mark
Fletcher, Nick
Ford, Vicky
Foster, Kevin
Fox, rh Dr Liam
Francois, rh Mr Mark
Frazer, Lucy
Freer, Mike
Fuller, Richard
Fysh, Mr Marcus
Garnier, Mark
Ghani, Ms Nusrat
Gibb, rh Nick
Gibson, Peter
Gideon, Jo
Gillan, rh Dame Cheryl
Girvan, Paul
Glen, John
Goodwill, rh Mr Robert
Gove, rh Michael
Graham, Richard
Grant, Mrs Helen
Gray, James
Grayling, rh Chris
Green, Chris
Green, rh Damian
Griffith, Andrew
Griffiths, Kate
Grundy, James
Gullis, Jonathan
Halfon, rh Robert
Hall, Luke
Hammond, Stephen
Hancock, rh Matt
Hands, rh Greg
Harper, rh Mr Mark
Harris, Rebecca
Harrison, Trudy
Hart, Sally-Ann
Hart, rh Simon
Hayes, rh Sir John

Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Heappey, James
 Heaton-Harris, Chris
 Henderson, Gordon
 Henry, Darren
 Higginbotham, Antony
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Holden, Mr Richard
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Holloway, Adam
 Holmes, Paul
 Howell, John
 Howell, Paul
 Huddleston, Nigel
 Hughes, Eddie
 Hunt, Jane
 Hunt, rh Jeremy
 Hunt, Tom
 Jack, rh Mr Alister
 Javid, rh Sajid
 Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard
 Jenkinson, Mark
 Jenkyns, Andrea
 Jenrick, rh Robert
 Johnson, rh Boris
 Johnson, Dr Caroline
 Johnson, Gareth
 Johnston, David
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Fay
 Jones, Mr Marcus
 Jupp, Simon
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Kearns, Alicia
 Keegan, Gillian
 Knight, rh Sir Greg
 Knight, Julian
 Kruger, Danny
 Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
 Lamont, John
 Langan, Robert
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Leadsom, rh Andrea
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Levy, Ian
 Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Brandon
 Lewis, rh Dr Julian
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Lockhart, Carla
 Loder, Chris
 Logan, Mark
 Longhi, Marco
 Lopez, Julia
 Lopresti, Jack
 Lord, Mr Jonathan
 Loughton, Tim
 Mackinlay, Craig
 Mackrory, Cherylyn
 Maclean, Rachel
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, Kit
 Mangnall, Anthony
 Mann, Scott
 Marson, Julie
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 Mayhew, Jerome
 Maynard, Paul
 McCartney, Karl

McPartland, Stephen
 McVey, rh Esther
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, Johnny
 Merriman, Huw
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Millar, Robin
 Miller, rh Mrs Maria
 Milling, rh Amanda
 Mills, Nigel
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
 Mohindra, Mr Gagan
 Moore, Damien
 Moore, Robbie
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, James
 Morrissey, Joy
 Morton, Wendy
 Mullan, Dr Kieran
 Mumby-Croft, Holly
 Mundell, rh David
 Murray, Mrs Sheryll
 Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
 Nici, Lia
 Nokes, rh Caroline
 Norman, rh Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Paisley, Ian
 Patel, rh Priti
 Paterson, rh Mr Owen
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Philp, Chris
 Pincher, rh Christopher
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, Victoria
 Pritchard, Mark
 Quin, Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Raab, rh Dominic
 Randall, Tom
 Redwood, rh John
 Rees-Mogg, rh Mr Jacob
 Richards, Nicola
 Richardson, Angela
 Roberts, Rob
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Robinson, Gavin
 Robinson, Mary
 Rosindell, Andrew
 Ross, Douglas
 Rowley, Lee
 Russell, Dean
 Rutley, David
 Sambrook, Gary
 Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Selous, Andrew
 Shannon, Jim
 Shapps, rh Grant
 Sharma, rh Alok
 Shelbrooke, rh Alec
 Simmonds, David
 Skidmore, rh Chris
 Smith, Chloe

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
 Stuart, Graham
 Sunak, rh Rishi
 Sunderland, James
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Throup, Maggie
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Tracey, Craig
 Trevelyan, rh Anne-Marie
 Trott, Laura
 Truss, rh Elizabeth

Abbott, rh Ms Diane
 Abrahams, Debbie
 Aldous, Peter
 Ali, Rushanara
 Ali, Tahir
 Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
 Amesbury, Mike
 Anderson, Fleur
 Antoniazzi, Tonia
 Ashworth, Jonathan
 Bardell, Hannah
 Barker, Paula
 Beckett, rh Margaret
 Begum, Apsana
 Benn, rh Hilary
 Betts, Mr Clive
 Black, Mhairi
 Blackford, rh Ian
 Blackman, Kirsty
 Blake, Olivia
 Blomfield, Paul
 Blunt, Crispin
 Bonnar, Steven
 Brabin, Tracy
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
 Brennan, Kevin
 Brock, Deidre
 Brown, Alan
 Brown, Ms Lyn
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
 Bryant, Chris
 Buck, Ms Karen
 Burgon, Richard
 Butler, Dawn
 Byrne, Ian
 Byrne, rh Liam
 Cadbury, Ruth
 Callaghan, Amy
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan

Tugendhat, Tom
 Vara, Mr Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Vickers, Matt
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Wakeford, Christian
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Wallace, rh Mr Ben
 Wallis, Dr Jamie
 Warburton, David
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Webb, Suzanne
 Whately, Helen
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Mr John
 Wiggin, Bill
 Wild, James
 Williams, Craig
 Williamson, rh Gavin
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Wood, Mike
 Wragg, Mr William
 Young, Jacob
 Zahawi, Nadhim

Tellers for the Ayes:
 Leo Docherty and
 Tom Pursglove

NOES

Carden, Dan
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
 Chamberlain, Wendy
 Champion, Sarah
 Chapman, Douglas
 Charalambous, Bambos
 Cherry, Joanna
 Clark, Feryal
 Cooper, Daisy
 Cooper, Rosie
 Cooper, rh Yvette
 Corbyn, rh Jeremy
 Cowan, Ronnie
 Coyle, Neil
 Crawley, Angela
 Creasy, Stella
 Cruddas, Jon
 Cryer, John
 Cunningham, Alex
 Daby, Janet
 Davey, rh Ed
 David, Wayne
 Davies, Geraint
 Davies-Jones, Alex
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Day, Martyn
 De Cordova, Marsha
 Debbonaire, Thangam
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Docherty-Hughes, Martin
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Doogan, Dave
 Dorans, Allan
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Dromey, Jack
 Duffield, Rosie
 Eagle, Dame Angela
 Eagle, Maria

Eastwood, Colum
 Edwards, Jonathan
 Efford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Elmore, Chris
 Eshalomi, Florence
 Esterson, Bill
 Evans, Chris
 Farron, Tim
 Farry, Stephen
 Fellows, Marion
 Ferrier, Margaret
 Flynn, Stephen
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Foy, Mary Kelly
 Freeman, George
 Gale, rh Sir Roger
 Gardiner, Barry
 Gibson, Patricia
 Gill, Preet Kaur
 Giindon, Mary
 Grady, Patrick
 Grant, Peter
 Gray, Neil
 Green, Kate
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Nia
 Gwynne, Andrew
 Haigh, Louise
 Hamilton, Fabian
 Hanna, Claire
 Hanvey, Neale
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet
 Harris, Carolyn
 Hayes, Helen
 Healey, rh John
 Hendrick, Sir Mark
 Hendry, Drew
 Hill, Mike
 Hillier, Meg
 Hoare, Simon
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Hollern, Kate
 Hopkins, Rachel
 Hosie, Stewart
 Howarth, rh Sir George
 Hudson, Dr Neil
 Huq, Dr Rupa
 Hussain, Imran
 Jardine, Christine
 Jarvis, Dan
 Johnson, Dame Diana
 Johnson, Kim
 Jones, Darren
 Jones, Gerald
 Jones, rh Mr Kevan
 Jones, Ruth
 Jones, Sarah
 Kane, Mike
 Keeley, Barbara
 Kendall, Liz
 Khan, Afzal
 Kinnock, Stephen
 Kyle, Peter
 Lake, Ben
 Lammy, rh Mr David
 Lavery, Ian

Law, Chris
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
 Lewis, Clive
 Linden, David
 Lloyd, Tony
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lynch, Holly
 MacAskill, Kenny
 MacNeil, Angus Brendan
 Madders, Justin
 Mahmood, Mr Khalid
 Mahmood, Shabana
 Malhotra, Seema
 Maskell, Rachael
 Matheson, Christian
 Mc Nally, John
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McCartney, Jason
 McDonagh, Siobhain
 McDonald, Andy
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
 McDonald, Stuart C.
 McDonnell, rh John
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat
 McGinn, Conor
 McGovern, Alison
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McLaughlin, Anne
 McMahan, Jim
 McMorrin, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Miliband, rh Edward
 Mishra, Navendu
 Monaghan, Carol
 Moran, Layla
 Morden, Jessica
 Morgan, Stephen
 Morris, Grahame
 Murray, Ian
 Murray, James
 Nandy, Lisa
 Newlands, Gavin
 Nichols, Charlotte
 Nicolson, John
 Norris, Alex
 O'Hara, Brendan
 Olney, Sarah
 Onwurah, Chi
 Oppong-Asare, Abena
 Osamor, Kate
 Osborne, Kate
 Oswald, Kirsten
 Owatemi, Taiwo
 Owen, Sarah
 Parish, Neil
 Peacock, Stephanie
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Mr Toby
 Phillips, Jess
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Pollard, Luke
 Powell, Lucy
 Qureshi, Yasmin
 Rayner, Angela
 Reed, Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reeves, Ellie
 Reeves, Rachel
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Ribeiro-Addy, Bell

Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Rodda, Matt
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Saville Roberts, rh Liz
 Seely, Bob
 Shah, Naz
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr Barry
 Sheppard, Tommy
 Siddiq, Tulip
 Slaughter, Andy
 Smith, Alyn
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Jeff
 Smith, Nick
 Smyth, Karin
 Sobel, Alex
 Spellar, rh John
 Starmer, rh Keir
 Stephens, Chris
 Stevens, Jo
 Stevenson, John
 Stone, Jamie
 Streeting, Wes
 Stringer, Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sultana, Zarah
 Tami, rh Mark

Tarry, Sam
 Thewliss, Alison
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick
 Thompson, Owen
 Thomson, Richard
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Stephen
 Trickett, Jon
 Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Vaz, rh Valerie
 Webbe, Claudia
 West, Catherine
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whitford, Dr Philippa
 Whitley, Mick
 Whittome, Nadia
 Williams, Hywel
 Wilson, Munira
 Winter, Beth
 Wishart, Pete
 Yasin, Mohammad
 Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:
Colleen Fletcher and
Liz Twist

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 1B disagreed 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.

Amendments (a) and (b) proposed in lieu of Lords amendments 2B and 3B—(Greg Hands.)

Question put, That the amendments be made.

The House divided: Ayes 318, Noes 303.

Division No. 228]

[5.45 pm

AYES

Adams, Nigel
 Afolami, Bim
 Aiken, Nickie
 Aldous, Peter
 Allan, Lucy
 Anderson, Lee
 Anderson, Stuart
 Andrew, Stuart
 Ansell, Caroline
 Argar, Edward
 Atherton, Sarah
 Atkins, Victoria
 Bacon, Gareth
 Bacon, Mr Richard
 Badenoch, Kemi
 Bailey, Shaun
 Baillie, Siobhan
 Baker, Duncan
 Baker, Mr Steve
 Baldwin, Harriett
 Barclay, rh Steve
 Baron, Mr John
 Baynes, Simon
 Bell, Aaron
 Benton, Scott
 Beresford, Sir Paul
 Berry, rh Jake
 Bhatti, Saqib
 Bowie, Andrew

Bradley, Ben
 Braverman, rh Suella
 Brereton, Jack
 Brine, Steve
 Bristow, Paul
 Britcliffe, Sara
 Brokenshire, rh James
 Browne, Anthony
 Buchan, Felicity
 Buckland, rh Robert
 Burghart, Alex
 Burns, rh Conor
 Butler, Rob
 Cairns, rh Alun
 Carter, Andy
 Cartledge, James
 Cash, Sir William
 Cates, Miriam
 Caulfield, Maria
 Chalk, Alex
 Churchill, Jo
 Clark, rh Greg
 Clarke, Mr Simon
 Clarke, Theo
 Clarke-Smith, Brendan
 Clarkson, Chris
 Cleverly, rh James
 Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey
 Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse

Colburn, Elliot
 Collins, Damian
 Costa, Alberto
 Courts, Robert
 Coutinho, Claire
 Cox, rh Sir Geoffrey
 Crosbie, Virginia
 Daly, James
 Davies, David T. C.
 Davies, Gareth
 Davies, Dr James
 Davies, Mims
 Davies, Philip
 Davison, Dehenna
 Dinenege, Caroline
 Dines, Miss Sarah
 Donelan, Michelle
 Dorries, Ms Nadine
 Double, Steve
 Dowden, rh Oliver
 Doyle-Price, Jackie
 Drummond, Mrs Flick
 Duddridge, James
 Duguid, David
 Dunne, rh Philip
 Eastwood, Mark
 Edwards, Ruth
 Ellis, rh Michael
 Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
 Eustice, rh George
 Evans, Dr Luke
 Evennett, rh Sir David
 Everitt, Ben
 Fabricant, Michael
 Farris, Laura
 Fell, Simon
 Fletcher, Katherine
 Fletcher, Mark
 Fletcher, Nick
 Ford, Vicky
 Foster, Kevin
 Fox, rh Dr Liam
 Frazer, Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 Fuller, Richard
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Gale, rh Sir Roger
 Garnier, Mark
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gibson, Peter
 Gideon, Jo
 Glen, John
 Goodwill, rh Mr Robert
 Gove, rh Michael
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Mrs Helen
 Grayling, rh Chris
 Green, Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Griffith, Andrew
 Griffiths, Kate
 Grundy, James
 Gullis, Jonathan
 Hall, Luke
 Hammond, Stephen
 Hancock, rh Matt
 Hands, rh Greg
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harris, Rebecca
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Sally-Ann

Hart, rh Simon
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Heapey, James
 Heaton-Harris, Chris
 Henderson, Gordon
 Henry, Darren
 Higginbotham, Antony
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Holden, Mr Richard
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Holloway, Adam
 Holmes, Paul
 Howell, John
 Howell, Paul
 Huddleston, Nigel
 Hudson, Dr Neil
 Hughes, Eddie
 Hunt, Jane
 Hunt, Tom
 Jack, rh Mr Alister
 Javid, rh Sajid
 Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
 Jenkinson, Mark
 Jenkyns, Andrea
 Jenrick, rh Robert
 Johnson, rh Boris
 Johnson, Dr Caroline
 Johnson, Gareth
 Johnston, David
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Fay
 Jones, Mr Marcus
 Jupp, Simon
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Kearns, Alicia
 Keegan, Gillian
 Knight, rh Sir Greg
 Knight, Julian
 Kruger, Danny
 Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
 Lamont, John
 Largan, Robert
 Leadsom, rh Andrea
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Levy, Ian
 Lewis, rh Brandon
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Loder, Chris
 Longhi, Marco
 Lopez, Julia
 Lopresti, Jack
 Lord, Mr Jonathan
 Mackrory, Cherylyn
 Maclean, Rachel
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, Kit
 Mangnall, Anthony
 Mann, Scott
 Marson, Julie
 Mayhew, Jerome
 Maynard, Paul
 McCartney, Jason
 McCartney, Karl
 McPartland, Stephen
 McVey, rh Esther
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, Johnny
 Merriman, Huw
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Millar, Robin

Miller, rh Mrs Maria
 Milling, rh Amanda
 Mills, Nigel
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
 Mohindra, Mr Gagan
 Moore, Damien
 Moore, Robbie
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, James
 Morrissey, Joy
 Morton, Wendy
 Mumby-Croft, Holly
 Mundell, rh David
 Murray, Mrs Sheryll
 Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
 Neill, Sir Robert
 Nici, Lia
 Nokes, rh Caroline
 Norman, rh Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Opperman, Guy
 Parish, Neil
 Patel, rh Priti
 Paterson, rh Mr Owen
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Philp, Chris
 Pincher, rh Christopher
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, Victoria
 Pritchard, Mark
 Quin, Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Raab, rh Dominic
 Randall, Tom
 Rees-Mogg, rh Mr Jacob
 Richards, Nicola
 Richardson, Angela
 Roberts, Rob
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Robinson, Mary
 Ross, Douglas
 Rowley, Lee
 Russell, Dean
 Rutley, David
 Sambrook, Gary
 Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Selous, Andrew
 Shapps, rh Grant
 Sharma, rh Alok
 Shelbrooke, rh Alec
 Simmonds, David
 Skidmore, rh Chris
 Smith, Chloe

Smith, Greg
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, rh Julian
 Smith, Royston
 Solloway, Amanda
 Spencer, Dr Ben
 Spencer, rh Mark
 Stafford, Alexander
 Stephenson, Andrew
 Stevenson, Jane
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Streeter, Sir Gary
 Stride, rh Mel
 Stuart, Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunak, rh Rishi
 Sunderland, James
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Throup, Maggie
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Tracey, Craig
 Trevelyan, rh Anne-Marie
 Trott, Laura
 Truss, rh Elizabeth
 Tugendhat, Tom
 Vara, Mr Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Vickers, Matt
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Wakeford, Christian
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Wallace, rh Mr Ben
 Wallis, Dr Jamie
 Warburton, David
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Webb, Suzanne
 Whately, Helen
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Mr John
 Wiggin, Bill
 Wild, James
 Williams, Craig
 Williamson, rh Gavin
 Wood, Mike
 Wright, rh Jeremy
 Young, Jacob
 Zahawi, Nadhim

Tellers for the Ayes:
Tom Pursglove and
Leo Docherty

NOES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane
 Abrahams, Debbie
 Ahmad Khan, Imran
 Ali, Rushanara
 Ali, Tahir
 Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
 Amesbury, Mike
 Amess, Sir David
 Anderson, Fleur

Antoniazzi, Tonia
 Ashworth, Jonathan
 Bardell, Hannah
 Barker, Paula
 Beckett, rh Margaret
 Begum, Apsana
 Benn, rh Hilary
 Betts, Mr Clive
 Black, Mhairi

| | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Blackford, rh Ian | Edwards, Jonathan | Kyle, Peter | Phillipson, Bridget |
| Blackman, Bob | Efford, Clive | Lake, Ben | Pollard, Luke |
| Blackman, Kirsty | Elliott, Julie | Lammy, rh Mr David | Powell, Lucy |
| Blake, Olivia | Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias | Latham, Mrs Pauline | Qureshi, Yasmin |
| Blomfield, Paul | Elmore, Chris | Lavery, Ian | Rayner, Angela |
| Blunt, Crispin | Eshalomi, Florence | Law, Chris | Redwood, rh John |
| Bone, Mr Peter | Esterson, Bill | Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma | Reed, Steve |
| Bonnar, Steven | Evans, Chris | Lewer, Andrew | Rees, Christina |
| Brabin, Tracy | Farron, Tim | Lewis, Clive | Reeves, Ellie |
| Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben | Farry, Stephen | Lewis, rh Dr Julian | Reeves, Rachel |
| Brennan, Kevin | Fellows, Marion | Linden, David | Reynolds, Jonathan |
| Bridgen, Andrew | Ferrier, Margaret | Lloyd, Tony | Ribeiro-Addy, Bell |
| Brock, Deidre | Flynn, Stephen | Lockhart, Carla | Rimmer, Ms Marie |
| Brown, Alan | Fovargue, Yvonne | Long Bailey, Rebecca | Robinson, Gavin |
| Brown, Ms Lyn | Foxcroft, Vicky | Loughton, Tim | Rodda, Matt |
| Brown, rh Mr Nicholas | Foy, Mary Kelly | Lucas, Caroline | Rosindell, Andrew |
| Bryant, Chris | Francois, rh Mr Mark | Lynch, Holly | Russell-Moyle, Lloyd |
| Buck, Ms Karen | Gardiner, Barry | MacAskill, Kenny | Saville Roberts, rh Liz |
| Burgon, Richard | Ghani, Ms Nusrat | Mackinlay, Craig | Seely, Bob |
| Butler, Dawn | Gibson, Patricia | MacNeil, Angus Brendan | Shah, Naz |
| Byrne, Ian | Gill, Preet Kaur | Madders, Justin | Shannon, Jim |
| Byrne, rh Liam | Gillan, rh Dame Cheryl | Mahmood, Mr Khalid | Sharma, Mr Virendra |
| Cadbury, Ruth | Girvan, Paul | Mahmood, Shabana | Sheerman, Mr Barry |
| Callaghan, Amy | Glindon, Mary | Malhotra, Seema | Sheppard, Tommy |
| Cameron, Dr Lisa | Grady, Patrick | Maskell, Rachael | Siddiq, Tulip |
| Campbell, rh Sir Alan | Grant, Peter | Matheson, Christian | Slaughter, Andy |
| Campbell, Mr Gregory | Gray, James | Mc Nally, John | Smith, Alyn |
| Carden, Dan | Gray, Neil | McCabe, Steve | Smith, Cat |
| Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair | Green, Kate | McCarthy, Kerry | Smith, Jeff |
| Chamberlain, Wendy | Greenwood, Lilian | McDonagh, Siobhain | Smith, Nick |
| Champion, Sarah | Greenwood, Margaret | McDonald, Andy | Smyth, Karin |
| Chapman, Douglas | Griffith, Nia | McDonald, Stewart Malcolm | Sobel, Alex |
| Charalambous, Bambos | Gwynne, Andrew | McDonald, Stuart C. | Spellar, rh John |
| Cherry, Joanna | Haigh, Louise | McDonnell, rh John | Starmer, rh Keir |
| Chishti, Rehman | Hamilton, Fabian | McFadden, rh Mr Pat | Stephens, Chris |
| Clark, Feryal | Hanna, Claire | McGinn, Conor | Stevens, Jo |
| Cooper, Daisy | Hanvey, Neale | McGovern, Alison | Stone, Jamie |
| Cooper, Rosie | Hardy, Emma | McKinnell, Catherine | Streeting, Wes |
| Cooper, rh Yvette | Harman, rh Ms Harriet | McLaughlin, Anne | Stringer, Graham |
| Corbyn, rh Jeremy | Harris, Carolyn | McMahon, Jim | Sultana, Zarah |
| Cowan, Ronnie | Hayes, Helen | McMorrin, Anna | Tami, rh Mark |
| Coyle, Neil | Hayes, rh Sir John | Mearns, Ian | Tarry, Sam |
| Crawley, Angela | Healey, rh John | Miliband, rh Edward | Thewliss, Alison |
| Creasy, Stella | Hendrick, Sir Mark | Mishra, Navendu | Thomas, Gareth |
| Cruddas, Jon | Hendry, Drew | Monaghan, Carol | Thomas-Symonds, Nick |
| Cryer, John | Hill, Mike | Moran, Layla | Thompson, Owen |
| Cunningham, Alex | Hillier, Meg | Morden, Jessica | Thomson, Richard |
| Daby, Janet | Hobhouse, Wera | Morgan, Stephen | Thornberry, rh Emily |
| Davey, rh Ed | Hodge, rh Dame Margaret | Morris, Grahame | Timms, rh Stephen |
| David, Wayne | Hodgson, Mrs Sharon | Mullan, Dr Kieran | Trickett, Jon |
| Davies, Geraint | Hollern, Kate | Murray, Ian | Turner, Karl |
| Davies-Jones, Alex | Hollobone, Mr Philip | Murray, James | Twigg, Derek |
| Davis, rh Mr David | Hopkins, Rachel | Nandy, Lisa | Vaz, rh Valerie |
| Day, Martyn | Hosie, Stewart | Newlands, Gavin | Walker, Sir Charles |
| De Cordova, Marsha | Howarth, rh Sir George | Nichols, Charlotte | Webbe, Claudia |
| Debbonaire, Thangam | Huq, Dr Rupa | Nicolson, John | West, Catherine |
| Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh | Hussain, Imran | Norris, Alex | Whitehead, Dr Alan |
| Djanogly, Mr Jonathan | Jardine, Christine | Offord, Dr Matthew | Whitford, Dr Philippa |
| Docherty-Hughes, Martin | Jarvis, Dan | O'Hara, Brendan | Whitley, Mick |
| Dodds, Anneliese | Jenkin, Sir Bernard | Olney, Sarah | Whittome, Nadia |
| Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M. | Johnson, Dame Diana | Onwurah, Chi | Williams, Hywel |
| Doogan, Dave | Johnson, Kim | Oppong-Asare, Abena | Wilson, Munira |
| Dorans, Allan | Jones, Darren | Osamor, Kate | Wilson, rh Sammy |
| Doughty, Stephen | Jones, Gerald | Osborne, Kate | Winter, Beth |
| Dowd, Peter | Jones, rh Mr Kevan | Oswald, Kirsten | Wishart, Pete |
| Drax, Richard | Jones, Ruth | Owatemi, Taiwo | Wragg, Mr William |
| Dromey, Jack | Jones, Sarah | Owen, Sarah | Yasin, Mohammad |
| Duffield, Rosie | Kane, Mike | Paisley, Ian | Zeichner, Daniel |
| Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain | Keeley, Barbara | Peacock, Stephanie | |
| Eagle, Dame Angela | Kendall, Liz | Pennycook, Matthew | Tellers for the Noes: |
| Eagle, Maria | Khan, Afzal | Perkins, Mr Toby | Liz Twist and |
| Eastwood, Colum | Kinnock, Stephen | Phillips, Jess | Colleen Fletcher |

Question accordingly agreed to.

Amendments (a) and (b) made in lieu of Lords amendments 2B and 3B.

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.

Amendments (a) to (c) proposed in lieu of Lords amendment 6B.—(Greg Hands.)

Question put, That the amendments be made.

The House divided: Ayes 363, Noes 267.

Division No. 229]

[5.53 pm

AYES

Adams, Nigel
Afolami, Bim
Afriyie, Adam
Ahmad Khan, Imran
Aiken, Nickie
Aldous, Peter
Allan, Lucy
Amess, Sir David
Anderson, Lee
Anderson, Stuart
Andrew, Stuart
Ansell, Caroline
Argar, Edward
Atherton, Sarah
Atkins, Victoria
Bacon, Gareth
Bacon, Mr Richard
Badenoch, Kemi
Bailey, Shaun
Baillie, Siobhan
Baker, Duncan
Baker, Mr Steve
Baldwin, Harriett
Barclay, rh Steve
Baron, Mr John
Baynes, Simon
Bell, Aaron
Benton, Scott
Beresford, Sir Paul
Berry, rh Jake
Bhatti, Saqib
Blackman, Bob
Blunt, Crispin
Bone, Mr Peter
Bowie, Andrew
Bradley, Ben
Bradley, rh Karen
Braverman, rh Suella
Brereton, Jack
Bridgen, Andrew
Brine, Steve
Bristow, Paul
Britcliffe, Sara
Brokenshire, rh James
Browne, Anthony
Bruce, Fiona
Buchan, Felicity
Buckland, rh Robert
Burghart, Alex
Burns, rh Conor
Butler, Rob
Cairns, rh Alun
Campbell, Mr Gregory
Carter, Andy
Cartlidge, James
Cash, Sir William

Cates, Miriam
Caulfield, Maria
Chalk, Alex
Chishti, Rehman<pa>
Churchill, Jo
Clark, rh Greg
Clarke, Mr Simon
Clarke, Theo
Clarke-Smith, Brendan
Clarkson, Chris
Cleverly, rh James
Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey
Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse
Colburn, Elliot
Collins, Damian
Costa, Alberto
Courts, Robert
Coutinho, Claire
Cox, rh Sir Geoffrey
Crabb, rh Stephen
Crosbie, Virginia
Crouch, Tracey
Daly, James
Davies, David T. C.
Davies, Gareth
Davies, Dr James
Davies, Mims
Davies, Philip
Davison, Dehenna
Dinenage, Caroline
Dines, Miss Sarah
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
Donelan, Michelle
Dorries, Ms Nadine
Double, Steve
Dowden, rh Oliver
Doyle-Price, Jackie
Drax, Richard
Drummond, Mrs Flick
Duddridge, James
Duguid, David
Dunne, rh Philip
Eastwood, Mark
Edwards, Ruth
Ellis, rh Michael
Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
Eustice, rh George
Evans, Dr Luke
Evennett, rh Sir David
Everitt, Ben
Fabricant, Michael
Farris, Laura
Fell, Simon
Fletcher, Katherine

Fletcher, Mark
Fletcher, Nick
Ford, Vicky
Foster, Kevin
Fox, rh Dr Liam
Francois, rh Mr Mark
Frazer, Lucy
Freeman, George
Freer, Mike
Fuller, Richard
Fysh, Mr Marcus
Garnier, Mark
Ghani, Ms Nusrat
Gibb, rh Nick
Gibson, Peter
Gideon, Jo
Gillan, rh Dame Cheryl
Girvan, Paul
Glen, John
Goodwill, rh Mr Robert
Gove, rh Michael
Graham, Richard
Grant, Mrs Helen
Gray, James
Grayling, rh Chris
Green, Chris
Green, rh Damian
Griffith, Andrew
Griffiths, Kate
Grundy, James
Gullis, Jonathan
Halfon, rh Robert
Hall, Luke
Hammond, Stephen
Hancock, rh Matt
Hands, rh Greg
Harper, rh Mr Mark
Harris, Rebecca
Harrison, Trudy
Hart, Sally-Ann
Hart, rh Simon
Hayes, rh Sir John
Heald, rh Sir Oliver
Heappey, James
Heaton-Harris, Chris
Henderson, Gordon
Henry, Darren
Higginbotham, Antony
Hinds, rh Damian
Hoare, Simon
Holden, Mr Richard
Hollinrake, Kevin
Hollobone, Mr Philip
Holloway, Adam
Holmes, Paul
Howell, John
Howell, Paul
Huddleston, Nigel
Hughes, Eddie
Hunt, Jane
Hunt, rh Jeremy
Hunt, Tom
Jack, rh Mr Alister
Javid, rh Sajid
Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
Jenkin, Sir Bernard
Jenkinson, Mark
Jenkyns, Andrea
Jenrick, rh Robert
Johnson, rh Boris
Johnson, Dr Caroline
Johnson, Gareth

Johnston, David
Jones, Andrew
Jones, rh Mr David
Jones, Fay
Jones, Mr Marcus
Jupp, Simon
Kawczynski, Daniel
Kearns, Alicia
Keegan, Gillian
Knight, rh Sir Greg
Knight, Julian
Kruger, Danny
Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
Lamont, John
Largan, Robert
Latham, Mrs Pauline
Leadsom, rh Andrea
Leigh, rh Sir Edward
Levy, Ian
Lewer, Andrew
Lewis, rh Brandon
Lewis, rh Dr Julian
Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
Lockhart, Carla
Loder, Chris
Logan, Mark
Longhi, Marco
Lopez, Julia
Lopresti, Jack
Lord, Mr Jonathan
Loughton, Tim
Mackinlay, Craig
Mackrory, Cherilyn
Maclean, Rachel
Mak, Alan
Malthouse, Kit
Mangnall, Anthony
Mann, Scott
Marson, Julie
May, rh Mrs Theresa
Mayhew, Jerome
Maynard, Paul
McCartney, Jason
McCartney, Karl
McPartland, Stephen
McVey, rh Esther
Menzies, Mark
Mercer, Johnny
Merriman, Huw
Metcalfe, Stephen
Millar, Robin
Miller, rh Mrs Maria
Milling, rh Amanda
Mills, Nigel
Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
Mohindra, Mr Gagan
Moore, Damien
Moore, Robbie
Mordaunt, rh Penny
Morris, Anne Marie
Morris, David
Morris, James
Morrisey, Joy
Morton, Wendy
Mullan, Dr Kieran
Mumby-Croft, Holly
Mundell, rh David
Murray, Mrs Sheryll
Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
Neill, Sir Robert
Nici, Lia
Nokes, rh Caroline

Norman, rh Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Paisley, Ian
 Parish, Neil
 Patel, rh Priti
 Paterson, rh Mr Owen
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Philp, Chris
 Pincher, rh Christopher
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, Victoria
 Pritchard, Mark
 Quin, Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Raab, rh Dominic
 Randall, Tom
 Redwood, rh John
 Rees-Mogg, rh Mr Jacob
 Richards, Nicola
 Richardson, Angela
 Roberts, Rob
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Robinson, Gavin
 Robinson, Mary
 Rosindell, Andrew
 Ross, Douglas
 Rowley, Lee
 Russell, Dean
 Rutley, David
 Sambrook, Gary
 Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Bob
 Selous, Andrew
 Shannon, Jim
 Shapps, rh Grant
 Sharma, rh Alok
 Shelbrooke, rh Alec
 Simmonds, David
 Skidmore, rh Chris
 Smith, Chloe
 Smith, Greg
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, rh Julian
 Smith, Royston
 Solloway, Amanda
 Spencer, Dr Ben
 Spencer, rh Mark
 Stafford, Alexander

Stephenson, Andrew
 Stevenson, Jane
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Streeter, Sir Gary
 Stride, rh Mel
 Stuart, Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunak, rh Rishi
 Sunderland, James
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Throup, Maggie
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Tracey, Craig
 Trevelyan, rh Anne-Marie
 Trott, Laura
 Truss, rh Elizabeth
 Tugendhat, Tom
 Vara, Mr Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Vickers, Matt
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Wakeford, Christian
 Walker, Sir Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Wallace, rh Mr Ben
 Wallis, Dr Jamie
 Warburton, David
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Webb, Suzanne
 Whately, Helen
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Mr John
 Wiggin, Bill
 Wild, James
 Williams, Craig
 Williamson, rh Gavin
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Wood, Mike
 Wragg, Mr William
 Wright, rh Jeremy
 Young, Jacob
 Zahawi, Nadhim

Tellers for the Ayes:
Leo Docherty and
Tom Pursglove

NOES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane
 Abrahams, Debbie
 Ali, Rushanara
 Ali, Tahir
 Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
 Amesbury, Mike
 Anderson, Fleur
 Antoniazzi, Tonia
 Ashworth, Jonathan
 Bardell, Hannah
 Barker, Paula
 Beckett, rh Margaret
 Begum, Apsana
 Benn, rh Hilary

Betts, Mr Clive
 Black, Mhairi
 Blackford, rh Ian
 Blackman, Kirsty
 Blake, Olivia
 Blomfield, Paul
 Bonnar, Steven
 Brabin, Tracy
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
 Brennan, Kevin
 Brock, Deidre
 Brown, Alan
 Brown, Ms Lyn
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas

Bryant, Chris
 Buck, Ms Karen
 Burgon, Richard
 Butler, Dawn
 Byrne, Ian
 Byrne, rh Liam
 Cadbury, Ruth
 Callaghan, Amy
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Carden, Dan
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
 Chamberlain, Wendy
 Champion, Sarah
 Chapman, Douglas
 Charalambous, Bambos
 Cherry, Joanna
 Clark, Feryal
 Cooper, Daisy
 Cooper, Rosie
 Cooper, rh Yvette
 Corbyn, rh Jeremy
 Cowan, Ronnie
 Coyle, Neil
 Crawley, Angela
 Creasy, Stella
 Cruddas, Jon
 Cryer, John
 Cunningham, Alex
 Daby, Janet
 Davey, rh Ed
 David, Wayne
 Davies, Geraint
 Davies-Jones, Alex
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Day, Martyn
 De Cordova, Marsha
 Debonnaire, Thangam
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Docherty-Hughes, Martin
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Doogan, Dave
 Dorans, Allan
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Dromey, Jack
 Duffield, Rosie
 Eagle, Dame Angela
 Eagle, Maria
 Eastwood, Colum
 Edwards, Jonathan
 Efford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Elmore, Chris
 Eshalomi, Florence
 Esterson, Bill
 Evans, Chris
 Farron, Tim
 Farry, Stephen
 Fellows, Marion
 Ferrier, Margaret
 Flynn, Stephen
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Foy, Mary Kelly
 Gale, rh Sir Roger
 Gardiner, Barry
 Gibson, Patricia
 Gill, Preet Kaur
 Glindon, Mary

Grady, Patrick
 Grant, Peter
 Gray, Neil
 Green, Kate
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Nia
 Gwynne, Andrew
 Haigh, Louise
 Hamilton, Fabian
 Hanna, Claire
 Hanvey, Neale
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet
 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
 Hopkins, Rachel
 Hosie, Stewart
 Howarth, rh Sir George
 Hudson, Dr Neil
 Huq, Dr Rupa
 Hussain, Imran
 Jardine, Christine
 Jarvis, Dan
 Johnson, Dame Diana
 Johnson, Kim
 Jones, Darren
 Jones, Gerald
 Jones, rh Mr Kevan
 Jones, Ruth
 Jones, Sarah
 Kane, Mike
 Keeley, Barbara
 Kendall, Liz
 Khan, Afzal
 Kinnock, Stephen
 Kyle, Peter
 Lake, Ben
 Lammy, rh Mr David
 Lavery, Ian
 Law, Chris
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
 Lewis, Clive
 Linden, David
 Lloyd, Tony
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lynch, Holly
 MacAskill, Kenny
 MacNeil, Angus Brendan
 Madders, Justin
 Mahmood, Mr Khalid
 Mahmood, Shabana
 Malhotra, Seema
 Maskell, Rachael
 Matheson, Christian
 Mc Nally, John
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonagh, Siobhain
 McDonald, Andy

McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
 McDonald, Stuart C.
 McDonnell, rh John
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat
 McGinn, Conor
 McGovern, Alison
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McLaughlin, Anne
 McMahan, Jim
 McMorrin, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Miliband, rh Edward
 Mishra, Navendu
 Monaghan, Carol
 Moran, Layla
 Morden, Jessica
 Morgan, Stephen
 Morris, Grahame
 Murray, Ian
 Murray, James
 Nandy, Lisa
 Newlands, Gavin
 Nichols, Charlotte
 Nicolson, John
 Norris, Alex
 O'Hara, Brendan
 Olney, Sarah
 Onwurah, Chi
 Oppong-Asare, Abena
 Osamor, Kate
 Osborne, Kate
 Oswald, Kirsten
 Owatemi, Taiwo
 Owen, Sarah
 Peacock, Stephanie
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Mr Toby
 Phillips, Jess
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Pollard, Luke

Powell, Lucy
 Qureshi, Yasmin
 Rayner, Angela
 Reed, Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reeves, Ellie
 Reeves, Rachel
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
 Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Rodda, Matt
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Saville Roberts, rh Liz
 Shah, Naz
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr Barry
 Sheppard, Tommy
 Siddiq, Tulip
 Slaughter, Andy
 Smith, Alyn
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Jeff
 Smith, Nick
 Smyth, Karin
 Sobel, Alex
 Spellar, rh John
 Starmer, rh Keir
 Stephens, Chris
 Stevens, Jo
 Stone, Jamie
 Streeting, Wes
 Stringer, Graham
 Sultana, Zarah
 Tami, rh Mark
 Tarry, Sam
 Thewliss, Alison
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick
 Thompson, Owen
 Thomson, Richard

Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Stephen
 Trickett, Jon
 Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Vaz, rh Valerie
 Webbe, Claudia
 West, Catherine
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whitford, Dr Philippa
 Whitley, Mick

Whittome, Nadia
 Williams, Hywel
 Wilson, Munira
 Winter, Beth
 Wishart, Pete
 Yasin, Mohammad
 Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:
Colleen Fletcher and
Liz Twist

Question accordingly agreed to.

Amendments (a) to (c) made in lieu of Lords amendment 6B.

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.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 83H), That a Committee be appointed to draw up Reasons to be assigned to the Lords for disagreeing to their amendment 1.

That Greg Hands, Maggie Throup, Leo Docherty, Emily Thornberry and Patrick Grady be members of the Committee.

That Greg Hands be the Chair of the Committee.

That three be the quorum of the Committee.

That the Committee do withdraw immediately.—
(Mike Freer.)

Question agreed to.

Committee to withdraw immediately; reasons to be reported and communicated to the Lords.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton): In order to observe social distancing, the Reasons Committee will meet in Committee Room 12.

Backbench Business

Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy

[Relevant documents: First Report of the Defence Committee, Session 2019-21, In Search of Strategy—The 2020 Integrated Review, HC 165, and the Government response, HC 910; Oral evidence taken before the Defence Committee on 29 September and 10 November 2020, on The Integrated Review—Threats, Capabilities and Concepts, HC 834; Oral evidence taken before the Defence Committee on 17 November 2020, on Defence industrial policy: procurement and prosperity, HC 163; and Fourth Report of the International Development Committee, Session 2019-21, Effectiveness of UK aid: potential impact of FCO/DFID merger, HC 596, and the Government response, HC 820.]

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton):

Before I call Tobias Ellwood, I should say that there will be a four-minute limit on Back-Bench contributions. A number of colleagues want to get in on this debate. I do not mind interventions, but they prevent other people from speaking unless colleagues stick to four minutes. If that does not happen, I will reduce it to three minutes, so I would urge colleagues, especially those in the Chamber, to be very aware of the effect of that.

6.2 pm

Mr Tobias Ellwood (Bournemouth East) (Con): I beg to move,

That this House has considered the publication of the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy.

I thank the Backbench Business Committee for allotting this debate today. Let me begin by expressing my gratitude for what the armed forces do for our country. They do not just watch our backs and keep us safe at night; they are our back-up and who we call upon to step forward in times of need, which is no better exemplified than during the pandemic.

The origins of this integrated review date back to the Queen's Speech in December 2019, billed as

“the most radical reassessment of our place in the world since the end of the Cold War”.

Simply put, the function of any review of this kind is, first, to assess the current and emerging threats and opportunities that we face; secondly, to define the UK's ambitions on the international stage; and, finally, to upgrade our soft and hard power credentials so we can continue to defend our interests and support those ambitions.

The world is a more dangerous place since the last comprehensive review in 2015. The Chief of the Defence Staff recently described

“the strategic context as uncertain, complex and dynamic; with the defining condition being one of chronic instability.”

The causes of this era of instability are, first, the west, including us, having become risk-averse, increasingly unclear what we collectively stand for, believe in or, indeed, are willing to defend.

Secondly, authoritarianism is on the rise across the world. Ever more states and non-state actors are abusing our dated international rules-based order to pursue their own agendas. Finally, advances in technologies

and our growing reliance on data have altered the very character of conflict, allowing attacks on our way of life to be exacted below the threshold of traditional military response.

So how should Britain respond? We should have an integrated review so that we can clarify our long-term strategy relating to China, to Russia, to extremism that is once again on the rise. What are our intentions to help to resolve hotspots such as Yemen? What is our post-Brexit security relationship with the EU? Currently there is none. What are the latest assumptions about the security consequences of climate change and of future pandemics? Most fundamentally, what are our ambitions to repair our frail, rules-based order? Our history, connectivity, international reach, and soft and hard power strengths have traditionally allowed us to step forward when other nations hesitate. Today we hold the G7 presidency, and with the United States just last week reaffirming its resolve to lead the west in confronting global instability, we are overdue in clarifying what “global Britain” means.

The absence of a review is having consequences. Without confirming our international role, our interests and our ambitions, how can the Ministry of Defence craft a requisite defence posture? How can our defence industry plan for the future? In updating our military architecture, we must also be frank about our current capabilities. We should be honest. We perpetuate the myth that our incredible professional armed forces can meet all their taskings and that they have all the kit they need. In reality, that is not the case: our forces are overstretched; sadly, they are now underpaid; and they are often lacking the equipment or the number of platforms to do the taskings that we ask of them.

Yes, the Royal Navy has two incredible aircraft carriers, but our surface fleet is now too small to protect our post-Brexit maritime trade interests. In the Army, our main battle tank and our Warrior armoured personnel carriers are now more than 20 years old, waiting for the green light of the integrated review to know whether they will get upgraded or not. The Royal Air Force has just introduced a formidable F-35 stealth fighter. Unfortunately, we are now only purchasing 48 of 138, because the money is no longer available.

Mark Tami (Alyn and Deeside) (Lab): The right hon. Gentleman makes a very important point. If we reduce the order, not only does that reduce the actual number of aircraft; it also affects workshare and the work going forward. I represent an area that includes Sealand, which has a direct interest in the F-35, which is obviously a vital aircraft for this country's defences.

Mr Ellwood: I agree with the right hon. Gentleman; there are knock-on consequences to delaying decisions, and to changing the promises and commitments that were made in previous reviews.

Yes, the MOD received an additional £16.5 billion in December for the rest of this Parliament, but the Office for Budget Responsibility confirms that there is a £7 billion shortfall in the 10-year equipment plan. Of course we want to seek to retain full-spectrum capability, but investment in the new cyber and space programmes has been paid for by cuts to our conventional capabilities. If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is the need for resilience and flexibility. I therefore stress that it would

be a grave error to reduce the size of the Army by the speculated 10,000 troops. I suspect that the Whips might have a problem if that were put to a vote in this House.

Let me step back; what Britain has traditionally brought to the table is our leadership. Our diplomatic reach, agency work and overseas aid programmes have allowed us to offer workable solutions to problems and to lead the alliances to fix them. I am genuinely concerned that Whitehall has lost the bandwidth—or, indeed, the appetite—to do this. I hope that the publication of the integrated review will prove me wrong.

Finally, I want to turn to China, our biggest geopolitical long-term threat, which warrants its own chapter in the review. For decades, the west has turned a blind eye to China's human rights abuses and democratic deficit, hoping that it will mature into a global responsible citizen. Well, we now realise that that will not happen. China's conduct in the pandemic, in Hong Kong, in the South China sea, along with its continued abuse of World Trade Organisation rules and the way it has saddled dozens of countries with debt confirms that it is pursuing a competing long-term geopolitical agenda, which, left unchecked, will progressively see our world splinter into two spheres of influence.

Economically, technologically and militarily, China will challenge and possibly overtake US dominance in our lifetime. Militarily, China's navy grows by the size of our Navy every single year. It is now introducing its own fifth generation air force, and its army is now the largest in the world. It is sending more rockets into space than all the other nations combined and perfecting space-based weapons.

In my view, cold war two has already begun, but we are still in denial and too timid to call it out, because of China's mighty economic clout. This time, it will not be a build-up of military hardware, troops and nuclear weapons either side of an iron curtain. It will be fought on two very different fronts. First, nations will be forced to take sides, and China is winning here. It is neutralising countries by ensnaring them in long-term debt, controlling states by owning their data and paralysing the international apparatus, such as the United Nations, so removing global scrutiny. Secondly, it involves so-called short of war operations, bypassing direct military engagement through the use of cyber weapons to hit societies directly, as every aspect of our lives goes online. This is the modern battlefield: interference in our critical national infrastructure, including eventually satellites; misinformation via social media; and data theft, including personal data. This is the new reality that the integrated review must address.

I hope that I have articulated to the Minister why this review of all reviews in our generation is arguably the most important for us to publish. It was a brave Churchill in 1946 who warned the west in his iron curtain speech of the advancing Soviet threat. This review offers our Prime Minister today an opportunity to do something similar, starting by expanding the G7 permanently to include Australia, India and Korea, which would represent more than half the world's GDP, the basis on which we could reform our international trade and security standards. For China's Achilles heel is its economy. Global trade is critical for China's advancement. During the last war, the UK and the US got together to write the Atlantic Charter, which formed the basis for so many of the Bretton Woods organisations that built up our world order and which has served us so well for the past few

decades. They now need attention. Perhaps it is time for us to look at an Atlantic Charter 2.0. Again, this is something on which the integrated view could focus.

In conclusion, it is time to up our game. The integrated review is a critical statement of intent, re-establishing our post-Brexit credentials and setting out a coherent vision of the UK's place in the world. It is vital that the Government produce this roadmap, because it is currently missing. I hope that the Minister and the Government are listening carefully to the impressive list of parliamentary colleagues who will be speaking today, no doubt supporting this publication. I hope that there will be no further delay in the integrated review. It must be not another exercise to salami-slice capabilities, manpower, or indeed defence spending but a genuine appraisal of our defence posture and the formal confirmation of our nation elevating its global ambitions and its desire to play a more proactive role on the international stage.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton):

The four-minute limit will now come into effect. For those participating virtually, the countdown clock will be visible on the screens. In the Chamber, it will be in the usual place on the clock.

6.14 pm

John Spellar (Warley) (Lab): The Chairman of the Defence Committee, with whom I am pleased to serve, mentioned the Atlantic Charter. I am very proud of the fact that that charter was brought in by the post-war Labour Government of Ernest Bevin and Clem Attlee to deal with the existential threat that this country was facing.

Looking at the current review, everyone recognises the linkages between the elements of defence, security, foreign policy and development. As US Defence Secretary Mattis said:

“If you don't fund the State Department fully, then I need to buy more ammunition ultimately”.

As a member of the Defence Committee and a previous Defence Minister, I also have to be concerned that the defence budget is not carved up to fund the other areas, because that is what we were facing in the earlier policy review. There was a glaring need to expand cyber and intelligence capability. That was obvious, but it was all within a zero budget. Something had to give, and if there had not been cross-party uproar, it would have been the Defence budget, with a catastrophic impact on equipment, troop numbers, facilities and morale. That is still a threat, and it would be a huge mistake.

Our previous ambassador to the United States, Kim Darroch, recently gave evidence to the Defence Committee. He said:

“I would be really worried about reducing further the size of the British Army. I say that in part on the basis of my experience in Washington. I would go into the Department of Defense and occasionally to see General Mattis myself or to take people in to see him and his predecessor under the Obama Administration. One of the things that both would say consistently is, ‘You are already too small—in terms of your Army. I mean, 80,000 just isn't good enough. You need to be above 100,000. It is a big mistake to reduce to the level you are at. For goodness' sake, do not go down any further and expect to retain your current level of credibility in Washington.’”

Ironically, one of the outcomes of the dither and delay that we have seen on the strategic review that has been to our advantage is that we can relate to the new Biden

[John Spellar]

Administration and the new policies that are rapidly reshaping internal and external policy for the United States. We must certainly work with the Biden Administration to reinforce NATO after the instability of the unlamented Trump regime, but we need to have credibility in order to do that.

That brings me to the second underpinning of our defence and security strategy, which must be resilience, not only in our service personnel, crucial as that is, but in their support, both from civilian employees and also in industry. Surely even the dinosaurs in the Treasury have learned from the covid pandemic that the cost of running down capacity is penny wise, pound foolish on an exponential scale. That is why the mood of the country has shifted, and the pressure will be on the Ministry of Defence to back British industry wherever possible—so I say to the Defence Department: get on with the support ship contract! We must also value the work and commitment of the support personnel and cut out the pernicious dogma that private provision is always best. It has a role, but as we can see from what is currently happening at Faslane, the bean counters are splitting the contracts into smaller competing packages, leading to a complexity of multiple providers and interfaces and a lack of a clear line of accountability. And that on our nuclear deterrent base—really?

6.18 pm

Dr Julian Lewis (New Forest East) (Con): What a joy it is to follow two such pro-defence warriors as we have just heard. As the years roll by, the contents of defence reviews get vaguer as their titles grow more convoluted. In my time in Parliament, we have moved from the 1998 strategic defence review through the 2010 strategic defence and security review, the 2015 national security strategy and strategic defence review and the 2018 national security capability review to the snappily titled integrated review of security, defence, development and foreign policy that we are discussing today.

Conducting such exercises in public will always be problematic. When a conflict is actually under way, it is folly to spell out our strategy, yet in between crises it is usually impossible to predict which potential conflicts will actually occur. If we want peaceful co-existence and our adversary does not, he has the choice of whether, when, where and how to attack. We, by contrast, must maintain a range of capabilities to deal with a wide spectrum of threats. Because an opponent's intentions can change far more quickly than military capabilities, a democracy must maintain maximum flexibility to deal with the unexpected.

The spectrum of threats runs from nuclear and other mass destruction weapons through to conventional or hard military power, and then, via cyber-space and subversion, to disinformation—the latter three on an industrial scale thanks to the coming of the internet. The range of options available to democracies in the face of such threats runs from deterrence through to containment, and then to the dire last-resort alternatives of open warfare or submission to the attacker's demands. If only deterrents could meet all potential threats, that would clearly be ideal, but while one can deter some of the most destructive methods of aggression, containment must be used to hold hostile states and aggressive

ideologies in check until they evolve into something less virulent. In cyber-space, there is a role for deterrence by building resilience and ensuring that would-be attackers will face unacceptable and unavoidable penalties, while at the level of subversion, which is often commercial and financial, not just ideological, the role of good intelligence work is of paramount importance.

As I have already in the past expressed doubts about the wisdom of holding strategic reviews of this sort in public, I will spend the remaining short period of time posing a few questions about the intelligence aspects. I would like to know from the Government whether Defence Intelligence, in particular, will have the necessary agility and breadth to meet the newer threats on the spectrum. Can some detail on the operation of the National Cyber Force announced at the end of last year be provided in the context of the review? Will adequate investment be made in UK capability to operate in the so-called grey zone of disinformation and influence operations, which can be contained but are difficult to deter? Will such investments be funded by additional resources and not be at the expense of conventional capabilities needed to counter hard-power threats elsewhere on the spectrum? Finally, if the fusion doctrine set out in the national security capability review continues to move elements of national security policy into Government Departments not traditionally involved in such work, will parliamentary oversight of those national security elements be facilitated, and will my Committee be able to do its job in that respect?

6.22 pm

Chris Law (Dundee West) (SNP) [V]: When the integrated review was announced, many of us feared for the future of the UK's contribution to international aid and development. The Prime Minister has made it clear previously that he placed little value on aid spending, remarking that the UK could not

“keep spending huge sums of British taxpayers' money as though we were some independent Scandinavian NGO.”

Rather than recognising the UK's moral duty to help the world's poorest and most vulnerable people, the Prime Minister's ambition was to use aid money to promote global Britain and advance the UK's political, commercial and diplomatic interests. It was expected that he would at least go through the pretence of a review, but with the integrated review paused due to covid-19 and without any external consultation, the Prime Minister announced that he would abolish the world-leading Department for International Development. The Government dismissed the opinion of experts, including over 200 non-governmental organisations, who called on the Prime Minister to reverse his decision, and instead pursued his long-term desire to merge the Department into the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

The Chancellor compounded this when he announced that the UK would reduce its aid commitment from 0.7% to 0.5% of gross national income—a shocking abrogation of responsibility and morally reprehensible, particularly in this global health crisis. The Chancellor shamefully used covid and protecting public finances as his excuse for this reckless and inhumane cut. He conveniently forgot, however, that a windfall had been delivered to the defence budget the previous week. Westminster once again put bombs before bairns. Huge sums are already being lost due to the fall in the amount

of GNI, and this further cut means that the aid budget is going to be cut by up to a third. Let us be in no doubt: this is devastating. In the midst of a global pandemic, we should be stepping up, not stepping away. The UN has already warned that covid-19 will set back development gains by decades, and millions have been pushed into poverty.

The reality of these cuts is that each year 5.5 million fewer children are being immunised and 105,000 more lives are being lost, while almost 1 million fewer children are being supported to gain a decent education and 7.6 million fewer women and girls are being provided with modern methods of family planning. Crucially, until legislation is brought forward and enacted, it is the Government's legal responsibility to ensure that 0.7% of GNI is spent on official development assistance. Anything else would be unlawful and this House must hold them to account on that. Reports suggest that the Government will delay any legislation until after the G7 summit in June. Reneging on the 0.7% target is just another example of the UK abandoning its international commitments.

The Government are embarrassing themselves on the world stage as they become increasingly isolated and insular, with the Prime Minister breaking his own manifesto commitments to imitate and appease his Brexit allies Cummings and Farage. This mindset has driven the Government's decisions on international development in the integrated review—a mindset that has routinely advocated using the aid budget to build a new royal yacht *Britannia*; that believes a strategic priority of UK aid is to build the trading and investment partners of the future; and that encourages spending on spies, enhanced cyber-weapons and artificial intelligence-enabled drones rather than on alleviating extreme poverty. This is not a global Britain; it is a little Britain. No matter how many Union Jacks the UK Government wave or parade in front of our televisions, this mindset is best described as Hobbesian: being solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.

Finally, with the UK seemingly intent on breaking its commitments and abandoning the world's most vulnerable people when they need us most, we in the Scottish National party will continue to oppose this mindset, and Scotland will soon fulfil its obligations as an independent nation, delivering aid for the world's poorest as part of the global effort to eradicate poverty.

6.26 pm

Tom Tugendhat (Tonbridge and Malling) (Con) [V]: It is a great pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Dundee West (Chris Law). I thought his Hobbesian description was somewhat negative, given that Hobbes was talking about civil war and the separation of the kingdom into different parts, whereas what the Government have achieved through one of the areas that is essential to the planned integrated review—that is, of course, science—is really quite remarkable.

If we look at the achievements of Kate Bingham, we see that the Government have delivered something fundamental to the future strategic strength of our entire nation: the deployment of science and innovation alongside enterprise and—yes—finance to make the whole much greater than the sum of the parts. This is a fantastic achievement in the face of a virus that is affecting the entire world, and it will no doubt deliver an enormous amount for the entire globe, as we will see that the innovation and development we have achieved in the United Kingdom will become something of a gift to all.

That leads me to the second area that is essential for our integrated review to be successful: technology. From AI to quantum computing, the achievements of our start-up nation and our universities are going to be fundamental to ensuring our strategic strength and depth into the future. That is why so many of us have been passionate advocates for the Government's National Security and Investment Bill and are absolutely supportive of its aims—although some of us would rather make a few tweaks. The Bill is essential to the development of the future of our green economy. Whether in hydrogen energy, about which many of us are passionate because of China's domination of the battery industry, or other areas, there are many technologies in which we are already leading.

That brings me to the element on which I am afraid the Government really could do more. They really do need to publish the integrated review. They have the most fantastic team in No. 10—led by someone who was an adviser to the Foreign Affairs Committee, so I admit to a bias there. The Government could easily publish a fantastic report on how they see this issue going forward. Bringing together the full arms of the state—all the institutions that the British people have at their disposal—is exactly what we need if we are to be able to fight our corner in the coming decade. The world is changing, the rules are changing and the norms are changing. We set the standards by encoding into written law the norms that we grew up with over the past 200 years. Other countries are, quite understandably, encoding their own standards into the electronic code that now runs our lives. As that is becoming cheaper and cheaper, we are seeing technological decoupling and a reversal of some of the globalisation that was achieved in the late 1990s.

This is a moment of challenge for all of us, but I think Britain can succeed. Britain is not only at the heart of a networked world, with some of the best, oldest and strongest alliances around the world—we also have the people. We have the diplomats and the aid workers. We have the soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines. We have the businesses, the finance houses, the innovators, the farmers and so many more who can generate that kind of lead. Indeed, our scientists and our NHS are demonstrating it today. What we need now is not a new orchestra. We need the conductor to set out the tune, so that we can all play it, because Britain will succeed if we know where we are going.

6.30 pm

Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Ind) [V]: I am pleased that we are having this debate and that there will be a review of foreign and defence policy that includes foreign affairs, defence and international aid. But it is a great shame—in fact, it is more than a shame; it is terrible—that on 19 November 2020, the Prime Minister announced that defence expenditure would rise to 2.2% of GDP and that an extra £24.1 billion would be spent over the next four years, and at almost the same time he announced a reduction in the aid budget from 0.7% to 0.5% of GDP and the closure of the Department for International Development, which was subsumed back into the Foreign Office, where the Government always wanted it to be. That is a great shame and a terrible message to the rest of the world.

This review needs to concentrate on the issues that face the world as a whole. The covid pandemic has shown just how dangerous this world is and just how

[Jeremy Corbyn]

dangerous the threat of another pandemic is, which is now seen as a tier 1 threat. The Government were advised in 2008 of the need to prioritise preparations for dealing with a global pandemic. The shortages of personal protective equipment and everything else show that they absolutely did not do that. The introduction to that report quite rightly says, on page 3, that we should look at the “drivers” of conflict. The wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria and now Yemen have led to an unprecedented number of refugees around the world. Some 65 million people—fellow citizens of this planet—have no home of their own and no secure place to live. They want to contribute to the world’s future.

If we are to have a rational review of what we are to achieve in the future, we must surely look at the issues facing the security of the planet, which obviously means our own security at the same time. One of those issues is global inequality. The gap between the richest and the poorest was, at the best times, beginning to close, but because of the economic slowdown due to the coronavirus, it is likely to get wider and wider. More people will be short of food, and more people will be leading insecure lives, and that will be the driver of the terrorists and threats of tomorrow.

Later this year, COP26 will meet in Glasgow, where I hope we will come to an agreement that we will get to net zero by 2030. That means that the priority for all of us should be looking at the issues that face the world—refugees, global poverty, environmental disaster and, of course, trade supplies and food chains for the future; we are a trading nation, and we need to be sure that we can still trade and buy things from elsewhere. We have a very big job on our hands, and I hope the review takes all those issues on board.

The last thing I would like to say in the few seconds I have left is quite simply this. The threat of a nuclear war has now been downgraded to tier 2. The treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons—the global ban—has been supported and signed by 86 nations and ratified by 52. Opinion polls show 59% support in this country for signing it. The global network of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament shows the importance of it. When the non-proliferation treaty comes up for review, let us make a positive contribution and a real effort to bring about a world free of nuclear weapons in the future. Let us concentrate on human rights, poverty and the issues that face us, because that will ultimately make us more secure.

6.34 pm

Mr Mark Francois (Rayleigh and Wickford) (Con): It is a pleasure to follow the right hon. Member for Islington North (Jeremy Corbyn). In 20 years, we have not agreed on very much, but I was born in his constituency in Crouch End.

I want to make two principal points about the integrated review. The first is about Ministry of Defence procurement, which has frankly become a basket case. The National Audit Office and the Public Accounts Committee have produced numerous reports in recent years outlining the chronic failures in the MOD’s procurement function. One recent NAO report highlighted that of the 32 major projects managed by Defence Equipment and Support, only five are running to schedule, and many, as well as

being late, are also running considerably over budget. The latest NAO report on the equipment plan, published on 12 January, confirms yet again that the plan is unaffordable within the MOD’s budget, and that the affordability gap is widening.

One procurement after another is now in serious trouble. The Ajax recce vehicle, Astute submarines, the Crowsnest airborne early warning platform, the Challenger 2 upgrade, the Warrior capability sustainment programme—the list goes on and on, and yet nothing ever really changes. The procurement bureaucracy ploughs on regardless like a giant super-tanker, but one that is probably 40% over budget and five years late.

The increase of the defence budget by £4 billion a year over four years—a roughly 10% increase—is very welcome indeed. Nevertheless, unless we can seriously reform procurement, it will be the equivalent of simply handing large wedges of cash to a chronic alcoholic. About 40% of the entire defence budget is now spent on equipment, including support, yet DE&S at Abbey Wood is persistently incapable of managing its contractors properly and efficiently. If we cannot grasp that nettle once and for all in this review, the whole exercise will have been largely a complete waste of time.

Secondly, if because we cannot cut the Gordian knot of defence procurement, we look for savings elsewhere by slashing the Regular Army, that will only compound the error, as the deputy Chairman of the Committee, the right hon. Member for Warley (John Spellar), made so plain. There is really little point in Ministers promulgating the concept of global Britain and punching above our weight on the world stage if at the same time we are reducing our Regular Army to 72,000 and discarding some of the best line infantry battalions in the world as a result.

The new Biden Administration are already very worried about that, and from what I hear privately they have a perfect right to be. This is now a very live issue—75,000 versus 72,000. I understand that no final decisions have yet been taken, so I appeal to Ministers to draw back before it is too late and reject the 72,000 proposal while there is still time.

As Kipling famously reminded us:

“For it’s Tommy this, an’ Tommy that, an’ ‘Chuck him out, the brute!”

But it’s ‘Saviour of ‘is country’ when the guns begin to shoot”. Let us not destroy some of the finest line infantry in the world simply because we lack the moral courage to fundamentally reform the way we buy their kit.

6.38 pm

Jonathan Edwards (Carmarthen East and Dinefwr) (Ind) [V]: It is a pleasure to speak in this debate. The UK’s departure from the EU and the upcoming publication of the integrated review has prompted a great deal of thinking about the role of the British state in the world. To date, far too much of the political discourse in this House has been based on empty slogans such as “global Britain” and “Empire 2.0”. Much of that vein of British nationalism is based on the misguided concept of superiority—hence the glib use of phrases such as “world-beating” and “best in the world” by Ministers and media propagandists.

I fear that the grand illusions that drove much of the Brexit debate will drive the UK’s foreign policy in a direction that is foolishly based on the exercise of military

power. For example, sending an aircraft carrier and an accompanying strike group to the South China sea to showcase carrier capability seems a bizarre strategic decision when it comes to defence and security priorities. Instead, I urge the British Government to forget their superiority complex, stop wasting billions on weapons of mass destruction and realise that, in the real world, it is through working with others that policy objectives can be best achieved.

That brings me to where I believe the British state should prioritise future investment. The essence of our defence policy must be security. I do not believe the British state faces any prospect of invasion from another state; rather, the security threat comes from terrorism and cyber-warfare. A mass-casualty event in the UK is far more likely to come via the use of a terrorist dirty bomb using nuclear, chemical or biological technology than via a state-sponsored missile strike.

I share concerns that the trade and co-operation agreement between the EU and the UK could reduce the resources available to law enforcement agencies to tackle those threats following the loss of access to Europol, Eurojust and the second Schengen information system. Access to such systems would be far more effective in identifying and neutralising sporadic terrorist threats than any nuclear bomb, warship or tank.

Misguided foreign policy adventures diminish domestic security and create long-term instability in those regions where wars are waged. The review should therefore address not only how the British state can enhance its defence capabilities in the true sense of the word, but how the UK can collaborate with countries across the world to support peace and stability.

It is that final question—how the British Government promote peace and stability—that is, for me, at the very heart of what we are debating today. This review gives the Government an opportunity to set out a vision of a globally responsible Britain using soft power to promote access to global education, support diplomatic missions to find solutions to global tensions, and combat environmental degradation.

That is critical at a time when covid-19 is reversing decades of global progress in supporting vulnerable communities across the world. UNICEF reports that 6,000 more children are at risk of dying each day due to the impact of the pandemic on health services in low and middle-income countries. By the end of 2020, there had been an estimated 14.3% increase in the number of severely malnourished children. We have not heard too much about how the review will outline how UK aid will be used to support interventions to tackle these issues, other than being a blueprint for wasting billions on flag-waving exercises designed to shore up the Conservative base.

I will finish by quoting the *Guardian* columnist Simon Jenkins:

“Sovereign countries change not from without but from within. Short of horrendous wars, they change when their rulers know they must... If Britain really feels the need to set the world to rights it will do so by example, and no other way.”

Diolch yn fawr iawn.

6.41 pm

Sarah Atherton (Wrexham) (Con) [V]: Our adversaries are changing, the characteristics of warfare are changing, and our military is modernising to combat emerging

hard and soft threats, but that will take decades to evolve, and in the meantime we still need boots on the ground. A string of previous defence and procurement reviews have been throttled by lack of funding, but with the announcement of a £24 billion increase in defence spending, I want to see ambition matched by British global aspiration.

In 2018, the national security capability review identified that disease and natural hazards posed a real threat to the UK. How right it was. Therefore, this integrated review must incorporate a fresh analysis of the type of risk and geopolitical competition that that will cause and, equally, what role we want the military to play in it.

During this pandemic, civilian authorities have requested military support on 441 occasions. In Wales, the military has propped up the vaccine roll-out programme, and the number of military personnel embedded in NHS Wales doubled as of last week. The health board serving my constituency of Wrexham has just been afforded logistical planners to assist with expanding the efficiencies of the vaccination centres. That role is vital to protect the public and, by extension, national stability and security.

Let us look at the number of military personnel currently diverted to other duties: 14,500 on winter support; 4,500 on military aid to the civil authorities; three battalions on standby, and a further 5,000 personnel working behind the scenes. Without doubt, such prolonged support will impact military resilience and strike capability. I would like to see that threat addressed in the integrated review, along with a reassurance that personnel numbers will reach their target and will not be reduced.

I anticipate that the integrated review will identify opportunities in the modernisation of defence in order to create skilled jobs and drive exports. That will facilitate the Government's agenda to level up and build back stronger. Certainly, the defence industry and supply chain is vital, and nowhere more so than in Wales. In addition to the presence of military personnel, the next generation of the Army's Ajax armoured fighting vehicle is made in Merthyr, and components for the Boxer in Cardiff. In north-east Wales, MOD Sealand is the global F-35 maintenance hub, and the Shadow aircraft will be supported by Raytheon, in addition to the work undertaken at Qioptiq.

That all creates significant prosperity—more than 7,500 jobs—with the procurement spend in Wales increasing by 11% to £1 billion. That has been achieved because we are one United Kingdom, and the Conservatives are the party of defence. Wales's defence footprint is vital, but our armed forces and defence industry need certainty. Certainty comes with the integrated review, which I hope will be published sooner rather than later.

6.45 pm

Sarah Champion (Rotherham) (Lab) [V]: It is almost a year since the Prime Minister launched his integrated review of the UK's international policy, and how the world has changed since then. The review is supposed to map out how the levers of our diplomatic, development and defence policy work together, providing a truly integrated international strategy for the decades ahead, but despite assurances that it would be published last autumn there is still no sign of it. We have, however, seen a drip of premature announcements linked to the review about increases to defence spending, reductions

[Sarah Champion]

to development spending, and of course the merger of DFID and the FCO last summer.

To make such a momentous decision as a merger before completing the review denied many external stakeholders the opportunity to contribute evidence, and pre-empted the review's conclusions. It was a deep mistake and will have long-term consequences. By cutting UK aid spending to 0.5% of gross national income from 2021 onwards, the Government have broken their promise that the integrated review would be underpinned by an ongoing commitment to spend 0.7% of UK GNI on official development assistance. Reducing our spending at a time of increased global need while our allies in France and Germany seek to increase their development spend sends a message of a country backing away from solving problems and sharing burdens, rather than taking the lead in finding solutions.

In normal times, we would be talking about how to ensure that our aid budget is reaching the people most in need of it, whether it is delivering value for money, and whether it is sufficiently transparent. We need to get back to those conversations. I am pleased that the Government plan to publish a new development strategy, born out of the conclusions and objectives that will be set out in the integrated review. That new strategy will provide an opportunity for the UK to cement its commitment to poverty reduction and the attainment of the sustainable development goals. The International Development Committee, which I chair, is keen to contribute to that new strategy, ensuring that it draws upon the views of stakeholders from across the world.

When the Foreign Secretary spoke to my Committee last month, he told us of his vision for the UK to be an international leader in conflict and dispute resolution. To undertake that role with credibility we must first remove the contradictions that persist in our international policy. How can the UK take the global lead in tackling climate change but continue to support the use of fossil fuels through UK Export Finance? How can we share our commitment to providing quality education for girls when one of the first casualties of aid cuts was a girls' education programme in Rwanda? How does it make sense for the UK to be rightly providing humanitarian assistance to Yemen yet continuing to sell arms to the countries that use those weapons on the Yemeni people?

The integrated review is our chance to tell the world what sort of country the UK wants to be. I want it to be one that promotes peace, equality and prosperity for all, so I have to ask: when will the integrated review be published?

6.49 pm

Dr Liam Fox (North Somerset) (Con): Politicians have never really come to terms fully with globalisation. Perhaps it is the inevitable loss of sovereignty that provides the reticence, but it is a reality. We live in a world that is more interdependent and interconnected than at any time in history. Examples of the impact of that are all around us, from the financial crisis to the effects post 9/11 and the covid pandemic. Events in other parts of the world ricochet quickly to wherever we are, to the extent that the concept of "over there" is almost redundant, because whatever risk is over there

today will be over here tomorrow, whether that risk comes from terrorism, economic issues or, as now, a public health emergency.

We need to have a proper response to the reality in which we find ourselves. I draw a distinction between globalism—the idea of global government—and globalisation, which is an economic reality. One is a pipe dream and the other is the situation that we must address today. We require multilateral co-operation in a much more concerted way than we have in the past and we have to have better institutions. Many of the institutions on which we depend today for global co-operation were designed for a very different world. The United Nations, the Security Council, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organisation and the World Health Organisation all need to be brought up to date, and Britain can play a lead in that.

We need to be at the centre, and we are well placed. We have a permanent seat on the Security Council, and we are in the G7 and the G20. We are at the heart of the Commonwealth. We are a key member of NATO and a big contributor to the World Bank and the IMF. All those have already put Britain in a key position to help.

Post Brexit, we need to remodel Whitehall to reflect the reality of the change, whereby risk is multifactorial, and defence, economic security and commodity security, including water, are all risks that need to be addressed together. I sat on the National Security Council, which was supposed to take a wider view of risk, but it is all too easy for it to become focused on short-term threats to national security rather than take a wider strategic view of longer-term threats.

Issues such as NATO are ongoing problems. The underfunding of NATO by many of its European members needs to be addressed—and they need not think that a change in the American presidency is going to give them much of a breather at a time when the patience of American taxpayers has been sorely tested for far too long. We need to take a strategic view not only of our own interests, but of the interests of those whose world view competes with ours. That is particularly true when the Chinese Communist party is trying to create a more permissive environment for totalitarianism and when we need to create one for democracy, freedom and the rule of law.

I end with a short story. When I was Defence Secretary, I asked a senior official at the Élysée Palace why during the cold war we were happy to use the word "better"—freedom was better than tyranny, capitalism better than state planning and democracy better than totalitarianism—but we were reticent during the Islamic threat to say that religious toleration was better than imposed orthodoxy, that equality for women was better than their being second-class citizens and that democracy was better than theocracy. The answer that I got was, "I think that today we can only say that we are different, not better." If we believe that what we stand for is only different and not better than the alternatives, how can we lead? We either have to shape the world or be shaped by it. I believe that the values we hold are the key to that better future.

6.52 pm

Martin Docherty-Hughes (West Dunbartonshire) (SNP) [V]: Just last night, we heard from ITV News that there is a new component: the defence White Paper—something

that had not been raised with us on the Defence Committee and none of the witnesses at our integrated review inquiry had seriously raised. In the press reports this morning, submissions from the Australian and German Governments raised their own defence White Papers, but it seems odd that the first we are hearing about it in a UK context is a month before the White Paper is published.

The Committee's report on the integrated review was called "In Search of Strategy"; I do not think I am the only one still looking for that strategy. It is, of course, important at this point to reiterate what I and many in Scotland will be looking for in the review. It will come as no surprise to anyone who has heard me witter on about it that our north Atlantic neighbourhood must be central to this integrated review: it is the geography and location that defines our future, just as it has our past. That would, of course, seem logical except that it played no part in the 2015 SDSR, and the UK's neglect of its own backyard is an ongoing worry for those who see all the emphasis in this review being about an Indo-Pacific tilt.

The second plea that I would like to make is on behalf of the defence people who will undertake this strategy. It is clear from the evidence presented in the comprehensive spending review that the extra cash for defence announced in November is going to find its way principally to ensuring that the MOD can just about tread water with its equipment plan, while the day-to-day budget remains stagnant.

For those on the Government Front Bench who will talk about "efficiency savings", let me say that anyone who has read the National Audit Office reports knows that those are illusionary; yet again, this will be fiscal restraint built on the backs of those who serve in our armed forces, and their terms and conditions, housing and wages, all after almost a decade of previous lost real-terms savings. This is unsustainable.

My country is going to be an independent member of the European Union and NATO in the coming years, and much as it will come as a surprise to those who have not been paying attention, this Scottish nationalist at least wants to see our largest neighbour and closest friend have a strategy that its people and its Parliament can understand and buy into. I do not expect anyone on the Government Benches to want to get this right for those reasons, but today I do live in hope.

6.55 pm

Mr Andrew Mitchell (Sutton Coldfield) (Con): I draw the House's attention to my interests, which are set out in the Register of Members' Financial Interests.

The integrated review is a most important moment and, along with my colleagues, I look forward very much to its publication. It will set out what global Britain means post Brexit, and as many have said, there are undoubtedly huge opportunities for us there. It wires together defence, diplomacy and development, and I want to say a few words about development and the importance of soft power, where, hitherto, Britain has been a global leader.

Many on the Conservative Benches, as well as across the House, are very much opposed in principle to the reduction in the 0.7% commitment, not only because it was a promise delivered when the former Defence Secretary, my right hon. Friend the Member for North Somerset

(Dr Fox), and I were in government, but because it was a manifesto commitment made by every elected Member of this House at the last election, just a year ago. It is incredibly unwise to break that commitment, particularly in the midst of a global pandemic. We all know that covid will never be beaten here until it is beaten everywhere, and the British development budget has helped to do an enormous amount to build health structures, which have been so important. If we are vaccinating people in the northern part of Uganda, it is not just about a vaccine and a needle; it is about health structures, and having clinics, fridges, and adequately trained staff.

This will be the largest cut that has ever been made in international development spending, and we are the only country contemplating it: the United States has announced that it will increase development spending by \$15 billion; France is increasing its level of development spending above what we are now proposing; and Germany reached the 0.7% figure last year. The 0.7% has gone down so much this year—as of course it rightly does sometimes, because it reflects the state of our gross national income—that £3 billion has already been shaved off the budget. If the 0.5% proposal were to be brought in, we would be talking about another £4 billion, and so nearly half the budget of nearly £15 billion last year. It is wrong in principle to use that to wipe out 1% of the debt we have racked up in the past year. I ask the Government respectfully to think again about this.

I have a second point I wish to make. I read that the Government are worried about losing a vote on this in the House of Commons and are therefore intending to kick it into the long grass. May I suggest a more constructive approach? Brexit was supposed to bring power back to this Parliament, not to Executive fiat, and I think the Government should put this to Parliament sooner rather than later. The reason for that is, first, that development is long-term; many important development programmes run for three or five years. We see this in the example of the Prime Minister's excellent proposal that all girls should get 12 years of education. If there is doubt over the budget, it is extremely unhelpful in planning those programmes, which will, by definition, then be much less effective. Secondly, as has been pointed out, the Government may be in breach of the law, because the provisions do not allow for missing the target on purpose. If the Government advance down that particular route, they may well get judicially reviewed. So I urge them to think again about this, perhaps getting the £4 billion they would save by this pernicious and shabby cut from a digital online services tax. Why not let Amazon pay fair tax instead of balancing the books in this way on the backs of the poorest people in the world?

6.59 pm

Mick Whitley (Birkenhead) (Lab) [V]: I refer the House to my entry in the Register of Members' Financial Interests. I thank my right hon. Friend the Member for Warley (John Spellar) and the right hon. Member for Bournemouth East (Mr Ellwood) for securing a debate on this incredibly important subject.

Since coming to power in 2010, the Conservative party has presided over a decade of decline in the field of defence. Successive defence reviews have been used to slash spending, leaving a £13 billion black hole in the defence budget, our armed forces short of service personnel,

[Mick Whitley]

and greatly needed orders being deferred. This all raises troubling questions about the readiness of our armed forces to meet new and fast-changing threats in an ever more volatile world. The Prime Minister is right to recognise that, after so many years of reckless mismanagement, it is time to end the era of retreat. I welcomed the Chancellor's announcement last autumn of more than £24 billion of additional funding, in cash terms, for defence over the next four years. The Minister must now confirm how much of this additional funding will be used to fill spending gaps caused by swingeing funding cuts over the past decade.

Of course, the first priority of this integrated review must be to address the needs and wellbeing of our brave service personnel, who put their lives at risk to keep us safe. That means, at long last, putting an end to the scourges of low pay, substandard housing and inadequate mental healthcare. I would also like to know what consideration the integrated review will give to the role that defence spending has to play in supporting domestic manufacturing and improving sovereign capabilities. This is a key challenge for the UK going forward. For far too long, our country's sovereign capabilities have been undermined by the Government's tendency to bypass British manufacturers and buy defence projects off the shelf from abroad. One of the most important lessons of the pandemic is that we simply cannot rely on international supply chains to deliver equipment and infrastructure that is vital to safeguarding our national security. It is imperative that the integrated review recognises that, and that the Government take steps to ensure that vital defence projects are designed and delivered by British manufacturers.

This issue has a special resonance in my constituency of Birkenhead, which is home to the iconic Laird shipyards. In 2019, Cammell Laird was part of a TEAM UK consortium that was successfully shortlisted for the construction of Royal Fleet Auxiliary's new fleet solid support ships. By building these ships in British shipyards, the Ministry of Defence can guarantee at least 6,500 jobs across the UK, including hundreds at Cammell Laird alone.

I have been encouraged by what the Defence Secretary and Prime Minister have to say about the role of defence spending in promoting jobs, skills and high-quality apprenticeships at home, but I am concerned that the Government are still failing to deliver. Too many supposedly shovel-ready defence projects have been delayed, jeopardising British manufacturers and jobs. In Faslane this week, members of Unite the union are balloting for industrial action over the future maritime support programme contract process. They fear the contract will be split into smaller components and contractors, which risks undermining collective bargaining arrangements, as well as the delivery of the project. What we need now is action, and that means putting social value and the promotion of economic prosperity at the very heart of the integrated review.

7.3 pm

Philip Dunne (Ludlow) (Con) [V]: I remind the House of my role as deputy chairman of the Defence Growth Partnership. I, too, look forward, as other Members have said, to the integrated review, but I also look

forward to the defence and security industrial strategy. I congratulate the Secretary of State on securing a multi-year settlement outwith the one-year spending review, providing a £16 billion increase in defence spending over the next four years. As was made crystal clear in the recent National Audit Office report, the continuing material gap in the affordability of the equipment programme has to be grasped. Allocating adequate capital and then avoiding repeated delays through stop-start decisions to programmes will improve both cost and the delivery schedule.

I make four quick points on judging the integrated review. The first is whether the increased resources are sufficient to match the Government's policy ambition to develop the required capacity and capability to maintain credible and effective force structures. The second is whether the review recognises the value of a defence industrial base with sufficient resilience, innovation and sustainable capacity to supply our armed forces with the superior capability that they need, now and in the future. That requires a careful combination of competition and collaboration with industry, providing greater visibility to contractors of potential defence capability requirements. It also requires identifying the contribution of defence and security to the UK economy, as I recommended a few years ago; I am pleased that that is now being stood up through the joint economic data hub, which will help to demonstrate how defence can contribute to prosperity and the Government's levelling-up agenda.

Thirdly, in the post-Brexit era the integrated review provides the opportunity to show global Britain taking a leadership role in international capability programmes. Developing export potential for UK defence capabilities by establishing joint requirements with our allies is essential to ensure that our armed forces are at the forefront of innovation, but also encourages industry to co-invest in developing new capabilities. Securing international support for export programmes will require increased co-operation between Government Departments here at home and the simplifying of Government-to-Government engagement overseas.

Fourthly, I shall be looking for continued investment in innovation—something I championed when in post. All too often, the innovation budget has fallen victim to the annual salami-slice of cutting current programmes to fit departmental spending into the annual budget envelope. That is no way to build confidence with the user community in the armed forces, nor with the potential new suppliers who will come from the technology innovators of the wider commercial world beyond defence, as war-fighting moves into the digital, cyber and space domains.

I urge the Government to use the integrated review to match capability with ambition and support the UK's defence enterprise base, to develop world-leading capability and to build on its important contribution to the prosperity of our country and the credibility of our armed forces.

7.7 pm

Hywel Williams (Arfon) (PC) [V]: I thank the right hon. Members for Bournemouth East (Mr Ellwood) and for Warley (John Spellar) for securing the debate.

I fear that the review is compromised by the assumptions on which it is founded, not just the assumptions about global affairs—new and unclear threats abound, and

old friends of course change leaders—but rather, the assumptions about the very state whose interests the review seeks to safeguard and advance. An effective review must pay due attention not only to the state of international affairs but to the political and economic environment here in the UK. More than half the population of Scotland now support independence in every poll. More than half the population of Northern Ireland say they want a referendum in the next five years on reunification. Even in Wales, disregarded as the most docile part of the kingdom, support for independence now stands at over 30%. The Prime Minister and his friends might prefer to ignore these humdrum matters in their grandiose consideration of global affairs, but for any international strategy to be worth the candle, it needs a degree of domestic consent.

Let us suppose for a moment that Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales choose to remain in the UK. The first finding of the review should be that the centralisation of international engagement in Westminster and in Whitehall will no longer do. So far, this Government have shown themselves wonderfully adept at failing to work with these diverse national interests. They subordinate the Union to the wishes of the largest number. The review should therefore enable proper participation by the four parts of the UK in international affairs, from approving trade deals to consenting to offensive operations by armed forces drawn from, and paid for by, all four parts of the state.

Plaid Cymru wants Wales to play a constructive international role, from supporting climate action to eradicating want, to striving for peace in conflicts in places like Yemen. The Prime Minister's view is different and, I am afraid, more than a little confused. He said in this place on 19 November:

“We have a chance to break free from the vicious circle whereby we ordered ever decreasing numbers of ever more expensive items of military hardware, squandering billions along the way.”—*[Official Report, 19 November 2020; Vol. 684, c. 488.]*

That is all quite true, of course. That is what he said then, but he followed it up with support for Trident. He has, as we say in Welsh, “Pen punt a chynffon dimau”, which very loosely translates as “A pound in the head but a ha'penny in the pocket”. Change is essential.

On a local note, the MOD has acquired training aircraft that cannot normally fly over the sea and that make a very loud noise over land. They are based on Ynys Môn. Ynys Môn is, of course, an island; the clue is in the name.

The time for global pretensions, when foreign affairs were conducted by a Westminster and Whitehall elite, has had its day; and, given its multitudinous failures, quite rightly so.

7.10 pm

James Sunderland (Bracknell) (Con): It is something of an irony that the debate is about publication of the integrated review, but I am grateful to my right hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth East (Mr Ellwood) for convening it and giving us this opportunity.

At the heart of the review is the need for the UK properly to define its strategic role in the world. What is it that we want to do? In my view, policy follows strategy, so it stands to reason that our global strategy will pave the way for the next generation of integrated

foreign, development and defence policy aims to 2030 and beyond. For those in any doubt at all, defence spending is a necessary evil to keep us safe. Today we face a multitude of threats in multiple domains. Some are known to us and some are not, and we are living in an era of constant competition and persistent engagement with our foes, so we need an insurance policy that lies in having some of the most potent military forces in the world—both nuclear and conventional.

Thanks to the commitment of this Government, with an additional £16.5 billion being pumped into defence over the next four years, the MOD finds itself in the position of being able to think long term with its planning. It provides certainty, security and the confidence to make longer-term decisions. I cannot even begin to scratch the surface of the review in a few minutes, but I want to focus on a number of areas.

First, we need to better align our foreign policy with our defence policy, so let us clarify that relationship. Cutting overseas aid from 0.7% to 0.5% is not popular, but charity begins at home. I support the decision, albeit with two conditions: that it reverts when we can afford it; and that it comes with a requirement for a comprehensive review of how we spend the money overseas. Let us tighten the relationship between hard and soft power; embed Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and MOD advisers within foreign Governments; and make those Governments more accountable for how they spend our money. Let us make better use of military training teams to engage in upstream capacity building, particularly in countries where existential threats continue to hinder progress.

If we are serious about being a global power, perhaps even east of Suez, our forces need to be truly expeditionary. We must therefore enhance our ability to project force anywhere in the world at unlimited liability and at readiness. Our naval platforms, ro-ro ferries and long-range aircraft, such as the C-17, will need to be augmented.

We must also never take a risk with the extensive logistic capabilities that we will need to support our combat and combat support arms. The Navy will need more warships, not least to protect our carriers, as quantity does have a quality all of its own. I would also like to see a bigger surface fleet, albeit with less capable platforms, perhaps, but to enhance our global presence. We will also need to invest in our forward operating bases, not just our traditional P jobs in Cyprus, Gibraltar and Ascension, but also further east in Diego Garcia, Bahrain, Singapore and elsewhere. Defence relationships with NATO, the UN, the Five Eyes community, the five power defence arrangements, the EU and through bilateral agreements will also need to be reinforced.

Lastly, we need a comprehensive defence industrial strategy to support our nascent manufacturing capability. I continue to find it crass that we are investing huge sums in overseas military equipment when we should be protecting jobs and livelihoods at home. We have some of the best manufacturers and integrators on our shores, so let us invest in them by building British, buying British and selling British. I hope that once it is published, the integrated review will be what it needs to be.

7.14 pm

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck (South Shields) (Lab) [V]: I would like to thank the right hon. Member for Bournemouth East (Mr Ellwood) and my right hon.

[Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck]

Friend the Member for Warley (John Spellar) for securing tonight's debate. The integrated review so far has been a matter of delay, confusion, contradiction and vague statements. It was announced in 2019, and the House was told that it would be completed early in the new year of 2020. Then it was to be January 2021, and then the Secretary of State for Defence said it would be in February, only for the Prime Minister to advise us a day later that it would not be in February. We are now told that it is expected in spring this year. The Government's response to the Defence Committee's report, aptly named "In search of strategy", was incredibly poor. Their response to the International Development Committee's report was not only poor but dismissive, and their response to the Foreign Affairs Committee did not fare much better.

I appreciate that this is a difficult review. It is vast in scope and it comes at a time of global instability, emerging threats and increasing risks on the back of a decade of decline, the coronavirus pandemic, climate change, food insecurity, non-state actors, allies who do not always behave in the way we expect them to, and enemies we know of and those we do not know yet, but the actions of this Government to date have not increased our status and standing in the world; they have diminished them. We are isolated from Europe and out of step with the new US President when it comes to arms sales in support of the Saudi-led offensive operations in Yemen. We need to be consistent in our approach to human rights abuses. We should call them out in every single country where they happen. The fact that we do not do so is leading to questions about our values and priorities on the international stage. The merger of the Department for International Development and the Foreign Office has damaged our soft power and our reputation for international humanitarian co-operation.

In spite of the delay in the review, funding and policy decisions relevant to it have been announced, such as the increase in defence spending, which was welcomed across the House. However, this raises the question: what is the desire behind spending this money? It appears to be funding without a strategy. What has not been so welcome is the repeated reports of cuts of 10,000 soldiers. I understand that emerging cyber-technology and grey-zone operations need investment and that warfare is always changing. In this ever-changing landscape, though, the one constant in warfare throughout history has always been and always will be our brave forces personnel, and to diminish their numbers would be a grave mistake. Defence Secretaries in the previous two US Administrations warned us that our Army was too small, and just last week Lord Darroch, the former British ambassador to the US, warned that further cuts could put our transatlantic defence relations at risk.

I am always struck that, when it comes to defence and foreign affairs, vague and nebulous words and concepts are used that serve only to hinder understanding and the delivery of our aims. So I make a plea that this review should not suffer from the same problem as previous ones, such as the 2015 SDSR. In Committee, we heard that the review repeatedly used phrases such as "rules-based international system", yet officials were completely unable to describe exactly what this meant. It does not bode well that MPs across this House continue to seek answers on this issue and get none.

It does not bode well that people around the world are no longer clear what we stand for. I urge the Government to stop making vague promises, stop making contradictory statements and offer some answers very soon.

7.18 pm

Stuart Anderson (Wolverhampton South West) (Con): I have been a member of the Defence Committee for approaching a year now, and the integrated review is something that we have been eagerly awaiting. The importance of the review cannot be overestimated, and a date for when it is going to be released would be gratefully received by the Committee and many more. In a little over that year, we have left the EU and we are coming out of what is hopefully a once-in-a-century pandemic that will have a lasting impact on what the future holds for us. What is our country going to look like on the world stage? What thought has been given to our position—to where we see ourselves and where our allies see us?

Anyone who knows me would say I am an optimist, but I like to temper that with a sensible pragmatism. We have faced the same as the rest of the world; the speed at which we recover could define the position that we take. I understand why there has been a delay in the publication of the review, but time is now of the essence and we must release it.

As a member of the Defence Committee and a proud veteran, I want to see a strong vision for our country, especially on the world stage. The opportunities for us will be different given the impact of coronavirus and life outside the EU. However, in the same breath we must look at the threats to our country and our allies. Many continually argue that warfare has changed and we must prepare for every eventuality. Although it is fair to say that warfare has evolved, its nature remains—and always will—brutal, so it is vital that we prepare and can cover every eventuality, from traditional fighting capabilities to operating effectively in the grey zone, and anything else that we need to be able to do.

As a young soldier, I was sent on operations after debates and votes in this House. I hope it is not the case, but there could be a time in the future when we debate and vote on whether to send troops into harm's way to defend us or our allies. I want to know that we have done everything we can to equip, prepare and set up for success our brave armed forces.

I have a son, Sam, of whom I am very proud. At 16, he has one main focus, and that is to be a soldier. To me, he is still a child, but he is the same age as I was when I walked into the Army careers centre. If he is successful in joining the Army, I want to know that he will have everything he needs to fight, however they need to fight in the coming decades.

I firmly believe that there is an acceleration in the evolution of the battle space. We need to know, clearly, how we are prepared for that and where we stand in the world. The integrated review will set all this out for our country and our allies. We need to do what the Prime Minister originally planned and release the integrated review, so I would really welcome a date.

7.21 pm

Claire Hanna (Belfast South) (SDLP) [V]: Since the previous major review of the UK's national security and defence in 2015, we have experienced significant

change and new, emerging threats, not least the global pandemic and the UK's departure from the EU. Last November, the Prime Minister said in a statement on the review that

"Britain must...stand alongside our allies, sharing the burden"—
[*Official Report*, 19 November 2020; Vol. 684, c. 487-488.]

but I am afraid those words felt hollow in the context of the loss of DFID and significant cuts to the aid budget. I am concerned that the integrated review will represent another step away from international development and overseas aid priorities and a move towards defence and cure—I suppose—rather than a focus on prevention and long-term development.

The UK's development record has been something to be really proud of in terms of helping countries with fragile political, economic and healthcare systems and in turn making the world a safer place for us all. That is the best basis of a security and defence strategy. Recent moves towards explicitly self-interested policies will create a scenario in which the purpose of development spending becomes transactional or just for use as leverage, which is not just morally wrong but has, as we know, proven disastrous in the past. It is important to remember precisely why DFID was created. It was from the need to separate general overseas policies from aid interests and to ensure that aid was used in the best interests of the most vulnerable—which is how I believe citizens want it to be spent—and not, as was the case then, to leverage trade and arms deals.

For the first time in many years, development progress around the world is going backwards. Unfortunately, that is the context in which the Government have dropped their legal commitment—a manifesto pledge that is less than a year old and, as was said earlier in the debate, a commitment made by nearly every Member of this House—to protect the UK's aid spending. For all the talk of global Britain and walking on the world stage, it is important not to strip back things such as generosity, far-sightedness and multilateralism. I say this as an Irish Member of the UK Parliament who is not moved by concepts like sovereignty and the armed forces, but who is deeply proud of the UK's commitment and records on aid.

We are living in an economic contraction worse than any in living memory, but aid investment is far-sighted and is a good way to spend money to guard against longer-term problems. Well-nourished children will learn well in school, and informed and empowered women will see their children thrive and survive. Draining the reservoirs of poverty stops extremism taking hold and we know that this makes for a safer and more secure world for all of us.

In December, a report estimated that covid-19 would push a further 200 million people into extreme poverty, while, at the same time, commercial interests from the global north extract resources many times greater in value than those that we invest in aid and development. Climate change resulting from our overuse of those resources will have massive impacts on developing countries and could lead to mass displacement, natural disasters, instability and the potential for conflict and a refugee crisis.

As we face the future, the UK cannot leave developing countries behind and go it alone. This review cannot see the decimation of a strong record on aid in favour of isolationism and self-interested policies. If we do not

address the root of instability and insecurity around the world, we will not have a safer world for UK citizens or for anybody else. With covid and with development generally, until everyone is secure, we cannot all be secure.

7.25 pm

Sir Bernard Jenkin (Harwich and North Essex) (Con) [V]: With the end of the cold war, the UK failed to develop a new national or grand strategy and allowed its mechanisms for maintaining such a strategy to atrophy. This review must start by accepting that and deal with the changes in equipment, concepts, pressure of economics, accelerating technological change, and the new forms of conflict and competition. It must demand new and different operational concepts and a new strategic framework to meet the challenge of modern hybrid warfare.

The Chief of the Defence Staff's announcement of a new integrated operating concept is therefore of extreme importance. The integrated review must set out a conceptual framework that incorporates all forms of new technology and must support the new relevant operational concepts. The Nagorno-Karabakh war demonstrates just how decisive technological advantage can be if one side has deployed it and the other side does not have it. The technology can be more important than force numbers, tactics or training, and that may be a paradigm shift in the nature of modern conflict.

To prevail, today's military must have electronic warfare dominance, integrated, multi-force battle management systems enabling very short sensor-to-shooter links, 24/7 surveillance and remote targeting, ground, air and sea-launched precision warheads and survivable platforms such as armoured fighting vehicles with active defence suites. At 2% of GDP, what will we be able to buy? Not enough on its own. Not only must the MOD adapt but many other Government Departments need to acknowledge and provide for their own evolving contribution to national security. This also extends to the private sector.

Civilian technological development has become key to maintaining military pre-eminence. A crisis may still require large equipment numbers at short notice, so we must also reduce unit costs and design in commonality, ease of training, and low cost of storage and maintenance. We must also find civilian value for military technology in order to reduce costs.

Here is an example. The west relies on space for everything that we do in our daily lives, including military operations. This contrasts with Russia or China. By 2045, China may well have equivalent reliance, but its design will be resilient and defensible. The UK has no launch capability, but we do have a thriving satellite industry. Now is the time that we must fund a coherent space policy, including launch capability. If Russia's heavy lift rockets can destroy the global network of telecommunication satellites with nuclear electromagnetic pulse space weapons and instantly it can replace its own satellites, we must show how we would replace ours just as quickly both as a response and as a deterrent. The RAF's experimental Microset could be a classic dual-use capability in such a role.

Finally, Sir Stephen Lovegrove's welcome move to national security adviser takes defence into what has been too much of a diplomat's fiefdom, but it is imperative that his successor as deputy permanent secretary at Defence arrives with an appreciation of all this new

[Sir Bernard Jenkin]

complexity and the role that technology must play. In this, we need experts not amateurs, however gifted the latter are.

7.29 pm

Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD) [V]: I want to make three points, and the first is a short one. The hon. Member for Bracknell (James Sunderland) referred to some threats not being known. That takes me instantly to the cyber aspect of our defence. The revelations recently about how the organisation called Bellingcat identified the murderers in Salisbury are very instructive indeed. We have to be very serious about this, as other Members have said. That is all I want to say about that.

The hon. Members for Bracknell and for Birkenhead (Mick Whitley) and the right hon. Member for Ludlow (Philip Dunne) made great play of guarding our British defence industry capability. I am firmly of the opinion that, as we reach next-generation weapons for all three services, it is very important that if we cannot make them by our own hand—and hopefully we can, using British expertise and British engineering—we should co-operate with other countries, and we must have a stake in making that equipment. If we do not, the fact is that we will never have all the intellectual knowledge that we would like to have.

I am sure we are all very pleased that the UK has bought F-35s from the United States—although perhaps not as many as we would like—but I cannot honestly see Lockheed Martin telling us every single thing about how every gizmo in that aircraft works. Why should it? This is a very important point. Even if it seems expensive at the time, if we do not do that, we will be making a mistake. As other Members have said, we will be depleting our future manufacturing capability, and once we lose those skills—be it in shipyards, building aircraft or building weapons for the Army—it is very hard to get them back again.

My second point is a Scottish point, and I want to make a slightly different one from the one that the Chamber hears quite a lot. I am very clear that if the 4th Battalion of the Royal Regiment of Scotland said to my hometown of Tain or to Wick, Thurso or wherever they have the right to do this that they would like to parade with their bayonets fixed and their colours flying, local people would be absolutely delighted. There is no doubt about it: our armed forces enjoy a very special place in people's hearts in the highlands. I talked about the 4th Battalion of the Royal Regiment of Scotland, but if HMS Sutherland chose to visit Invergordon, which it has done in the past, that would go down extremely well with the local people. Our armed forces are seen as something that Scotland can be extremely proud of, and I believe that the armed forces in all four parts of the United Kingdom are part of the glue that sticks our country together and makes the United Kingdom united.

There have been some sensational words in the press about the fact that we are not recruiting as many people into the armed forces as we should be, and that possibly is the case. The highlands of Scotland are very fertile recruiting grounds, as are many other parts of Scotland.

I wish to see much more effort made through recruiting teams coming to Highland games, fêtes and town galas, because there is a great future here, and it could really help our armed forces. It is a pleasure to join this debate, and I am grateful to the right hon. Member for Bournemouth East (Mr Ellwood) for bringing it forward.

7.33 pm

Richard Drax (South Dorset) (Con) [V]: First, I pay tribute to our armed forces for all they do. Last November, the Prime Minister paid his own tribute when he said:

“For decades, British Governments have trimmed and cheese-pared our defence budget. If we go on like this, we risk waking up to discover that our armed forces—the pride of Britain—have fallen below the minimum threshold of viability, and, once lost, they can never be regained. That outcome would not only be craven; it would jeopardise the security of the British people, amounting to a dereliction of duty for any Prime Minister.”—[*Official Report*, 19 November 2020; Vol. 684, c. 487.]

Amen to that. My right hon. Friend went on to announce a welcome increase in defence spending of just over £24 billion over the next four years. As a former soldier and a member of the Defence Committee, I believe that this level of support and commitment to our armed forces is critical.

Paying an insurance premium is always painful, until it is called for, when its value is truly appreciated. The question now is: what do we want our armed forces to do? We need a clear aim if a relevant appreciation is to be made. We had a useful acronym in the Army: KISS—keep it simple, stupid. For too long, reviews have been overcomplicated, often resulting in a fudge. During the cold war, the aim was simple: to counter the threat from the Soviet Union. Today, there is a clear and present danger not only from a re-emergent Russia but from China, and that is not to mention terrorism. Worryingly, the rules-based order appears not to apply to any of them.

Our days of operating on our own, except perhaps for minor deployments, are over, and we will be working closely with our NATO allies. Whatever we deploy, whether on land, on sea or in the air, must be the best, with properly trained and equipped personnel. Can we afford to go on mothballing scores of main battle tanks, fooling ourselves that they can be reactivated in days, when that is simply not possible? If we are to keep that asset, surely quality is more realistic than quantity.

Of course, money and the Government's commitment to spend it is a key factor, but with hugely expensive items on the wish list, not least in cyber and space, the question is how to prioritise? Surely that is a question not just for the UK, but for our allies, not least the most important one—the United States. At a recent public session of our Committee, I noted Lord Darroch's comments carefully. He told us that former US Defence Secretary General Mattis said that the US would not regard our armed forces as credible if we could not field an Army of 100,000. I understand that there is an ongoing argument within the MOD about whether the Army should be cut to 75,000 or 72,000. Like the US, I believe that any cut to our dwindling conventional force is short sighted. Maintaining such an asset within NATO is key to deterring a would-be aggressor. Now, as global Britain, we need to take that responsibility very seriously indeed.

Of equal significance is soft power. Our armed forces serve and are welcomed around the world. Our troops evacuate, support, rescue, protect, build and train overseas.

The white ensign flying proudly at the stern of our warships is still a powerful and reassuring emblem to many, representing freedom, democracy and the rule of law. At a time of great instability in the world, when so many people live under the cosh, never has it been more important to fly the flag.

The Prime Minister has made an encouraging start. Now we need clarification of the aim so that a thorough appreciation can be made and the right conclusions reached.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton): We will go to our final speaker, Alyn Smith, who I am squeezing in with two and a half minutes.

7.37 pm

Alyn Smith (Stirling) (SNP) [V]: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak.

This is a curious debate, in that the integrated review is a bit like the Loch Ness monster: it is oft talked about but seldom seen. It is curious that we are debating a paper that none of us has seen and is clearly being made up as the Government go along. That said, I wish them well. I want Scotland's closest neighbour and friend to have a vision of where it fits in the world, to be secure in its skin and to be comfortable in how it progresses and presents itself. But from my and my party's perspective, global Britain has voluntarily made itself smaller, meaner and poorer by leaving the European Union: smaller by leaving the European Union and limiting the opportunities we have, poorer by doing so in the way it did, and meaner by opting out of the Erasmus programme and visa arrangements for creatives when it did not need to, and by cutting the 0.7% international aid budget at a time when the world needs it more than ever.

All those advantages have been taken away and replaced with bluster and flags, and the idea that flying a flag on a ship somehow makes it more effective than any other. That is not our vision. Contrast that with the SNP's vision of independence in Europe and the real-world advantages that we have enjoyed until recently, which we will regain with independence. We want to be independent not to be separate or apart. We know where we fit in the world: we fit in the north-west corner of the European continent, and we are very comfortable with that. We are naturally multilateral. The cornerstone of our foreign policy is EU membership. The cornerstone of our defence policy is NATO membership. The cornerstone of our trade policy is EU membership. All those advantages will make us more secure and richer.

The people of Scotland have a choice between two Unions: the Union with the UK or the Union with our European continent. Choosing between two Unions is a really comfortable place for the people of Scotland to be. I will critique global Britain on its merits, and I will critique the review honestly when it is brought forward—I look forward to doing so—but I will contrast them against the real-world advantages of European Union membership, which Scotland so firmly endorsed and will regain with independence.

7.40 pm

Stewart Malcolm McDonald (Glasgow South) (SNP) [V]: I congratulate the Chair of the Defence Committee on securing the debate. In the year of COP26, and the

year we hope to start to put the pandemic behind us, the debate is rather timely. However, as my hon. Friend the Member for Stirling (Alyn Smith) said, it seems curious that we are debating a document that has not yet been published. Of course, that is not the only curious thing about the integrated review. The other curious thing about it is that, certainly as far as the defence element goes, all of the budget has been published months in advance of the integrated review being finalised; that happened before Christmas.

The other curious element is when we will we finally see it. If the Minister answers only one question, I feel it should be that one, because when the Secretary of State for Defence gave a covid update not so long ago I asked that question of him and he told us that it would be in the first two weeks of February. Here we are, still within the first two weeks of February, and we now believe that it will be within the first two weeks of March. If the Minister clears up that and nothing else, we will at least have made some progress.

In November of last year we published a 70-point submission to the Government. I am sure that the Minister has read all of it. We put in there some of the things that the Scottish National party would like to see within the integrated review when it is published. We restated our long-standing opposition to the nuclear programme. We suggested that we see proper multi-year defence agreements dealt with on a cross-party basis, much as happens in European countries. We suggested, again, our manifesto commitment of an armed forces representative body. We suggested that the Foreign Office follow examples such as Canada or Belgium, where there is greater public involvement in foreign and diplomatic policy making, and that we have a proper mechanism by which the devolved Administrations of the UK can engage in foreign policy making and the use of the Department's resources.

We suggested, of course, no deviation from the 0.7% aid spend. I think I heard the hon. Member for Bracknell (James Sunderland) use that dreadful phrase "charity begins at home". Well, he is never one to miss an opportunity to miss the mood of a debate and my goodness did he when he uttered that phrase in the same speech in which he called for the Government to stick to the global Britain rhetoric. We cannot have both of those things.

We have called on the Government to formally adopt the concept of climate justice, to design a new atrocity prevention strategy, and to have greater policy coherence across all Departments when it comes to foreign policy. One example of that descending into farce was on 2 July last year, when Lord Ahmad, a Foreign Office Minister, welcomed the UN's call for a global ceasefire, and on 5 July the Trade Secretary announced the resumption of weapons sales to Saudi Arabia.

We have asked the Government repeatedly to implement the recommendations of the Russia report. We have asked for a commitment to NATO's standing maritime groups to be prioritised over out-of-area operations that have dubious benefit. We have called on the Government to have resilience at the heart of defence and security policy making. We have called on the Government to put health, human and economic security on a par with the buying of hard kit and to make it central to the review when it is published.

[Stewart Malcolm McDonald]

We have called on the Government to diversify the armed forces recruitment base, with only 11% of the armed forces made up of women. That number is embarrassingly low. We have called on the Government, along with Conservative Members, to rip Capita out of the recruitment process when it comes to the armed forces, and of course to deliver on the promise made to Scotland prior to the independence referendum on armed forces numbers in Scotland—a promise they have never met. We have also called on the Government to provide a mechanism in the review by which we can have democratic oversight of special forces, and to support a global ban on lethal autonomous weapons—something supported by the UN Secretary-General.

Forgive me, Madam Deputy Speaker—the clock does not seem to be working on the screen, but perhaps I can quickly outline the five pillars by which we will assess the review when it is published. How will it strengthen multilateralism? What will it do to help to reform organisations such as the Security Council and Interpol and to ensure greater collaboration on digital data and cyber? What will it do to enable the UK to be a good global citizen, to promote human rights, to strengthen aid commitments, and to have a proper atrocity prevention strategy? How will it focus on the UK as a north Atlantic nation? Many Members have said that NATO is the cornerstone of the UK's defence policy, as it should be, and yet seem keen to act anywhere other than in its own backyard. The UK is a north Atlantic country. We want the integrated review to bolster resilience. We want it to better enable the Government to define, identify and deter grey zone threats, and ultimately—

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton): I thank the hon. Member for his contribution. There is not a clock because we have an agreement from the Front Benchers that they will stick to the time limits agreed.

7.46 pm

Wayne David (Caerphilly) (Lab) [V]: This has been an important debate, and I am pleased that there have been so many excellent contributions. Four Chairs of Select Committees and a number of senior and well-informed Back Benchers have made a number of important and varied points. Most of them shared the view that there needs to be a strategic approach towards Britain's engagement in the world.

Let us remind ourselves that in February of last year the Prime Minister announced that he was launching an integrated review. He said that it would define Britain's place in the world. It would, he said, be the largest review of its kind since the end of the cold war. It would, we were told, provide a coherent framework for Britain's foreign, defence, security and development policies. Impressive words, but what has happened since? In November of last year, the Prime Minister delivered another statement that was again full of warm and impressive words, but by then the integrated review had been pushed into 2021; and in the middle of last month the Defence Secretary told us that it would be published in the first two weeks of February. The latest is that it will be published in the spring. Perhaps the Minister could be precise in telling us when that will take place.

We have seen significant developments in two areas in particular that should have been included in the consideration of the integrated review. The first was the collapsing of DFID into the FCO, to which my hon. Friend the Member for Rotherham (Sarah Champion) referred eloquently. This move had little strategic thought behind it and was accompanied by a cut in the UK's aid budget—this at a time when the world is in crisis and there is more need for development aid than ever before. It not only hits the world's poorest but diminishes the UK's status in the world and hugely damages our ability to be an international force for good.

The second development was the statement in November on an increase in defence spending and a reorientation of defence spending priorities. This came after a decade of cuts, of course. It was a supreme example of putting the cart before the horse. It was funding without a strategy, as my hon. Friend the Member for South Shields (Mrs Lewell-Buck) eloquently said. Neither in that statement in November nor since has there been an explanation of how exactly that money will be used strategically to address the real and potential threats that this country faces.

To be fair, the Foreign Secretary hinted, in his evidence to the Foreign Affairs Committee in October, that a rethink of priorities was taking place. We were informed that there would be an Indo-Pacific tilt in UK foreign policy, to which the hon. Member for Carmarthen East and Dinefwr (Jonathan Edwards) referred. We were also told that other areas, such as strengthening the national resilience of technology and cyber, would be included in the integrated review. But after a year, there is nothing of substance to be seen; and please, Minister, do not put all the blame on covid. We know there are more deep-seated problems at the heart of Government that have led to this unacceptable delay.

The central question is: when will we have the integrated review? Now that Britain has left the European Union and we are clear that the disastrous period of Trump's presidency is behind us, at long last we need to see the publication of the review. A review is needed to give coherence and direction to Britain's role in the world, so that all the energies of all Government Departments with an international interface can contribute towards common goals. A review is needed so that Britain's strong diplomatic tradition and its influence through so-called soft power can play a significant role in furthering our national objectives. We wait to see whether the Government's integrated review is up to the task.

7.51 pm

The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa (James Cleverly): Let me first congratulate my right hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth East (Mr Ellwood) on securing this debate, as well as the right hon. Member for Warley (John Spellar). Both have extensive interests and long-standing interest in this area. I pay tribute to the members of the House of Commons Defence Committee for their work, and I also thank the Foreign Affairs and International Development Committees for their scrutiny of my Department's work. I thank both their Chairs, my hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Tom Tugendhat) and the hon. Member for Rotherham (Sarah Champion), for their contributions, as I do the Chair of the Intelligence and Security Committee, my right hon. Friend the Member for New Forest East (Dr Lewis).

The fact that I am joined on the Front Bench by my hon. Friend the Minister for Defence Procurement—he represents Horsham, where my wife has family, as he knows—demonstrates the integrated nature of this review, as we have both a Defence Minister and a Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Minister here. *[Laughter.]* It is an in-joke, Madam Deputy Speaker; he knows what I mean. Time prevents me from addressing all the points raised in this debate, but I hope that during this speech I will be able to cover most of them. The integrated review is an ambitious and wide-reaching review, and the purpose of this integration is to examine every aspect of our international security, development and defence policy. It is my pleasure to respond to this debate on behalf of the Government.

The Government want UK foreign policy to deliver for our people and to be rooted firmly in our national interest. That is why the commitment to deliver a review of foreign, defence, security and development policy was announced in the Queen's Speech in December 2019. As we said then, and as has been mentioned by right hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth East, the review is

“the most radical reassessment of our place in the world since the end of Cold War”.

When published, the review will define the Government's ambition for the UK's role in the world, outline how the UK will be a problem-solving, burden-sharing country, and set a strong direction for the recovery from covid-19 at home and overseas so that collectively we can build back better.

I am pleased to be able to tell the House that the Government intend to publish the review in March. *[Interruption.]* This year. The Government's original intention was to publish the review in 2020. However, the House will agree that it would have been wrong to set out the Government's long-term international vision while we tackled the early stages of a global pandemic. Providing a full response to covid-19 was and is the Government's No. 1 focus; that is why it was right to pause the review in the spring of last year.

Work has, however, been ongoing, adapting to the ever-shifting geopolitical and geo-economic context caused by covid-19. The review has involved detailed horizon-scanning, covering trends, opportunities, risks and threats. It has involved evidence-gathering and policy analysis, and wide consultation with experts, academics and foreign partners.

The Prime Minister, supported by the National Security Council, is personally leading the review. The Foreign Secretary chaired a cross-Whitehall ministerial small group to advise the Prime Minister. Civil servants from across Whitehall have worked to ensure that the review draws on the full range of expertise and skills available to Government. This demonstrates the integrated whole-of-Government approach to this review, going further than the strategic defence and security reviews of the past. Our future strategy and approach to the challenges of the next decade will benefit from the collective might of our national security apparatus.

The Government have also looked beyond Whitehall to incorporate the expertise of the nation, speaking to key people and organisations with an interest in our nation's security and prosperity. By reaching out in this way we have ensured that the best minds in the UK and beyond are feeding into the review's conclusions and challenging traditional Whitehall assumptions and thinking.

The initial findings of the review are already informing our decision making. The announcements made in November's spending review were informed by the first phase of the integrated review and set us on the right path to deliver on our visions and priorities. The Prime Minister has already announced the first conclusion: the largest increase in defence spending since the cold war, more than £24 billion over four years. This settlement is a signal of intent and heralds an era when we bolster our global influence. It ensures that our armed forces have the necessary tools and equipment to defend the UK and its people, cement our place as a leader in NATO and underpin our foreign policy and our ability to defend free and open societies.

On international development, changes to our ODA budget were driven by the economic impact of covid and are temporary. To ensure the maximum impact from our aid budget, the Foreign Secretary has set out the core principles for us to sharpen our focus this year.

The Government have signalled our intention to deepen involvement in the Indo-Pacific and have started to take steps in that direction. Last week, we submitted the notification of intent letter to begin the comprehensive and progressive agreement for trans-Pacific partnership accession process.

The creation of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office itself was an act of integration, uniting development and diplomacy into one Department, bringing together Britain's international efforts to have an even greater positive impact and influence on the world stage.

Let me end by saying that this is the opportunity to define and strengthen our place in the world. The integrated review will send a message about what the UK stands for as an independent actor on the global stage and how we will back this up with action to secure our interests and also defend our values.

The world has not stood still, and neither have we. The UK endures as an active global leader. In the past year alone, we have led the global efforts to deliver a vaccine, raising \$8.8 billion for Gavi through our hosting of the global vaccine summit; we have demonstrated global leadership in tackling climate change, including doubling our international climate finance contribution to help millions around the world; and we have pushed back on those who would attack our values through the new bespoke immigration route for British national overseas status holders. This is global Britain.

The integrated review will build on that, setting out our vision for the next decade, based on our values and grounded in the UK national interest. We will announce the full conclusions of the integrated review in March, unleashing our independent foreign policy outside the European Union as we launch our presidencies of the G7 and COP26. 2021 will be a year of leadership for global Britain as a force for good in the world.

8 pm

Mr Ellwood: Let me take a minute to thank all those who have participated in the debate, and the Minister for responding. He mentioned covid-19 and our contribution. I look forward to seeing HMS Argus repeat what it did with Ebola, helping other nations and making sure that we get the vaccinations out. I hope that he might be able to take that forward. I thank all those who contributed.

[Mr Ellwood]

Three themes arose from the debate. First, there is a real desire for Britain to play a more active role on the international stage—to be one of those nations that step forward when others hesitate. Secondly, we must invest in our soft and hard power: do not cut the Army by 10,000, and do not cut our aid budget from 0.7%. Thirdly, the Government must publish the review. The Minister gave a month, but I noticed that he did not give a day or a year; I presume it is 2021. We very much look forward to that.

The US has stepped forward as a nation to say that it is going to be more invigorated, to re-establish western resolve. We need to be with it. This integrated review provides the road map for what global Britain means. We look forward to its publication.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House has considered the publication of the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton): I am sorry that we were not able to get to the many other speakers who wanted to get in, but time simply did not allow it.

Business without Debate

DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

That the draft Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2021, which were laid before this House on 17 December, be approved.—(*Tom Pursglove.*)

Question agreed to.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),

PUBLIC HEALTH

That the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 (S.I., 2021, No. 53), dated 18 January 2021, a copy of which was laid before this House on 19 January, be approved.—(*Tom Pursglove.*)

Question agreed to.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),

That the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (All Tiers and Self-Isolation) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 (S.I., 2021, No. 97), dated 28 January 2021, a copy of which was laid before this House on 29 January, be approved.—(*Tom Pursglove.*)

The Deputy Speaker's opinion as to the decision of the Question being challenged, the Division was deferred until Wednesday 10 February (Standing Order No. 41A).

Mr Mark Harper (Forest of Dean) (Con): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I felt it would be helpful to the House to explain why I objected to that statutory instrument. It was debated yesterday in a Committee, which I attended. I asked the Minister for Patient Safety, Suicide Prevention and Mental Health, my hon. Friend the Member for Mid Bedfordshire (Ms Dorries), a number of important questions about the sharing of health data with law enforcement authorities, namely the police. The Minister was not able—I have no criticism of her—to furnish the Committee with answers to many of those questions yesterday, and she undertook, quite reasonably, to write to Members.

I put it on the record that I did not feel it would be appropriate for the House to be asked to support the statutory instrument without those answers having been furnished to the Committee. Those answers have not been furnished to the Committee, and that is why I objected to the statutory instrument, which will force it to be voted on tomorrow. I hope that is helpful to the House.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton): I thank the right hon. Gentleman for that point of order. He has clearly used it to explain very thoroughly why he objected to the motion and, as I say, there will be a deferred Division tomorrow.

Climate and Ecological Emergency: UK's Response

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—(Tom Pursglove.)

8.5 pm

Caroline Lucas (Brighton, Pavilion) (Green): It has been almost two years since this House declared a climate and nature emergency, and more than one year since Parliament last debated the climate and nature crises as an interlinked issue, yet the need for not only debate and declarations but ambitious action could not be more urgent.

The world is now hotter than at any time in the past 12,000 years, and 16 of the 17 hottest years on record have taken place since 2000. Record fires have raged in the Amazon and the US, ice caps in Greenland melt at a terrifying pace and Storm Eta wreaked havoc and unimaginable tragedy in central America. At the same time, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services has set out the grim facts on nature and biodiversity: 1 million species are now threatened with extinction, many within decades—more than ever before in human history. Every warning light on the dashboard is flashing red. With the UK due to host the COP26 climate summit in November, and with the COP15 biodiversity summit also taking place this year, the responsibility to show honest and bold global leadership could not be greater.

That means acknowledging three things. First, our domestic climate policy is inconsistent and incoherent. To take just one example, the Government's failure to call in the recent decision to allow a new coalmine in Cumbria prompted James Hansen, for 10 years NASA's most senior climate scientist, to warn that the Prime Minister risks humiliation by showing such contemptuous disregard for the future of young people and nature. The UK cannot lead a good COP from a position of weakness and inconsistency.

Secondly, we are off course to meet both our fourth and fifth carbon budgets. Not only that, but those budgets are based on an 80% emission reduction by 2050, not net zero. The latest annual progress report from the Climate Change Committee highlighted that the Government have failed on 17 of their 21 progress indicators, and that only two of 31 key policy milestones have been met.

Thirdly, and most crucially for tonight's debate, the science on which the target of net zero by 2050, and thus the revised Climate Change Act 2008, are based has moved on. It is time to update the legislation. Let me explain why. The climate does not care about target dates. What matters is how much carbon is emitted into the atmosphere over the rest of this century. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimates that a global carbon budget—the total burnable carbon between 2018 and 2100—consistent with a 66% chance of 1.5° C warming is just 420 billion tonnes of CO₂. It is currently being burned at approximately 40 billion tonnes a year. On current trends, that gives us until 2030 at the latest before that global carbon budget is used up. After that point, we would have to rely on costly and uncertain negative emissions technologies to avoid global heating of more than 1.5° C. Historically, the UK has been one of the world's biggest emitters. We started the modern fossil fuel age with the industrial revolution. We are

disproportionately responsible for the cumulative emissions in the atmosphere. Factoring that in alongside the need to allow space for poorer countries to develop, a fair carbon budget for the UK looks like around 2.5 billion tonnes of CO₂ over that same period.

If we calculate emissions on a consumption basis—that is, if we take responsibility for carbon burned overseas in the service of UK consumption—we are burning through our fair carbon budget at more than 500 million tonnes a year. That gives us just five years before it is gone. That is the reality, that is the inconvenient truth and that is why we urgently need to adopt the climate and ecological emergency Bill, a private Member's Bill that I introduced into the House last year that so far has the support of 98 MPs from eight different parties.

The Climate Change Act 2008 was undoubtedly pioneering in its time, and many other countries have taken inspiration from it, but it is now hopelessly out of date. An emergency means that we need to act now, in line with what the science demands. The beauty of the climate and ecological emergency Bill is that it offers Government, Parliament and citizens a framework for the UK to play the fairest and most effective role it can to meet the crisis head on—a framework designed for coherence and integrity.

The CEE Bill follows the science; it represents the last best chance for the House to tackle the climate and ecological crisis that we all face together. It has been drafted with the help of expert scientists and has three primary goals: to ensure that the UK meets targets designed to limit global heating to 1.5° C, the point that we must not pass if we are to avoid catastrophe; to conserve and restore nature, ensuring that we protect this life-sustaining planet that is our common home; and to give people a real say in how we transition to a zero-carbon society, drawing on the creativity and ingenuity of the British people as we recover from the effects of the pandemic.

The Bill also seeks to fill in the holes of the 2008 Act in three key ways: first, by accounting for the UK's emissions on a consumption basis, counting the emissions that we are responsible for overseas as well as those from international aviation and shipping; secondly, by setting out measures that tackle the climate and ecological emergency simultaneously; and thirdly, by involving citizens in what will need to be an equitable shift towards a fairer and greener society.

We need to tell the truth about our climate emissions. The Government like to say that they have reduced emissions by more than 40% since 1990, but that is true only on a territorial basis; one of the ways in which it has been achieved is by offshoring so much of our manufacturing and essentially outsourcing so many of those emissions to countries such as China. If we factor those back in, we have reduced emissions by much less than 40%—possibly by as little as 10% or 15%.

It is time for honesty and time to face reality. The Committee on Climate Change has now published its advice in relation to the sixth carbon budget for the year 2035 and specifically recommended that international aviation and shipping emissions be taken into account. I would welcome confirmation from the Minister tonight that the Government intend to heed that advice.

I also note that the CCC's advice still leaves out the emissions associated with trade. I ask the Minister: will the UK commit to updating its consumption-based

[Caroline Lucas]

accounts and setting targets and budgets that take account of all the carbon emissions attributable to UK consumption, including those associated with imports? Does she agree that COP26 is the golden opportunity for the international community to start to co-ordinate action on consumption-based emissions with a view to ensuring consistent, robust methods of calculation, avoiding the risk of double-counting and getting the incentives right for different actors?

One of the most important policies in the CEE Bill is the inclusion of nature. Nature has been absent from these debates for far too long, and the UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, failing right now to meet 17 out of 20 UN biodiversity targets. Yet climate and nature are two faces of the same problem. The CEE Bill places a premium on nature-based solutions, and on making change now rather than relying on speculative future technologies. Unless we change the goals of our economic system away from ever-increasing growth, as the Dasgupta review demonstrates, we will undermine both our own health and that of the natural world. As Professor Dasgupta says, we need to change how we think, and act and measure economic success to protect and enhance our prosperity and the natural world. If anyone is in any doubt about that, consider that the global economy is set to nearly triple in size between now and 2050—that means three times more production and consumption.

It is hard enough to decarbonise the current economy in such a short time span; the idea that we will be able to do it three times over while protecting and restoring nature is, frankly, for the birds. Or quite literally not: not for the birds, not for the bees and not for the thousands of species at risk from the impact of human activity on the planet. The UN biodiversity summit COP15, due to take place in May, is an immediate opportunity for the Government to raise the bar and demonstrate that they are listening to Dasgupta and others.

Finally, there is citizens' engagement. It is important to recall that the Climate Change Act 2008 itself also started life as a presentation Bill in 2005, inspired by civil society's "Big Ask" campaign. It is proof that by working together, with shared purpose, giving a voice to thousands of concerned citizens calling for change, global history can be made.

Likewise, the CEE Bill is the people's Bill. It has sprung from the grassroots, with the intention of giving the public a real say on the climate and nature emergency. The brainchild of the CEE Bill Alliance—a talented group of campaigners, including those who previously fought for the Climate Change Act—it has also had input from scientists at the cutting edge of climate and ecology. My thanks go to them all and to all those who have joined the campaign. The campaign for the CEE Bill is broad and inclusive, working with allies from business, trade unions, faith groups, charities, local communities, the arts and individuals.

The Bill has participative democracy at its heart. The transition to a zero-carbon future is not something that should be done to the people; it is something that should be done with people. Only then will it be a just transition. There is an opportunity, too, for the process to give citizens fresh agency and hope—for our response to the climate crisis to renew our tired and failing democracy. Initiatives such as the Climate Assembly

UK show that people have a huge appetite to be part of identifying and agreeing positive solutions. Assembly members came up with ambitious ideas such as free bus travel, a frequent flyer levy, and advertising bans on high-emission products. We are often told that the public will not get on board with bold policies, but that could not be further from the truth. It is also striking that alongside clear, proactive, accountable and consistent leadership from the Government, assembly members also wanted cross-party consensus and for political parties to work together.

The CEE Bill proposes a new and much larger emergency assembly to guide Parliament and the Government in their strategy to reduce emissions and restore nature—this is to help Ministers, not hinder them, and ensure that action reflects the boldness for which citizens are crying out. So will the Minister outline tonight whether the Government have plans to actively and meaningfully engage the people of this country in tackling the climate and nature crises? What role does she envisage will be played by a participative democracy?

To conclude, we are nearing a cliff edge of cascading Earth system collapse. The narrow window for limiting warming to 1.5° is closing fast. Leadership means telling the truth about what that means for people's lives and livelihoods. It is no exaggeration to say that this is the most consequential decade in human history. The experience of covid-19 has demonstrated that with a collective understanding of the nature of a crisis Governments can take radical, unprecedented action. The scale and ramifications of the emergency require us to set aside party differences, as happened in 2008, and reach for the new vision of human prosperity that we know is possible. With sufficient political will, we can co-operate to ensure we all thrive within the limits of our planet, but that is not going to happen without new legislation that gives us a framework commensurate with the science and with the reality. The CEE Bill is that new legislation. It brings the future into the present and our responsibility to the future into the present, too. I hope the Minister will grasp this opportunity to recognise that the climate crisis is bigger than any one political ideology, and will work with me and others on legislation that could be a new and desperately needed global first.

8.18 pm

Nadia Whittome (Nottingham East) (Lab) [V]: It is a real privilege to follow the hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Caroline Lucas), and I am very proud to co-sponsor her CEE Bill.

The emergence of coronavirus has thrown into focus the way in which environmental degradation can have profound impacts on society, and of course the escalating ecological crisis will make future pandemics more likely, so we must make sure that our recovery is a green one right from the start. We cannot wait until the pandemic is over to take these urgent steps. We cannot afford to lose sight of the climate crisis, because it threatens our very existence. The 2018 special report by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concluded that to stop runaway climate chaos we need "rapid and far-reaching transitions" that are "unprecedented" in scale, yet we have heard from the hon. Lady how little progress we have made on that.

The Bill really offers the most viable way for us to tackle the climate and nature emergency at a national level. It provides a clear framework to deliver the UK's

commitments to the Paris climate agreement. For example, the Bill would introduce measures to dramatically reduce our emissions, restore and regenerate our soils, biodiverse habitats and ecosystems, and lessen the negative impacts that we have on our environment. In short, it would mean that the Government would have to take immediate, radical action of the sort that the crisis demands. The Bill has been written by scientists, lawyers and climate activists. It is backed by a broad range of campaign groups, businesses, charities and individuals and, as will be evidenced today, it has huge cross-party support.

In May 2019 this House declared the climate and ecological emergency, but that means very little without comprehensive legislation. We cannot simply declare; we must also act, and the Bill is essential to ensuring the commitment that we made almost two years ago.

8.21 pm

Patrick Grady (Glasgow North) (SNP): I am grateful for the opportunity to show solidarity with the hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Caroline Lucas), not least by taking the perch that she is quite accustomed to on these Benches. This is an important opportunity to demonstrate the cross-party and cross border ambition that exists to tackle the climate emergency. The Scottish Government and First Minister were the first on these islands to declare a climate emergency. I am still not sure whether the UK Government have declared an emergency in the way that the House as a whole has, but there is undoubtedly cross-party agreement on the need to raise our level of ambition and the level of action that we are taking.

The Scottish Parliament has already passed a second climate change Act, with genuinely world-beating carbon emissions reductions targets. Of course we have the opportunity to go further and faster, as technology and political allow us to. We are also committed in Scotland to a just transition, transforming local economies, and we have already committed to higher environmental standards and nature standards, including on air pollution—amendments of the type that the Tory Government were rejecting when the Environment Bill was debated last week.

We wish the hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion well with her Bill. It is disappointing that the procedures in this place are not allowing it to have the proper debate that it deserves, but she has given an indication of how popular campaigning and determination can make these things work, so perhaps, beyond the Queen's Speech, we shall see a further opportunity for proper debates and votes on the proposals, to test the will of the House on them.

In Glasgow, my city, we look forward to hosting COP26 later this year. I hope that, one day soon, Scotland will be able to become an independent signatory to the Paris agreement and whatever protocol arrives from Glasgow, but in the meantime the UK Government must lead by example. Talk is not enough, and we are demonstrating tonight that the cross-party ambition and the political will are there if the Government are willing to take that action.

8.23 pm

Sarah Olney (Richmond Park) (LD) [V]: It is a real pleasure to be here this evening to provide support to the hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Caroline Lucas)

in this very important debate. I speak on behalf of all the Liberal Democrats when I say that we really support the Bill's continued progress. While we have been discussing the climate and ecological emergency, for me one of the real priorities is that the Bill brings together the action needed both on climate change and on the environment. Both are absolutely critical, as the hon. Lady laid out in her excellent opening speech, but it is really clear that the current structure of government is not well set up to deliver on our objectives and the Government's objectives in these areas. We see too much stovepiping between different Departments on both climate and the environment, and to bring everything together under one set of objectives that can be driven forward together is really important, and is the real strength of the Bill.

I have been involved in a number of digital events up and down the country to support the Bill and talk more to the public about it. It has become clear that we can use the platform that the Bill provides to speak to the public much more openly about climate and the ecological emergency. We all know that there will be a measure of individual behaviour change required, and it is urgent that we start talking to members of the public right now about what they need to do to deliver the change we need to see if we are to combat climate change and make a real difference to our environment.

Those are the reasons why I am supporting the Bill. The Liberal Democrats want to see the Bill progress through the Commons. I echo what the hon. Member for Glasgow North (Patrick Grady) about the structures of the House not allowing that, but I believe that if a way could be found for more Members to have their say on the elements of the Bill, we would see a lot more progress.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton): Before I bring in the next speaker, it is important to say that Adjournment debates should not be about specific pieces of legislation. The debate is about the UK's response to the climate and ecological emergency. References to a Bill are fine, but it is not a forum for discussion on a particular Bill. I am sure that Liz Saville Roberts will take that into account in her speech.

8.25 pm

Liz Saville Roberts (Dwyfor Meirionnydd) (PC) [V]: Diolch yn fawr, Dirprwy Lefarydd. It is an honour for me to work today in a cross-party spirit with the hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Caroline Lucas). I am sure that we are all trying to raise the sense of urgency by the best means we can and use this House and this Chamber to good effect.

Climate change and ecosystem degradation are already a pressing reality in Wales, from changing weather patterns to biodiversity loss, with a 2019 report concluding that 666 species are threatened with extinction and 73 have been lost already. It is clear that to address this issue effectively and quickly, we need to mobilise unprecedented levels of innovation and investment across our economy and society.

Wales is a nation committed to transition, with the principle of sustainable development written into our constitution, but to bring about real transition, the UK also has to change. That means devolving and decentralising power, rather than centralising the decision making and resources necessary for that transition. Critically, that means increased economic and borrowing powers for

[Liz Saville Roberts]

the Government of Wales to finance the pivotal transition with the rapidity that our climate and environment demand.

I welcome this debate, and I hope that the UK Government will consider how best to support this transition across all four nations of the UK, particularly in the upcoming Budget. No nation in the world can manage climate change alone, but neither can centralised command and control alone bring about the change we need.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Before I call the Minister, I should say that there have been a number of contributions, and it needs to be noted that this has left the Minister with a very short amount of time to respond; she only has six minutes.

8.27 pm

The Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth (Anne-Marie Trevelyan): I congratulate the hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Caroline Lucas) on securing this Adjournment debate on such an important subject. I am really pleased that I was able to share some of my time with colleagues, because this issue goes far wider than this Parliament—it is a global challenge. How we act on climate change is the most pressing issue of our time; I completely agree with her.

While we find ourselves in the midst of this very difficult pandemic, which of course is our short-term priority, we must not abandon and have not abandoned our planet's need for urgent care, because we risk so many further crises for our children. Climate change is happening now, and this Government are determined that the UK will be a world leader in ensuring that the Paris agreement takes root across the globe. We will demonstrate through our commitment to bring down our country's greenhouse gas emissions, and acting this year as the president of COP, that we will be a global leader.

The Prime Minister has made a critical commitment to doubling our international climate finance to £11.6 billion, with £3 billion of that going to nature-based solutions. We were the first major economy in the world to set a legally binding target to reach net zero carbon emissions across our economy by 2050, and we have shown that rapid progress on decarbonisation is possible alongside a thriving economy. Our emissions are down by almost 44% across the last 30 years, and our economy has grown by 78% in the same period. We have been absolute in our commitment to power past coal over the last 10 years, with a reduction in electricity generation from coal from 40% in 2012 to less than 5% today, replaced by renewables. We have made significant progress in meeting our climate targets, meeting our first two carbon budgets and projected to meet the third by 2022. We exceeded the required emissions reduction of the first by 1.2% and the second by nearly 14%, but now is the time to double down and decrease our emissions further and faster. To do this, the Prime Minister set out his 10-point plan last year to lead the world into a new green industrial revolution. We set out ambitious policies, backed by £12 billion of Government investment. The plan will support up to 250,000 highly skilled green jobs across the UK and accelerate our path to reaching net zero by 2050 while laying the foundations for building back greener.

The 10-point plan will develop the cutting-edge technologies needed to drive down those emissions in industries across the UK through significant investment in hydrogen, new nuclear and carbon capture technologies. The 10-point plan will go further. We are backing our world-leading automotive sector, including in the west midlands, the north-east and Wales, with a £2.8 billion package to accelerate the transition to electric vehicles and transform our national infrastructure better to support that electric vehicle revolution. Working with industry, we will drive the growth of low-carbon hydrogen. As part of the 10-point plan, we are aiming for 5 GW of low-carbon hydrogen by 2030. That will see the UK benefit from around 8,000 jobs across our industrial heartlands and beyond.

Importantly for me, we are determined that this transition must be a just and fair one. The Treasury is conducting a review of the cost of net zero. In its review due to be published this spring, it will outline how the transition to a net zero economy will be funded and ensure that contributions are fair as between households, businesses and the taxpayer. We must ensure that the net zero transition works for everyone.

Throughout the UK, more than 2.5 million highly skilled people employed in manufacturing make a huge contribution to the wealth and character of their communities. We must not take those skills away from people, so as industry changes, our lifetime skills guarantee will ensure that people are equipped with the skills they need to adapt to the new products and services that we want them to provide. We have also launched the green jobs taskforce, bringing businesses and unions together with skills providers and Governments to develop plans for new, long-term, good-quality green jobs by 2030.

This year, we find ourselves in the privileged position of being the president of the G7 and of hosting and holding the presidency of COP26. We are determined to use these key international events to promote ambitious action to deliver the transformational change required by the Paris agreement. I have the extraordinary honour of being not only the Minister for Energy but the international champion for COP26 for adaptation and resilience. One of the critical challenges that we have as a global leader is not only to ensure that we walk the walk in demonstrating our decarbonisation in the UK, taking our country to a place where our greenhouse gas emissions are no longer impacting on the planet, but to help those developing countries that need to be able to grow and support their communities in a green way, building back better after the traumas that covid has caused to so many of the very poorest developing countries.

We will bring forward our own bold proposals, including our net zero strategy, in the run-up to COP26 to demonstrate that we will be cutting those emissions, creating new jobs and bolstering those new industries across our country to lead on that global stage. We will make sure that the UK's voice is heard, that we deliver on our commitment to net zero and that protecting our planet for our children and for theirs in the future is something on which we can deliver.

Question put and agreed to.

8.33 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) (Lab) | Bell Ribeiro-Addy |
| Debbie Abrahams (Oldham East and Saddleworth) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Nigel Adams (Selby and Ainsty) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Bim Afolami (Hitchin and Harpenden) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Imran Ahmad Khan (Wakefield) (Con) | Ms Nusrat Ghani |
| Nickie Aiken (Cities of London and Westminster) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Peter Aldous (Waveney) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Rushanara Ali (Bethnal Green and Bow) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Tahir Ali (Birmingham, Hall Green) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Lucy Allan (Telford) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Dr Rosena Allin-Khan (Tooting) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Mike Amesbury (Weaver Vale) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Sir David Amess (Southend West) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Fleur Anderson (Putney) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Lee Anderson (Ashfield) (Con) | Chris Loder |
| Stuart Anderson (Wolverhampton South West) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Caroline Ansell (Eastbourne) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Tonia Antoniazzi (Gower) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Edward Argar (Charnwood) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Jonathan Ashworth (Leicester South) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Sarah Atherton (Wrexham) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Victoria Atkins (Louth and Horncastle) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Gareth Bacon (Orpington) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Mr Richard Bacon (South Norfolk) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Kemi Badenoch (Saffron Walden) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Shaun Bailey (West Bromwich West) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Siobhan Baillie (Stroud) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Duncan Baker (North Norfolk) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Mr Steve Baker (Wycombe) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Harriett Baldwin (West Worcestershire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Steve Barclay (North East Cambridgeshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Hannah Bardell (Livingston) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |

| Member eligible for proxy vote | Nominated proxy |
|--|-------------------|
| Paula Barker (Liverpool, Wavertree) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Mr John Baron (Basildon and Billericay) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Simon Baynes (Clwyd South) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Margaret Beckett (Derby South) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Apsana Begum (Poplar and Limehouse) (Lab) | Bell Ribeiro-Addy |
| Aaron Bell (Newcastle-under-Lyme) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Hilary Benn (Leeds Central) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Scott Benton (Blackpool South) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Sir Paul Beresford (Mole Valley) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Jake Berry (Rossendale and Darwen) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Clive Betts (Sheffield South East) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Saqib Bhatti (Meriden) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Mhairi Black (Paisley and Renfrewshire South) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| Ian Blackford (Ross, Skye and Lochaber) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| Bob Blackman (Harrow East) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Kirsty Blackman (Aberdeen North) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| Olivia Blake (Sheffield, Hallam) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Paul Blomfield (Sheffield Central) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Crispin Blunt (Reigate) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Mr Peter Bone (Wellingborough) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Steven Bonnar (Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| Andrew Bowie (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Tracy Brabin (Batley and Spen) (Lab/Co-op) | Mark Tami |
| Ben Bradley (Mansfield) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Karen Bradley (Staffordshire Moorlands) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Ben Bradshaw (Exeter) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Suella Braverman (Fareham) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Kevin Brennan (Cardiff West) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Jack Brereton (Stoke-on-Trent South) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Andrew Bridgen (North West Leicestershire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Steve Brine (Winchester) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Paul Bristow (Peterborough) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Sara Britcliffe (Hyndburn) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Deidre Brock (Edinburgh North and Leith) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| James Brokenshire (Old Bexley and Sidcup) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |

| Member eligible for proxy vote | Nominated proxy |
|--|-------------------------|
| Alan Brown (Kilmarnock and Loudon) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| Ms Lyn Brown (West Ham) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Anthony Browne (South Cambridgeshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Fiona Bruce (Congleton) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Chris Bryant (Rhondda) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Felicity Buchan (Kensington) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Ms Karen Buck (Westminster North) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Robert Buckland (South Swindon) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Alex Burghart (Brentwood and Ongar) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Richard Burgon (Leeds East) (Lab) | Bell Ribeiro-Addy |
| Conor Burns (Bournemouth West) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Dawn Butler (Brent Central) (Lab) | Bell Ribeiro-Addy |
| Rob Butler (Aylesbury) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Ian Byrne (Liverpool, West Derby) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Liam Byrne (Birmingham, Hodge Hill) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Ruth Cadbury (Brentford and Isleworth) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Alun Cairns (Vale of Glamorgan) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Amy Callaghan (East Dunbartonshire) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| Dr Lisa Cameron (East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| Sir Alan Campbell (Tynemouth) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Mr Gregory Campbell (East Londonderry) (DUP) | Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson |
| Dan Carden (Liverpool, Walton) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Mr Alistair Carmichael (Orkney and Shetland) (LD) | Wendy Chamberlain |
| Andy Carter (Warrington South) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| James Cartlidge (South Suffolk) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Sir William Cash (Stone) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Miriam Cates (Penistone and Stocksbridge) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Maria Caulfield (Lewes) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Alex Chalk (Cheltenham) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Sarah Champion (Rotherham) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Douglas Chapman (Dunfermline and West Fife) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| Bambos Charalambous (Enfield, Southgate) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Joanna Cherry (Edinburgh South West) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| Rehman Chishti (Gillingham and Rainham) (Con) | Sir Iain Duncan Smith |
| Jo Churchill (Bury St Edmunds) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |

| Member eligible for proxy vote | Nominated proxy |
|--|-------------------|
| Feryal Clark (Enfield North) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Greg Clark (Tunbridge Wells) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Mr Simon Clarke (Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Theo Clarke (Stafford) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Brendan Clarke-Smith (Bassetlaw) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Chris Clarkson (Heywood and Middleton) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| James Cleverly (Braintree) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown (The Cotswolds) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Dr Thérèse Coffey (Suffolk Coastal) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Elliot Colburn (Carshalton and Wallington) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Damian Collins (Folkestone and Hythe) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Daisy Cooper (St Albans) (LD) | Wendy Chamberlain |
| Rosie Cooper (West Lancashire) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Yvette Cooper (Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Ind) | Bell Ribeiro-Addy |
| Alberto Costa (South Leicestershire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Robert Courts (Witney) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Claire Coutinho (East Surrey) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Ronnie Cowan (Inverclyde) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| Sir Geoffrey Cox (Torridge and West Devon) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Neil Coyle (Bermondsey and Old Southwark) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Stephen Crabb (Preseli Pembrokeshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Angela Crawley (Lanark and Hamilton East) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| Stella Creasy (Walthamstow) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Virginia Crosbie (Ynys Môn) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Tracey Crouch (Chatham and Aylesford) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Jon Cruddas (Dagenham and Rainham) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| John Cryer (Leyton and Wanstead) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Judith Cummins (Bradford South) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Alex Cunningham (Stockton North) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Janet Daby (Lewisham East) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| James Daly (Bury North) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Ed Davey (Kingston and Surbiton) (LD) | Wendy Chamberlain |
| Wayne David (Caerphilly) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| David T. C. Davies (Monmouth) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |

| Member eligible for proxy vote | Nominated proxy | Member eligible for proxy vote | Nominated proxy |
|--|-------------------|---|-------------------|
| Gareth Davies (Grantham and Stamford) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Jonathan Edwards (Carmarthen East and Dinefwr) (Ind) | Stuart Andrew |
| Geraint Davies (Swansea West) (Lab/Co-op) | Mark Tami | Ruth Edwards (Rushcliffe) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Dr James Davies (Vale of Clwyd) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Clive Efford (Eltham) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Mims Davies (Mid Sussex) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Julie Elliott (Sunderland Central) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Alex Davies-Jones (Pontypridd) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Michael Ellis (Northampton North) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Philip Davies (Shipley) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Mr Tobias Ellwood (Bournemouth East) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Mr David Davis (Haltemprice and Howden) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Chris Elmore (Ogmore) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Dehenna Davison (Bishop Auckland) (Con) | Ben Everitt | Mrs Natalie Elphicke (Dover) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Martyn Day (Linlithgow and East Falkirk) (SNP) | Patrick Grady | Florence Eshalomi (Vauxhall) (Lab/Co-op) | Mark Tami |
| Thangam Debbonaire (Bristol West) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Bill Esterson (Sefton Central) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Marsha De Cordova (Battersea) | Bell Ribeiro-Addy | George Eustice (Camborne and Redruth) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesei (Slough) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Chris Evans (Islwyn) (Lab/Co-op) | Mark Tami |
| Caroline Dinenage (Gosport) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Dr Luke Evans (Bosworth) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Miss Sarah Dines (Derbyshire Dales) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Sir David Evennett (Bexleyheath and Crayford) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Martin Docherty-Hughes (West Dunbartonshire) (SNP) | Patrick Grady | Ben Everitt (Milton Keynes North) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Anneliese Dodds (Oxford East) (Lab/Co-op) | Mark Tami | Michael Fabricant (Lichfield) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Michelle Donelan (Chippenham) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Laura Farris (Newbury) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Dave Doogan (Angus) (SNP) | Patrick Grady | Tim Farron (Westmorland and Lonsdale) (LD) | Wendy Chamberlain |
| Allan Dorans (Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock) (SNP) | Patrick Grady | Stephen Farry (North Down) (Alliance) | Wendy Chamberlain |
| Ms Nadine Dorries (Mid Bedfordshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Simon Fell (Barrow and Furness) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Steve Double (St Austell and Newquay) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Marion Fellows (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| Stephen Doughty (Cardiff South and Penarth) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Margaret Ferrier (Rutherglen and Hamilton West) (Ind) | Stuart Andrew |
| Peter Dowd (Bootle) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Katherine Fletcher (South Ribble) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Oliver Dowden (Hertsmere) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Mark Fletcher (Bolsover) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Richard Drax (South Dorset) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Nick Fletcher (Don Valley) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Jack Dromey (Birmingham, Erdington) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Stephen Flynn (Aberdeen South) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| Mrs Flick Drummond (Meon Valley) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Vicky Ford (Chelmsford) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| James Duddridge (Rochford and Southend East) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Kevin Foster (Torbay) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Rosie Duffield (Canterbury) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Yvonne Fovargue (Makerfield) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| David Duguid (Banff and Buchan) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Dr Liam Fox (North Somerset) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Philip Dunne (Ludlow) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Vicky Foxcroft (Lewisham, Deptford) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Ms Angela Eagle (Wallasey) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Mary Kelly Foy (City of Durham) (Lab) | Bell Ribeiro-Addy |
| Maria Eagle (Garston and Halewood) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Mr Mark Francois (Rayleigh and Wickford) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Colum Eastwood (Foyle) (SDLP) | Patrick Grady | Lucy Frazer (South East Cambridgeshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Mark Eastwood (Dewsbury) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | George Freeman (Mid Norfolk) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| | | Mike Freer (Finchley and Golders Green) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |

| Member eligible for proxy vote | Nominated proxy | Member eligible for proxy vote | Nominated proxy |
|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Richard Fuller (North East Bedfordshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Stephen Hammond (Wimbledon) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Marcus Fysh (Yeovil) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Matt Hancock (West Suffolk) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Sir Roger Gale (North Thanet) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Greg Hands (Chelsea and Fulham) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Barry Gardiner (Brent North) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Claire Hanna (Belfast South) (SDLP) | Ben Lake |
| Mark Garnier (Wyre Forest) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Neale Hanvey (Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| Nick Gibb (Bognor Regis and Littlehampton) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Emma Hardy (Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Patricia Gibson (North Ayrshire and Arran) (SNP) | Patrick Grady | Ms Harriet Harman (Camberwell and Peckham) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Peter Gibson (Darlington) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Carolyn Harris (Swansea East) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Jo Gideon (Stoke-on-Trent Central) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Rebecca Harris (Castle Point) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Preet Kaur Gill (Birmingham, Edgbaston) (Lab/Co-op) | Mark Tami | Trudy Harrison (Copeland) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Dame Cheryl Gillan (Chesham and Amersham) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Sally-Ann Hart (Hastings and Rye) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Paul Girvan (South Antrim) (DUP) | Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson | Simon Hart (Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| John Glen (Salisbury) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Helen Hayes (Dulwich and West Norwood) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Mary Glendon (North Tyneside) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Sir John Hayes (South Holland and The Deepings) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Mr Robert Goodwill (Scarborough and Whitby) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Sir Oliver Heald (North East Hertfordshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Michael Gove (Surrey Heath) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | John Healey (Wentworth and Dearne) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Richard Graham (Gloucester) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | James Heapey (Wells) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Mrs Helen Grant (Maidstone and The Weald) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Chris Heaton-Harris (Daventry) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Peter Grant (Glenrothes) (SNP) | Patrick Grady | Gordon Henderson (Sittingbourne and Sheppey) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| James Gray (North Wiltshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Sir Mark Hendrick (Preston) (Lab/Co-op) | Mark Tami |
| Neil Gray (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP) | Patrick Grady | Drew Hendry (Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| Chris Grayling (Epsom and Ewell) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Darren Henry (Broxtowe) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Damian Green (Ashford) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Anthony Higginbotham (Burnley) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Kate Green (Stretford and Urmston) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Mike Hill (Hartlepool) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Lilian Greenwood (Nottingham South) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Damian Hinds (East Hampshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Margaret Greenwood (Wirral West) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Simon Hoare (North Dorset) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Andrew Griffith (Arundel and South Downs) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Wera Hobhouse (Bath) (LD) | Wendy Chamberlain |
| Nia Griffith (Llanelli) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Dame Margaret Hodge (Barking) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Kate Griffiths (Burton) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Mrs Sharon Hodgson (Washington and Sunderland West) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| James Grundy (Leigh) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Kate Hollern (Blackburn) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Jonathan Gullis (Stoke-on-Trent North) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Kevin Hollinrake (Thirsk and Malton) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Andrew Gwynne (Denton and Reddish) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Adam Holloway (Gravesham) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Louise Haigh (Sheffield, Heeley) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Paul Holmes (Eastleigh) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Robert Halfon (Harlow) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Rachel Hopkins (Luton South) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Luke Hall (Thornbury and Yate) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | | |
| Fabian Hamilton (Leeds North East) (Lab) | Mark Tami | | |

| Member eligible for proxy vote | Nominated proxy | Member eligible for proxy vote | Nominated proxy |
|--|-------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Stewart Hosie (Dundee East) (SNP) | Patrick Grady | Simon Jupp (East Devon) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Sir George Howarth (Knowsley) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Mike Kane (Wythenshawe and Sale East) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| John Howell (Henley) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Daniel Kawczynski (Shrewsbury and Atcham) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Paul Howell (Sedgefield) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Alicia Kearns (Rutland and Melton) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Nigel Huddleston (Mid Worcestershire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Gillian Keegan (Chichester) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Dr Neil Hudson (Penrith and The Border) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Barbara Keeley (Worsley and Eccles South) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Eddie Hughes (Walsall North) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Liz Kendall (Leicester West) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Jane Hunt (Loughborough) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Afzal Khan (Manchester, Gorton) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Jeremy Hunt (South West Surrey) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Stephen Kinnock (Aberavon) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Rupa Huq (Ealing Central and Acton) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Sir Greg Knight (East Yorkshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Imran Hussain (Bradford East) (Lab) | Bell Ribeiro-Addy | Julian Knight (Solihull) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Mr Alister Jack (Dumfries and Galloway) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Danny Kruger (Devizes) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Christine Jardine (Edinburgh West) (LD) | Wendy Chamberlain | Kwasi Kwarteng (Spelthorne) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Dan Jarvis (Barnsley Central) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Peter Kyle (Hove) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Sajid Javid (Bromsgrove) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Mr David Lammy (Tottenham) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Mr Ranil Jayawardena (North East Hampshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | John Lamont (Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Sir Bernard Jenkin (Harwich and North Essex) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Robert Langan (High Peak) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Mark Jenkinson (Workington) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Mrs Pauline Latham (Mid Derbyshire) (Con) | Mr William Wragg |
| Andrea Jenkyns (Morley and Outwood) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Ian Lavery (Wansbeck) (Lab) | Bell Ribeiro-Addy |
| Robert Jenrick (Newark) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Chris Law (Dundee West) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| Boris Johnson (Uxbridge and South Ruislip) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Andrea Leadsom (South Northamptonshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Dr Caroline Johnson (Sleaford and North Hykeham) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Sir Edward Leigh (Gainsborough) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Dame Diana Johnson (Kingston upon Hull North) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Ian Levy (Blyth Valley) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Gareth Johnson (Dartford) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck (South Shields) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Kim Johnson (Liverpool, Riverside) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Andrew Lewer (Northampton South) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| David Johnston (Wantage) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Brandon Lewis (Great Yarmouth) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Darren Jones (Bristol North West) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Clive Lewis (Norwich South) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Andrew Jones (Harrogate and Knaresborough) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Dr Julian Lewis (New Forest East) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Mr David Jones (Clwyd West) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger (Bridgwater and West Somerset) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Fay Jones (Brecon and Radnorshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | David Linden (Glasgow East) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| Gerald Jones (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Tony Lloyd (Rochdale) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Mr Kevan Jones (North Durham) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Carla Lockhart (Upper Bann) (DUP) | Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson |
| Mr Marcus Jones (Nuneaton) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Mark Logan (Bolton North East) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Ruth Jones (Newport West) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Rebecca Long Bailey (Salford and Eccles) (Lab) | Bell Ribeiro-Addy |
| Sarah Jones (Croydon Central) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Marco Longhi (Dudley North) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |

| Member eligible for proxy vote | Nominated proxy | Member eligible for proxy vote | Nominated proxy |
|--|-------------------|---|-------------------|
| Julia Lopez (Hornchurch and Upminster) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Seema Malhotra (Feltham and Heston) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Jack Lopresti (Filton and Bradley Stoke) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Kit Malthouse (North West Hampshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Mr Jonathan Lord (Woking) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Scott Mann (North Cornwall) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Tim Loughton (East Worthing and Shoreham) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Julie Marson (Hertford and Stortford) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Caroline Lucas (Brighton, Pavilion) (Green) | Bell Ribeiro-Addy | Rachael Maskell (York Central) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Holly Lynch (Halifax) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Christian Matheson (City of Chester) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Kenny MacAskill (East Lothian) (SNP) | Patrick Grady | Mrs Theresa May (Maidenhead) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Steve McCabe (Birmingham, Selly Oak) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Jerome Mayhew (Broadland) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Kerry McCarthy (Bristol East) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Paul Maynard (Blackpool North and Cleveleys) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Jason McCartney (Colne Valley) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Ian Mearns (Gateshead) (Lab) | Bell Ribeiro-Addy |
| Siobhain McDonagh (Mitcham and Morden) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Mark Menzies (Fylde) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Andy McDonald (Middlesbrough) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Johnny Mercer (Plymouth, Moor View) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Stewart Malcolm McDonald (Glasgow South) (SNP) | Patrick Grady | Huw Merriman (Bexhill and Battle) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Stuart C. McDonald (Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East) (SNP) | Patrick Grady | Stephen Metcalfe (South Basildon and East Thurrock) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| John McDonnell (Hayes and Harlington) (Lab) | Bell Ribeiro-Addy | Edward Miliband (Doncaster North) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Mr Pat McFadden (Wolverhampton South East) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Robin Millar (Aberconwy) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Conor McGinn (St Helens North) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Mrs Maria Miller (Basingstoke) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Alison McGovern (Wirral South) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Amanda Milling (Cannock Chase) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Craig Mackinlay (South Thanet) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Nigel Mills (Amber Valley) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Catherine McKinnell (Newcastle upon Tyne North) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Navendu Mishra (Stockport) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Cherilyn Mackrory (Truro and Falmouth) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Mr Andrew Mitchell (Sutton Coldfield) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Anne McLaughlin (Glasgow North East) (SNP) | Patrick Grady | Gagan Mohindra (South West Hertfordshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Rachel Maclean (Redditch) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Carol Monaghan (Glasgow North West) | Patrick Grady |
| Jim McMahan (Oldham West and Royton) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Damien Moore (Southport) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Anna McMorrin (Cardiff North) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Layla Moran (Oxford West and Abingdon) (LD) | Wendy Chamberlain |
| John Mc Nally (Falkirk) (SNP) | Patrick Grady | Penny Mordaunt (Portsmouth North) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Angus Brendan MacNeil (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP) | Patrick Grady | Jessica Morden (Newport East) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Karl McCartney (Lincoln) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Stephen Morgan (Portsmouth South) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Stephen McPartland (Stevenage) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Anne Marie Morris (Newton Abbot) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Esther McVey (Tatton) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | David Morris (Morecambe and Lunesdale) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Justin Madders (Ellesmere Port and Neston) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Grahame Morris (Easington) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Khalid Mahmood (Birmingham, Perry Barr) (Lab) | Mark Tami | James Morris (Halesowen and Rowley Regis) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Shabana Mahmood (Birmingham, Ladywood) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Joy Morrissey (Beaconsfield) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Alan Mak (Havant) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Wendy Morton (Aldridge-Brownhills) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |

| Member eligible for proxy vote | Nominated proxy |
|---|-------------------------|
| Dr Kieran Mullan (Crewe and Nantwich) (Con) | Chris Loder |
| Holly Mumby-Croft (Scunthorpe) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| David Mundell (Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Ian Murray (Edinburgh South) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| James Murray (Ealing North) (Lab/Co-op) | Mark Tami |
| Mrs Sheryll Murray (South East Cornwall) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Andrew Murrison (South West Wiltshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Lisa Nandy (Wigan) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Sir Robert Neill (Bromley and Chislehurst) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Gavin Newlands (Paisley and Renfrewshire North) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| Charlotte Nichols (Warrington North) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Lia Nici (Great Grimsby) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| John Nicolson (Ochil and South Perthshire) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| Caroline Nokes (Romsey and Southampton North) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Jesse Norman (Hereford and South Herefordshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Alex Norris (Nottingham North) (Lab/Co-op) | Mark Tami |
| Neil O'Brien (Harborough) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Brendan O'Hara (Argyll and Bute) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| Dr Matthew Offord (Hendon) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Sarah Olney (Richmond Park) (LD) | Wendy Chamberlain |
| Chi Onwurah (Newcastle upon Tyne Central) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Guy Opperman (Hexham) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Abena Oppong-Asare (Erith and Thamesmead) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Kate Osamor (Edmonton) (Lab/Co-op) | Bell Ribeiro-Addy |
| Kate Osborne (Jarrow) (Lab) | Bell Ribeiro-Addy |
| Kirsten Oswald (East Renfrewshire) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| Taiwo Owatemi (Coventry North West) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Sarah Owen (Luton North) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Ian Paisley (North Antrim) (Con) | Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson |
| Neil Parish (Tiverton and Honiton) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Priti Patel (Witham) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Mr Owen Paterson (North Shropshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Mark Pawsey (Rugby) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Stephanie Peacock (Barnsley East) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Sir Mike Penning (Hemel Hempstead) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |

| Member eligible for proxy vote | Nominated proxy |
|---|-------------------------|
| Matthew Pennycook (Greenwich and Woolwich) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| John Penrose (Weston-super-Mare) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Andrew Percy (Brigg and Goole) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Mr Toby Perkins (Chesterfield) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Jess Phillips (Birmingham, Yardley) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Bridget Phillipson (Houghton and Sunderland South) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Chris Philp (Croydon South) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Christopher Pincher (Tamworth) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Luke Pollard (Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport) (Lab/Co-op) | Mark Tami |
| Dr Dan Poulter (Central Suffolk and North Ipswich) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Rebecca Pow (Taunton Deane) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Lucy Powell (Manchester Central) (Lab/Co-op) | Mark Tami |
| Victoria Prentis (Banbury) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Mark Pritchard (The Wrekin) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Jeremy Quin (Horsham) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Will Quince (Colchester) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Yasmin Qureshi (Bolton South East) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Dominic Raab (Esher and Walton) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Tom Randall (Gedling) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Angela Rayner (Ashton-under-Lyne) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Steve Reed (Croydon North) (Lab/Co-op) | Mark Tami |
| Christina Rees (Neath) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Ellie Reeves (Lewisham West and Penge) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Rachel Reeves (Leeds West) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Jonathan Reynolds (Stalybridge and Hyde) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Nicola Richards (West Bromwich East) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Angela Richardson (Guildford) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Ms Marie Rimmer (St Helens South and Whiston) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Rob Roberts (Delyn) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Mr Laurence Robertson (Tewkesbury) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Gavin Robinson (Belfast East) (DUP) | Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson |
| Mary Robinson (Cheadle) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Matt Rodda (Reading East) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Andrew Rosindell (Romford) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Douglas Ross (Moray) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |

| Member eligible for proxy vote | Nominated proxy | Member eligible for proxy vote | Nominated proxy |
|--|-------------------------|--|-------------------|
| Lee Rowley (North East Derbyshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Alexander Stafford (Rother Valley) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Dean Russell (Watford) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Keir Starmer (Holborn and St Pancras) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Lloyd Russell-Moyle (Brighton, Kemptown) (Lab/Co-op) | Mark Tami | Chris Stephens (Glasgow South West) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| David Rutley (Macclesfield) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Andrew Stephenson (Pendle) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Gary Sambrook (Birmingham, Northfield) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Jo Stevens (Cardiff Central) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Liz Saville Roberts (Dwyfor Meirionnydd) (PC) | Ben Lake | Jane Stevenson (Wolverhampton North East) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Selaine Saxby (North Devon) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | John Stevenson (Carlisle) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Paul Scully (Sutton and Cheam) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Bob Stewart (Beckenham) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Bob Seely (Isle of Wight) (Con) | Ms Nusrat Ghani | Iain Stewart (Milton Keynes South) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Andrew Selous (South West Bedfordshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD) | Wendy Chamberlain |
| Naz Shah (Bradford West) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Sir Gary Streeter (South West Devon) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP) | Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson | Wes Streeting (Ilford North) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Grant Shapps (Welwyn Hatfield) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Mel Stride (Central Devon) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Alok Sharma (Reading West) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Graham Stringer (Blackley and Broughton) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Mr Virendra Sharma (Ealing, Southall) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Graham Stuart (Beverley and Holderness) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Mr Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield) (Lab/Co-op) | Mark Tami | Julian Sturdy (York Outer) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Alec Shelbrooke (Elmet and Rothwell) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Zarah Sultana (Coventry South) (Lab) | Bell Ribeiro-Addy |
| Tommy Sheppard (Edinburgh East) (SNP) | Patrick Grady | Rishi Sunak (Richmond (Yorks)) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Tulip Siddiq (Hampstead and Kilburn) (Lab) | Mark Tami | James Sunderland (Bracknell) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| David Simmonds (Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Sir Desmond Swayne (New Forest West) (Con) | Mr William Wragg |
| Chris Skidmore (Kingswood) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Sir Robert Syms (Poole) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Andy Slaughter (Hammersmith) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Sam Tarry (Ilford South) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Alyn Smith (Stirling) (SNP) | Patrick Grady | Alison Thewliss (Glasgow Central) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| Cat Smith (Lancaster and Fleetwood) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Derek Thomas (St Ives) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Chloe Smith (Norwich North) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Gareth Thomas (Harrow West) (Lab/Co-op) | Mark Tami |
| Greg Smith (Buckingham) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Nick Thomas-Symonds (Torfaen) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Henry Smith (Crawley) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Owen Thompson (Midlothian) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| Jeff Smith (Manchester, Withington) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Richard Thomson (Gordon) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| Julian Smith (Skipton and Ripon) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Emily Thornberry (Islington South and Finsbury) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Nick Smith (Blaenau Gwent) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Stephen Timms (East Ham) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Royston Smith (Southampton, Itchen) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Edward Timpson (Eddisbury) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Karin Smyth (Bristol South) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Kelly Tolhurst (Rochester and Strood) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Alex Sobel (Leeds North West) (Lab) | Mark Tami | Justin Tomlinson (North Swindon) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Amanda Solloway (Derby North) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Craig Tracey (North Warwickshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Dr Ben Spencer (Runnymede and Weybridge) (Con) | Stuart Andrew | Anne-Marie Trevelyan (Berwick-upon-Tweed) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |

| Member eligible for proxy vote | Nominated proxy |
|--|-------------------|
| Jon Trickett (Hemsworth) (Lab) | Bell Ribeiro-Addy |
| Laura Trott (Sevenoaks) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Elizabeth Truss (South West Norfolk) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Tom Tugendhat (Tonbridge and Malling) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Karl Turner (Kingston upon Hull East) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Derek Twigg (Halton) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Mr Shailesh Vara (North West Cambridgeshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Martin Vickers (Cleethorpes) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Matt Vickers (Stockton South) (Con) | Chris Loder |
| Theresa Villiers (Chipping Barnet) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Mr Robin Walker (Worcester) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Mr Ben Wallace (Wyre and Preston North) | Stuart Andrew |
| Dr Jamie Wallis (Bridgend) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Matt Warman (Boston and Skegness) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| David Warburton (Somerset and Frome) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Giles Watling (Clacton) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Suzanne Webb (Stourbridge) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Claudia Webbe (Leicester East) (Ind) | Bell Ribeiro-Addy |
| Catherine West (Hornsey and Wood Green) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Helen Whately (Faversham and Mid Kent) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Mrs Heather Wheeler (South Derbyshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Dr Alan Whitehead (Southampton, Test) (Lab) | Mark Tami |

| Member eligible for proxy vote | Nominated proxy |
|---|-------------------------|
| Dr Philippa Whitford (Central Ayrshire) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| Mick Whitley (Birkenhead) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Craig Whittaker (Calder Valley) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| John Whittingdale (Malden) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Nadia Whittome (Nottingham East) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Bill Wiggin (North Herefordshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| James Wild (North West Norfolk) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Craig Williams (Montgomeryshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Hywel Williams (Arfon) (PC) | Ben Lake |
| Gavin Williamson (Montgomeryshire) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Munira Wilson (Twickenham) (LD) | Wendy Chamberlain |
| Sammy Wilson East Antrim) (DUP) | Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson |
| Beth Winter (Cynon Valley) (Lab) | Rachel Hopkins |
| Pete Wishart (Perth and North Perthshire) (SNP) | Patrick Grady |
| Mike Wood (Dudley South) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Jeremy Wright (Kenilworth and Southam) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Mohammad Yasin (Bedford) (Lab) | Mark Tami |
| Jacob Young (Redcar) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Nadhim Zahawi (Stratford-on-Avon) (Con) | Stuart Andrew |
| Daniel Zeichner (Cambridge) (Lab) | Mark Tami |

Written Statement

Tuesday 9 February 2021

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

Contingencies Fund Advance

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Paul Scully): I hereby give notice of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy having drawn an advance from the contingencies fund totalling £2,819,000,000 to enable

expenditure in connection with the Governments' response to covid-19 support packages for business to fight the virus and build back better, to be spent ahead of the passage of the Supply and Appropriation Act in March 2021.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £1,459,000,000, additional capital of £1,110,000,000 and additional cash of £250,000,000 will be sought in a supplementary estimate for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £2,819,000,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

The cash advance will be repaid upon receiving Royal Assent on the Supply and Appropriation Act.

[HCWS775]

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**not later than
Tuesday 16 February 2021**

STRICT ADHERENCE TO THIS ARRANGEMENT GREATLY FACILITATES THE
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Members may obtain excerpts of their speeches from the Official Report (within one month from the date of publication), by applying to the Editor of the Official Report, House of Commons.

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