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**HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT**

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES**

(HANSARD)

Wednesday 19 May 2021

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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

WALES

The Secretary of State was asked—

Connectivity and Infrastructure within Wales and Cross-border

Scott Benton (Blackpool South) (Con): What recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on connectivity and infrastructure within Wales and cross-border. [900090]

Marco Longhi (Dudley North) (Con): What recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on connectivity and infrastructure within Wales and cross-border. [900093]

The Secretary of State for Wales (Simon Hart): My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State and I have regular discussions with ministerial colleagues about cross-border connectivity and the Union connectivity review.

Scott Benton: From the castles of north Wales to the pleasure beach in my constituency, popular tourist attractions across north Wales and the north-west of England will host thousands of visitors this summer as people choose to holiday here in the UK rather than abroad. In order to support tourism and economic growth, it is vital that we strengthen transport links between those regions, so does my right hon. Friend agree that delivering on our manifesto pledge to upgrade the notoriously congested A55 must remain an absolute priority?

Simon Hart: I am very grateful to my hon. Friend for raising that question, and he is right. I have visited the area quite a bit recently and seen exactly the challenges ahead. It is a manifesto commitment. We visited with the Transport Secretary. That is very much in our sights, and we hope to have some good news about it in the foreseeable future.

Marco Longhi: My Italian forefathers always understood the importance of sunshine, sandy beaches and full-bodied, gorgeous ice cream, but for those who live in Dudley, the nearest beach is in Wales, and access is almost mission impossible. What can my right hon. Friend do to improve the wellbeing of my constituents by improving access to these basic rights?

Simon Hart: Sadly, we cannot move Dudley, but what we can do is progress the Union connectivity review and strengthen the links. I know my hon. Friend's part of the world very well. Of course, the cross-border holidaying and other activity between the west midlands and Wales is well known, and we want to improve it. That is exactly what the review is about, because we know that brings not only gratification to the residents of Dudley, but economic prosperity to both areas.

Mr Speaker: I call Liz Saville Roberts to ask the first of two questions.

Liz Saville Roberts (Dwyfor Meirionnydd) (PC): *Diolch yn fawr, Llefarydd.* The Wales Governance Centre has calculated that, were Wales to be treated like Scotland in relation to HS2 and rail funding, we would be over half a billion pounds better off. Only 1.26% of the firms in the HS2 supply chain are Welsh and we know that, when HS2 is complete, it will take £200 million out of the south Wales economy alone. In the Secretary of State's opinion, what percentage of HS2 supply chain firms should be based in Wales—or is he happy for his Government to continue to short-change Wales?

Simon Hart: I am glad that the right hon. Lady has recognised the relevance of HS2 in shortening journey times; indeed, the journey from her own constituency to London will benefit from the improvements that we are recommending—and that were included in the recent Queen's Speech, for that matter. There will be shorter journey times, but there will also be numerous opportunities for businesses in Wales to be part of the supply chain, not only in the construction period but thereafter. I hope that what she has actually pointed out is how her party, in her area, is going to warmly embrace that major infrastructure scheme, which will benefit Wales, whichever part of it people live in.

Liz Saville Roberts: A percentage would be nice, and an increase would be most welcome, given the effect that it will have.

In another area, Welsh-language TV channel S4C has seen a 36% real-terms cut since 2010, and there are now concerns that it will receive a flat cash settlement in the next licence fee round. S4C requires only a modest £10 million per annum of additional investment and the retention of CPI-linked annual increases in licence fee funding to remain competitive with the already advantaged BBC and, essentially, to reach audiences on new digital platforms. Will the Secretary of State work with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to ensure additional investment for S4C so that the channel is treated with equivalence to the BBC and, equally or more important, it is viable into the future?

Simon Hart: I am grateful to the right hon. Lady for raising the cultural and linguistic significance of S4C, not least because it is headquartered in my constituency.

I have a very warm relationship with all the individuals who have been making their case very powerfully to Members across the House in the last few months. I can confirm to her that the Wales Office has of course made some very strong submissions to DCMS. The decision has yet to be made, but I urge her and other colleagues to continue to do that. We recognise the importance of this and we want very much to get to a speedy and correct conclusion.

Chris Elmore (Ogmore) (Lab): One of the ways in which the Government could improve transport connectivity is by figuring out what they are doing with their much-lauded levelling-up fund. Given the performance of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Housing, Communities and Local Government Ministers at the BEIS Committee yesterday, which can be described as confused at best—not knowing how the fund will work, how it will be delivered or whether funding will continue into levels 2 and 3—can the Secretary of State confirm that there will be funding available for the second and third funding bids, and that it will be at the same level promised by Ministers just at the beginning of this year? Will he also commit to a further meeting with all Welsh MPs of all parties and MHCLG officials, so that they can clarify the confusing situation for those Members who have more than one county in their constituency and constituents do not lose out on this much-promised money?

Simon Hart: Certainly as far as meetings are concerned, I am more than happy to confirm that we will put those in the diary. Whether they are with the MHCLG or others is a matter for discussion. I am very happy to do that; we have done it on a number of issues. I have found that to be quite a constructive and collaborative experience.

As far as the levelling-up fund is concerned, this is, at the end of the day, a good news story. I recognise that there are lessons to be learned from year one, but the levelling-up fund, in whatever shape or form we like to describe it, is here to stay. I am very keen to hear the lessons from the hon. Member, his local authorities and other stakeholders on how we can make it even better than it already is in years two and three.

Manufacturing Industry

Matt Western (Warwick and Leamington) (Lab): What steps the Government is taking to support the manufacturing industry in Wales. [900091]

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Slough) (Lab): What steps the Government is taking to support the manufacturing industry in Wales. [900097]

Mick Whitley (Birkenhead) (Lab): What steps the Government is taking to support the manufacturing industry in Wales. [900098]

The Secretary of State for Wales (Simon Hart): The House only needs to look at the £16 million recently given to Meritor in Cwmbran, or the £30 million given to Celsa at the beginning of the pandemic, to see our commitment to Welsh manufacturing. The Government have provided over £11.35 billion in direct and indirect support for businesses in Wales to tackle the pandemic.

Matt Western [V]: The news in recent days that the Serious Fraud Office has launched an investigation into Liberty Steel will be really concerning for workers in Newport and Tredegar, and for all of us who want to see a rescue deal. However, given that global steel production is actually increasing, the industry can clearly be viable and it is, of course, critical to our supply chain infrastructure for so many industries. May I therefore urge the Government to come forward in the next few days with a clear plan and to confirm that they will do whatever it takes, including the option of public ownership, to secure UK domestic steel capacity and the jobs they support, including in my constituency of Warwick and Leamington?

Simon Hart: I am sure the hon. Member will understand if I do not get drawn into any questions about Liberty, particularly given the case he mentions, but I hope he will be reassured by the fact that my earlier reference to Celsa—we were able to step in at short notice and help a company for exactly the reasons that he rightly points out—is a demonstration of exactly how committed we are to a sustainable steel industry in Wales.

Mr Dhesi: Way back in 2012, in the good old days, the Conservative-led Government promised to build a western rail link to Heathrow that would benefit not only my Slough constituents, but the many Welsh businesses and families who would have a shorter, more direct route to our major national transport hub. So can the Secretary of State tell us when we can finally expect work to begin on that line? Can he also guarantee that Welsh and other UK steel manufacturers will be at the front of the queue when the line is being built?

Simon Hart: I would be a beneficiary of that line, so I am with the hon. Member in terms of our ambition to always try to improve on our infrastructure links. It is good for the economy and particularly good for the supply chain economy, as he rightly points out. Plenty of businesses in Wales could benefit from that. I hope the recent announcement on procurement in the Queen's Speech will give him and others encouragement that we are taking that extremely seriously.

Mick Whitley [V]: North Wales is part of an integrated cross-border economy that stretches from Wrexham and Flintshire to my constituency on the banks of the Mersey. Covid-19 has devastated key local manufacturers across the area, including the Vauxhall car plant in Ellesmere Port and many companies located in the Deeside enterprise zone. Can the Secretary of State inform the House what steps the Government are taking to expedite the proposed Mersey Dee Alliance fiscal stimulus package, which will help manufacturers across north-east Wales and the Wirral to build back better and greener in the wake of this terrible pandemic?

Simon Hart: I hope I can give the hon. Gentleman some encouragement. We are enthusiastic about the Mersey Dee Alliance and everything it stands for. We are keen to continue to work with it, looking at ways of recognising that the economic area stretches way beyond the geographical borders of Wales and England—we absolutely recognise that point. We are determined to make sure we get further progress and deliver on some of the commitments we made on manufacturing and other industries in Deeside that he referred to.

Dr Jamie Wallis (Bridgend) (Con) [V]: The Port Talbot and Bridgend area could lend itself fantastically to the establishment of the UK Government's first freeport in Wales, creating up to 15,000 jobs in the process. Does my right hon. Friend have an update on this initiative in Wales, and can he confirm whether the UK Government will start the freeport process alone if the Welsh Government continue to ignore this fantastic opportunity?

Simon Hart: My hon. Friend is right to point out how enthusiastically the freeport scheme has been welcomed across the whole of Wales, and it is a source of some frustration that we have yet to get it over the line. He is right to ask whether we could do that. Clearly, we would like to do it in collaboration with the Welsh Government, which is where the blockage currently resides, but we can and, if necessary, will proceed to deliver on our manifesto commitment come what may.

Gerald Jones (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney) (Lab): Trade agreements with other countries can provide new opportunities to promote our excellent Welsh manufacturers around the world, but we must ensure that these deals do not end up undercutting our industries in the process. The Welsh Automotive Forum has said that current trading arrangements between the UK and Europe are leading to disruption to Welsh companies due to new checks on imports and rules of origin, and I have heard that from local companies in Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney, too. What has the Secretary of State done personally to address this and will he guarantee that Welsh agricultural producers do not lose out from the proposed deal with Australia?

Simon Hart: We have regular meetings with the automotive sector, and with stakeholders, the supply chain and others, to try to ascertain exactly what the issues are and how they can be speedily resolved, so we are engaged on that level. As for the rumours about the Australia free trade agreement, I should point out that no deal has been done, but if and when it is done, it will include protections for the agricultural industry and it will not undercut UK farmers or compromise our high standards.

Covid-19: Financial Support

Alex Davies-Jones (Pontypridd) (Lab): What recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on financial support for people in Wales affected by the covid-19 outbreak. [900092]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales (David T. C. Davies): In the last year, the Government have provided £7.4 billion of additional support through the welfare system for people affected by covid-19, including the £20 a week increase in universal credit. I have regular discussions with my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer about financial support for Wales, and I was able to personally congratulate him a few weeks ago on the outstanding Budget that he delivered for Wales and the UK.

Alex Davies-Jones: But more than a year has now passed since ExcludedUK was first mentioned in this place and still nothing has been done to support the millions of people across the UK who have seen their livelihoods decimated by the pandemic and who have

not received a penny of support from this UK Government. The Secretary of State and the Minister mentions that they have met the Chancellor, but what representations have they made to him on behalf of Welsh people who have been excluded from support by his Government?

David T. C. Davies: In addition to the £7.4 billion of additional support through the welfare system, the UK Government provided the Welsh Government with an extra £8.6 billion-worth of support, and the Welsh Government were free to use that in any way they wished. They were free to give it out to local authorities and allow them to make grants to anyone who had been badly affected, so we completely acknowledge that people have suffered as a result of the pandemic. That is why there was £8.6 billion of support for the Welsh Government, why Welsh businesses received £2.75 billion of support and why we supported 466,000 Welsh workers through the furlough scheme.

Nia Griffith (Llanelli) (Lab): Families across Wales will have appreciated the recent easing of covid restrictions, made possible, of course, by First Minister Mark Drakeford's cautious, evidence-driven approach, but rising concerns about new variants of coronavirus remind us that the pandemic has not gone away. The vast majority of people want to play their part to keep us all safe, but the UK Government's failure to increase statutory sick pay is forcing many on low incomes to choose between going to work to support their families or staying at home to keep us safe. What pressure can the Minister bring to bear on the Chancellor to put that right?

David T. C. Davies: I am sure that the hon. Lady would acknowledge that Mr Drakeford has been able to work very closely with the UK Government because he has been present at all the Cobra meetings and Welsh Government Ministers have been present at all the ministerial implementation group meetings, very much as part of a joint approach towards tackling the pandemic. The Chancellor and Prime Minister have always been clear that people will suffer as a result of the pandemic. We have not been able to help everyone, but we have, as I said, provided an extra £8.6 billion for the Welsh Government, £2.75 billion for Welsh businesses and supported 466,000 Welsh workers on furlough—plus the mortgage holidays, the cuts in VAT and the cuts in business rates. In Wales alone, we have already created 5,000 extra jobs through the kickstart scheme.

Nia Griffith: On a different matter, without delving into the chaos of this Government's foreign travel policy, the reality for many airlines is that this summer will be nowhere near a return to normal. The whole aviation sector faces irreparable harm. We have already seen Welsh jobs lost in the sector and Aerospace Wales has warned that thousands more are on the line. What sector-specific financial support will the Government provide to the aviation industry in Wales to get it through yet another difficult summer and ensure that it has a strong future?

David T. C. Davies: I very much welcome the hon. Lady's support for the airline industry. Her stated view that we should get people back on to planes and flying around as much as possibly is in stark contrast to the extreme environmental view, which some people in her party seem to take, that nobody should ever get on a plane.

I can assure the hon. Lady that we meet the airline industry regularly; I spoke to the aerospace trade body about 10 days ago and met Airbus online a few days ago. We have not taken up sector-specific support, because the UK Government believe that we should be able to go out there and help all businesses that have been affected by the pandemic. That is why we have already put down £2.7 billion for Welsh businesses, which I hope she will welcome.

Ben Lake (Ceredigion) (PC): Research by the Centre for Progressive Policy has shown that UK Government covid emergency support was, on average, £1,000 more generous to London residents than to those in Wales, and that the UK Government spent nearly £7 billion more on London than if each nation and region of the UK had been allocated the same emergency spending per resident. What explanation has the Minister been given by his Cabinet colleagues for that discrepancy?

David T. C. Davies: The fact of the matter is that the money has gone to those in need in all parts of the United Kingdom. I have already mentioned the £8.75 billion extra that went to the Welsh Government, the £2.7 billion for Welsh businesses and the 466,000 Welsh workers who were supported through the furlough scheme—to be honest, I really welcome these questions, because they give me an opportunity to spell out the huge support that the Government have delivered for Wales. UK-wide, the UK Government have spent £280 billion supporting people across the whole United Kingdom. With the greatest respect to the hon. Gentleman, I do not think that an independent Wales would have been able to manage that level of support.

British Made Goods: Public Sector Contracts

John Spellar (Warley) (Lab): What discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on encouraging the purchasing of British made goods through public sector contracts. [900094]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales (David T. C. Davies): Last week's Queen's Speech announced legislation on procurement that will increase flexibility for contracting authorities and reduce bureaucracy, which will simplify procurement in the public sector and help support British businesses. I very much hope that the Welsh Government will join us in further supporting Welsh companies.

John Spellar: The Minister will be aware that the Department for Transport is spending billions on its programme to decarbonise transport, but it does not seem so interested in building our green manufacturing capacity. Does he share my concern at recent reports of Welsh councils buying green buses not from British firms, but from China? Will he hold urgent discussions with councils, Government and the Transport Secretary in London to demand that taxpayer-funded green subsidies support British industry and British jobs?

David T. C. Davies: I am absolutely delighted that the right hon. Gentleman recognises that this Government are spending billions of pounds on supporting green industries; he is absolutely right. I do not know which

specific councils he means, but I know that Newport City Council, a Labour council, recently bought some electric buses; I have no idea where from, but if he has a problem with how the council is conducting procurement, perhaps he would like to discuss it with some of his Labour colleagues. He will certainly know that we have to abide by the World Trade Organisation treaty agreement. I do not suppose that he is advising me to break our international treaty obligations, but if he is, I look forward to hearing more about it.

Strength of the Union: 2021 Senedd Election

Sir Edward Leigh (Gainsborough) (Con): What assessment he has made of the effect of the outcome of the 2021 Senedd election on the strength of the Union. [900095]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales (David T. C. Davies): The results of the recent elections clearly show that a majority of voters in Wales—and in Scotland, actually—voted for pro-Unionist parties. It is clear that voters in Wales want the freedom to study, work, live and travel freely between England and Wales without a border.

Sir Edward Leigh: Does my hon. Friend agree that, following the elections, and apart from evident self-interest, the Union is ever stronger because of abundant common interest?

David T. C. Davies: My right hon. Friend has been in this House for many years and has a great deal of wisdom. He makes an important point. We are united by a shared love of the Union, our United Kingdom and the firm belief that we are stronger together than apart—[*Interruption.*]

Mr Speaker: Order. If somebody wants to do a little tapping, there is room outside for that.

Fiscal Settlement

Deidre Brock (Edinburgh North and Leith) (SNP): What recent discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on the adequacy of the fiscal settlement. [900096]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales (David T. C. Davies): This fiscal settlement delivers for Wales. This year, the Welsh Government will receive almost £19 billion of block grant funding, which is £1 billion more than was agreed with the Welsh Labour Government as being a fair settlement for Wales.

Deidre Brock [V]: The fiscal settlement will not matter all that much if the possible trade deal with Australia goes through with a zero-tariff regime, which would cause serious difficulties for Welsh and, indeed, Scottish farmers. What compensation for those farmers is being built into the fiscal settlement, should this latest gung-ho trade deal scupper their livelihoods?

David T. C. Davies: No trade deal has been signed yet, but yesterday I was on a call with National Farmers Union representatives, who said that they welcomed the principle of a trade deal. They have a few concerns

about some of the details, and we will continue our discussions with the NFU and with farmers. But I am surprised at the hon. Lady, who I think was in favour of having a free trade deal with the European Union. Why would she not want to have a free trade deal with a country with which we all—and she and I personally—have very close links indeed?

Economy in Wales: 2021 Senedd Election

John Howell (Henley) (Con): If he will make an assessment of the effect of the outcome of the 2021 Senedd election on the economy in Wales. [900099]

The Secretary of State for Wales (Simon Hart): The Senedd election has shown that three out of four voters rejected separatism, recognising that our economic prosperity is indelibly linked to being part of the Union.

John Howell: I am concerned that one of the first priorities of the Welsh Government seems to be a universal basic income. Is my right hon. Friend aware of the debates that I took part in at the Council of Europe, in which the idea was completely rubbished?

Simon Hart: I say to my hon. Friend:

“Anybody who thinks this is a good idea should knock some doors of Labour voters in working families. It might sound radical to academics and ‘policy wonks’ but it sounds out of touch if you ask most normal people.”

Those are not my words, but the words of the new Minister for the Economy in the Welsh Government, so it seems that they have a problem in their own ranks, let alone trying to persuade us of the merits of it.

Christina Rees (Neath) (Lab/Co-op) [V]: Does the Secretary of State accept that it is Mark Drakeford’s superb stewardship of the Welsh economy and the Welsh NHS that has secured Mark’s overwhelming re-election? Will he welcome the Welsh Labour Government’s new 10-year infrastructure investment plan for a zero-carbon economy and release the promised UK Government funding for the global centre of rail excellence to be built in my Neath constituency?

Simon Hart: There were many questions included in that, but I am delighted to have played a part in getting the global centre of rail excellence situated in the hon. Lady’s constituency. That was a Government announcement by the Chancellor in the Budget, and it shows that collaboration can work when we try to achieve these aims. As far as covid reaction is concerned, that has been a team effort and a cross-UK effort. The vaccination programme is probably the clearest indication of why the Union matters and how we have been able to work collaboratively with our colleagues in the Welsh Government to deliver something that genuinely benefits the entire nation.

Discussions with the Welsh Government since 2021 Senedd Election

Stephen Crabb (Preseli Pembrokeshire) (Con): What discussions he has had with the Welsh Government since the 2021 Senedd election. [900100]

The Secretary of State for Wales (Simon Hart): My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister spoke with the First Minister shortly after the election result. I have extended an invitation to meet the new Minister for the Economy. We have had calls with the First Minister and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster last week, and another one is due this evening.

Stephen Crabb: The recent elections demonstrated that the vast majority of voters in Wales have no time for independence. They have little time for ripping up the devolution settlement either. What the elections showed is that they want their politicians and Ministers at either end of the M4 to work together to make good things happen for Wales, and to make Wales a stronger and more prosperous part of the UK. Given that the success of the vaccination programme shows that this can be done, what needs to happen now to unblock other important policies such as freeports, which are stuck between the UK and Welsh Governments?

Simon Hart: My right hon. Friend is spot on; we have had considerable, really enthusiastic interest in the freeport programme from across the whole of Wales—it will bring 15,000 jobs and it is a manifesto commitment—and the only obstacle standing between us and delivering it is currently the Welsh Government. I am determined to work collaboratively, as we have said before, to get this over the line, and any pressure that anybody in this House can bring to bear to help us achieve that will be very welcome.

PRIME MINISTER

The Prime Minister was asked—

Engagements

[900360] **Gareth Thomas** (Harrow West) (Lab/Co-op): If he will list his official engagements for Wednesday 19 May.

The Prime Minister (Boris Johnson): Last week, an inquest found Francis Quinn, Father Hugh Mullan, Noel Phillips, Joan Connolly, Daniel Teggart, Joseph Murphy, Edward Doherty, John Laverty, Joseph Corr and John McKerr, who were killed in Ballymurphy in August 1971, entirely innocent. On behalf of successive Governments, and to put this on the record in this House, I would like to say sorry to their families for how the investigations were handled and for the pain they have endured since their campaign began almost five decades ago. No apology can lessen their lasting pain. I hope they may take some comfort in the answers they have secured and in knowing that this has renewed the Government’s determination to ensure in future that other families can find answers with less distress and delay.

This morning, I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House, I shall have further such meetings later today.

Gareth Thomas: I strongly associate myself with the earlier part of the Prime Minister’s comments. May I raise something slightly different though? It is nearly four years since the Grenfell Tower tragedy claimed some 72 lives, yet hundreds of thousands of families still live in unsafe, unsellable homes, and many leaseholders

face crippling debts, through no fault of their own—Trident Point, Pearmain House and Amber Court are all in my constituency. Given that this was the biggest building scandal in modern UK history, why did the Prime Minister order his MPs to vote down our efforts yesterday to get this scandal sorted once and for all?

The Prime Minister: I in no way underestimate the suffering of the victims of Grenfell or of those whose buildings—whose homes—have been prejudiced by the spectre of unsafe materials. That is why we have provided an unprecedented £5 billion of investment, and I can also tell the hon. Gentleman that the most dangerous cladding is already gone or is going from all high-rise buildings. We certainly agree that leaseholders should be protected from remediation costs, and people in high-rise buildings will pay nothing to replace their unsafe cladding.

[900362] **Andrew Rosindell** (Romford) (Con): The Prime Minister will understand that Havering, just like Hillingdon, is located on the outskirts of London and has very different needs and aspirations from those in the core area of the city. My borough still prides itself on being part of Essex, as I know his prides itself on being part of historic Middlesex. Although we need co-operation on things such as transport, will he accept that it is time for wholesale reform of the way London and the wider region are governed? Will he support my campaign to allow boroughs such as Havering to take back control from the Mayor and City Hall interference? This would allow Havering, and indeed all outer London boroughs, the freedom to make their own decisions that best meet the needs of local people.

The Prime Minister: I can understand the feelings of frustration that the people of Havering may have about a current Mayor of London who does not understand the needs of outer London and is not investing in outer London in the way that a previous Mayor did—I seem to recall that they set up the outer London fund and drove through many other benefits for the outer boroughs. However, I must tell my hon. Friend in all candour that what we need to do is work together to ensure that that glad day returns when we have a Mayor who truly represents all Londoners.

Keir Starmer (Holborn and St Pancras) (Lab): I welcome the Prime Minister's comments on the Ballymurphy inquest and the sentiment behind them.

Does the Prime Minister agree that the single biggest threat to hitting the 21 June date for unlocking is the risk of new variants coming into the UK?

The Prime Minister: I certainly think that that is one of the issues that we must face, but perhaps it would be of benefit to the House if I update it on where we are, because we have looked at the data again this morning. I can tell the House that we have increasing confidence that vaccines are effective against all variants, including the Indian variant. In this context, I want particularly to thank the people of Bolton, Blackburn and many other places who have been coming forward in record numbers to get vaccinated—to get their first and second jabs. I think that the numbers have doubled in Bolton alone, and the people of this country can be proud of their participation.

Keir Starmer: I think that is a yes: that the risk of other variants coming through our borders is one of the biggest threats to unlocking. We are not just talking about the Indian variant; we are talking about future variants. In those circumstances, why on Monday did the Prime Minister choose to weaken travel restrictions by moving 170 countries or territories to the amber list?

The Prime Minister: We have one of the strongest border regimes anywhere in the world. There are currently 43 countries on the red list. Everybody should know that if they travel to an amber list country for any emergency or any extreme reason that they have for doing so, when they come back they have not only to pay for all the tests, but to self-isolate for 10 days. We will invigilate that; we are invigilating that. People who fail to obey the quarantine can face fines of up to £10,000.

Keir Starmer: I think everybody would agree that, having moved 170 countries to the amber list, absolute clarity is needed about the circumstances in which people can travel to an amber country. Yesterday morning, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs said that people could fly to amber list countries if they wanted to visit family or friends. By the afternoon, a Health Minister said that nobody should travel outside Britain this year, and that, "Travelling is dangerous." The Prime Minister said that travel to amber countries should be only where it is essential. By the evening, the Welsh Secretary suggested that

"some people might think a holiday is essential".

The Government have lost control of the messaging. Can the Prime Minister answer a really simple question that goes to the heart of this? If he does not want people to travel to amber list countries, if that is his position, why has he made it easier for them to do so?

The Prime Minister: I think that, after more than a year of this, the right hon. and learned Gentleman will understand that what the public would like to see is some effort to back up what the Government are saying to deliver clarity of message. On his point about legal bans, as he knows, we are trying to move away from endlessly legislating on everything and to rely on guidance and asking people to do the right thing. It is very, very clear, Mr Speaker: you should not be going to an amber list country except for some extreme circumstance, such as the serious illness of a family member. You should not be going to an amber list country on holiday. I can imagine that the right hon. and learned Gentleman wants to take a holiday, but he should not be going to an amber list country on holiday. If people do go to an amber list country then, as I say, we will enforce the 10-day quarantine period. If they break the rules, they face very substantial fines.

Keir Starmer: That completely swerves the question. The point was that, if it is only in "extreme circumstances"—the Prime Minister's words—why make it easier to go? Let us test it by looking at the consequences. Since the Government loosened travel restrictions, 150 flights a day are going to amber list countries and travel agents are reporting surges in holiday bookings to those countries. Prime Minister, this is not just a coincidence; it is because of the messaging. Can he tell the House how many people are now travelling to and from Britain from amber list countries every day?

The Prime Minister: I can tell the House that there has been a 95% reduction in travel of any kind to and from this country, and that is exactly what we would expect in the circumstances of this pandemic. There are 43 countries on the red list, and if people come back from one of those countries, they have to go immediately into hotel quarantine. The reason we are able to move forward in the way that we have been is because, as I have told the House repeatedly, we are continuing with the fastest vaccination roll-out, I think, just about anywhere in Europe. As of today, 70% of adults in this country have been vaccinated. That is a fantastic achievement, which is enabling us to make the progress that we are.

Keir Starmer: I think that's an "I don't know". The suggestion that in the last few days there has been a 95% drop-off in travel to amber list countries does not hold water. I am trying to understand the logic of the Government's position. We know that new variants are the single biggest risk to unlocking. We know that the Government do not think that people should travel to amber list countries, save for in extreme circumstances, but the Government have made it easier to do so. The messaging is confused and contradictory. As a result, this week many people are now travelling to amber list countries, but the Government cannot say how many or when. We are an island nation; we have the power to stop this. Why does the Prime Minister not drop this hopeless system, get control of our borders and introduce a proper system that can protect against the threat of future variants of the virus?

The Prime Minister: Actually, I think what would be helpful—I have set out the position on amber list countries very clearly at least twice; wouldn't it be great to hear the right hon. and learned Gentleman backing it up for a change and using what authority he possesses to convey the message to the rest of the country? The Labour position on borders is hopelessly confused. Last night, I think, the shadow Home Secretary said that Labour wanted to cut this country off from the rest of the world—to pause all travel, even though 75% of our medicines and 50% of our food actually come from abroad. It was only recently that the Leader of the Opposition was saying that quarantine was a "blunt instrument" and he would rather see alternatives.

Keir Starmer: The Prime Minister is just wrong again; we have called for a blanket hotel quarantine for months. I have raised it here at Prime Minister's questions three times. The Government ignored it every time and look where we are now, talking about the Indian variant.

The Prime Minister's former adviser had this one right. He said that the Government's border policy was a "joke". Our borders have been wide open pretty well throughout the pandemic. *[Interruption.]* For those who say that is not true, there was no hotel quarantine system in place until February this year. Flights are still coming in from India, and even as the variant is spreading the Prime Minister decides that now is the time to weaken the system even more. It is ridiculous.

Finally, I want to raise the appalling rise in antisemitism in the last week, and the attacks and violence that we have seen. On Saturday, a rabbi in Chigwell was hospitalised after being attacked outside his synagogue. Many of us will have seen the appalling incident in Golders Green.

The Community Security Trust reports a 500% rise in antisemitic incidents since the outbreak of violence in Gaza and Israel. I know that the Government are working on this, and both the Prime Minister and I have condemned these antisemitic attacks and violence, but across this House we all know that Jewish communities remain very anxious. What more does the Prime Minister think can be done to provide the extra support and protection needed to reassure Jewish communities at this really very difficult time?

The Prime Minister: I share the right hon. and learned Gentleman's horror at the outbreak of antisemitic incidents. The Government have conveyed that message loud and clear to those who are responsible for enforcing the law against hate crime of that kind. Obviously, we will continue to work and support the Jewish community in any way that we can, particularly by working with the Community Safety Trust, which does an absolutely outstanding job, but also by showing, as a country and as a society, that we will call this out at every stage. We will not let it take root; we will not allow it to grow and fester. In welcoming his remarks, I may say that I believe it is one of the most important changes of attitude—or U-turns, I should say—that I have seen from the Labour party in recent times. I am delighted that he is taking that attitude now. But what this country wants to see is a Government who get on with delivering on the people's priorities, making everybody safe. It might have been a good thing if he had voted—and got his party to vote—for tougher sentences against serious and violent sexual offenders, to say nothing of people who commit hate crime.

Mr Speaker: I think in fairness this House is very united and will remain united, and of course we do support the CST.

[900363] **Mary Robinson** (Cheadle) (Con): My second AstraZeneca jab reinforced my confidence not only in normal life resuming but in the future of our life sciences industry. In Cheadle and across south Manchester and the Cheshire life sciences corridor, investment in R&D and innovation will bring high-skilled, well-paid jobs. Will the Prime Minister join me in recognising and endorsing the work of our northern universities, NHS trusts and life sciences sector, who, together with the Northern Health Science Alliance, are piloting health tech initiatives that will take us forward from jabs to jobs?

The Prime Minister: Yes, and I thank my hon. Friend, who is a great advocate for the people of Cheadle. As part of our plan to move from jabs, jabs, jabs to jobs, jobs, jobs, I am delighted to say that over £1 billion-worth of Government-funded science and innovation projects are currently taking place across the north-west, thanks largely, or at least in part, to her advocacy.

Ian Blackford (Ross, Skye and Lochaber) (SNP) [V]: May I thank the Prime Minister for his comments on the Ballymurphy inquest?

As a member of Scotland's crofter community, I understand just how disastrous a Brexit trade deal with Australia, as proposed by this Tory Government, would be for Scotland's farming and crofting sectors. If reports of this Tory deal were true, farmers will lose their

livelihoods, rural businesses will collapse, and ultimately families will be driven off the land. Let us be very clear: if that happens, this UK Tory Government will be solely responsible. Just for once, will the Prime Minister give a straight answer to the farming and crofting families who are living with this threat? Can he categorically rule out his Government being prepared to sign up to a trade deal that will at any future point guarantee tariff-free access to Australian lamb and beef—yes or no?

The Prime Minister: I am delighted to see the shots of the right hon. Gentleman's croft, by the way—the humble representative of the crofting community. I do not think that he does justice to crofters and to farmers across the country, and in Scotland as well, because he grossly underestimates their ability to do great things with our free trade deals and to export Scottish beef around the world. Why does he not believe in what the people of Scotland can do? Why is he so frightened of free trade? I think it is a massive opportunity for Scotland and for the whole of the UK, and he should seize it and be proud of it.

Ian Blackford: That was quite chilling. To try to treat something as serious as this in the way that the Government and the Prime Minister have done is really quite pathetic. The fact that the Prime Minister could not give a straight answer will send a real chill across Scotland's farming communities. The UK Government led the betrayal of Scottish fishing and now the Tories are planning to throw our farmers and crofters under the Brexit bus. This morning Martin Kennedy, president of National Farmers Union Scotland, told ITV that farmers will feel "seriously betrayed" by these proposals. This deal would be the final nail in the coffin for many Scottish crofters and farmers. It will end a way of life that has endured for generations—generations, Prime Minister. I know that many of the Prime Minister's Tory colleagues privately agree with me and want him to pull back from this deal. Will the Prime Minister finally listen, think again, and ditch a deal that will send our farmers down under?

The Prime Minister: First, the right hon. Gentleman is totally wrong in what he says about the fisheries. In fact, there are massive opportunities for fisheries in the whole of the UK as we take back control of our territorial waters. That will be the same for Scotland and around the UK. Again he is grossly underestimating the ability of the people of this country, the agricultural communities of this country and the farming industry to make the most of free trade. This is a country that became successful and grew prosperous on free trade and exporting around the world. Our food exports are second to none. He should be proud of that and he should be celebrating that. All he does is call for us to pull up the drawbridge and go back into the EU to be run by Brussels. That is his manifesto, and I think the people of this country have decisively rejected it.

[900366] **Jo Gideon** (Stoke-on-Trent Central) (Con): North Staffordshire YMCA in my constituency undertakes fantastic work transforming the lives of young people locally in the Stoke-on-Trent community, and I am delighted that it has been recognised for its work through the Queen's awards for enterprise. There is no better example of levelling up in action, and I

invite the Prime Minister to join me in congratulating all the staff, volunteers and partners of the YMCA in north Staffordshire. I look forward to showing him levelling up in action when he next visits Stoke-on-Trent, the new second home of the Home Office.

The Prime Minister: I thank my hon. Friend very much, and she is totally right. It is part of our levelling up. We are absolutely determined to do that as fast as we possibly can, and I thank her for her message about it this morning. We are not just sending back offices; some of the most important Departments of State will be run from around our great cities and towns in the whole of the UK. I believe that will have a dramatic effect on levelling up across the UK, and I thank her for her question.

Ed Davey (Kingston and Surbiton) (LD): Local planning reforms introduced by Liberal Democrat Ministers have seen communities across England vote for new developments, including new housing, new affordable housing and new community facilities, while also protecting the environment and the countryside. Why therefore is the Prime Minister so determined to push through his planning reforms, which will do nothing to solve the country's real housing crisis and will allow developers to ride roughshod over local communities? The reforms will mean, in the words of his immediate predecessor as Prime Minister,

"the wrong homes being built in the wrong places."—[*Official Report*, 11 May 2021; Vol. 695, c. 39.]

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman is completely wrong, and he should look at the Bill when it comes forward, because we want to protect the green belt. We want to protect our wonderful open spaces. This is a Government who understand the value of the countryside and rural Britain, but we also think that young people have been deprived for too long of the ability to get on to the housing ladder. That is not just in the south-east, but across the country, and that is why we are bringing forward sensible reforms to allow brownfield sites to go ahead.

[900367] **Andrew Bowie** (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (Con): Two weeks ago, in giving the Scottish Conservatives their highest ever number of votes in the era of devolution, the Scottish people decided that Scotland would remain at the heart of this newly reinvigorated global Britain. With that in mind, will the Prime Minister accept my invitation to Stonehaven in my constituency to come and plant one of the 120 cherry blossom trees donated by the Sakura Cherry Tree Project to celebrate the deep and growing links between our country and that other great trading nation, Japan?

The Prime Minister: I think that such a gesture would be the cherry on the cake of the free trade deal that we have already done.

[900361] **Hywel Williams** (Arfon) (PC): In 2019, before visiting Wales, the Prime Minister said: "I will always back Britain's great farmers". Now it looks as if he is backing Australia's farmers instead, so will he keep to his word, clearly back Welsh farmers and permanently rule out tariff-free access for Australian lamb and beef imports?

The Prime Minister: I will back Britain's farmers and Welsh farmers in exporting their fantastic lamb around the world. Is it not a disgrace that not a single morsel of Welsh lamb has passed the lips of the Americans in the past 20 years or more? What about China? Has the hon. Gentleman no ambition for the people of this country, the people of Wales or Welsh farmers? I do, and this Government do, and that is why we are getting on with our agenda.

[900368] **Virginia Crosbie** (Ynys Môn) (Con): Does the Prime Minister, or Prif Weinidog, agree that a freeport on Anglesey will create much-needed skilled jobs and investment, protect our precious Welsh language and culture, and breathe fire into the nostrils of the Welsh dragon? Will the Prime Minister accept an invitation on behalf of the people of Ynys Môn to join me on a tour of the island to include a panad at the truck stop café in Holyhead?

The Prime Minister: It says here that I must not express a preference on the location of freeports, and I will not, but my hon. Friend makes an outstanding case, as ever. Together with our Welsh Conservative colleagues, she is helping to apply the Vicks inhaler to the bunged-up nostrils of the Welsh dragon.

[900364] **Richard Thomson** (Gordon) (SNP): Despite the opprobrium that the Prime Minister always seems to seek to heap upon the Scottish National party, at the Scottish elections two weeks ago, the SNP was returned to government with twice the number of MSPs as its nearest rivals, the Scottish Conservatives, securing 48% of the vote and 49% of the seats in the proportional system, with 51% of voters backing parties that support an independence referendum in the current term. If the Prime Minister genuinely believes that his criticisms of the Scottish Government have any merit whatsoever, why does he consider that the Scottish National party did so well in those elections, while his own party did so badly?

The Prime Minister: I totally reject what the hon. Gentleman just said. I notice that, actually, the Scottish National party did less well than it did under Alex Salmond in 2011—I hesitate to point that out to the hon. Gentleman, but that is the reality. I think the reason for that is that, notwithstanding the nationalist approach that he takes, the people of Scotland have been very disappointed by the record of the Scottish Government in fighting crime, improving education and making Scotland a great place to live and to invest. That is the failing for which his Government are being held to account.

[900369] **Danny Kruger** (Devizes) (Con): A large part of Salisbury plain falls in my constituency, and I therefore have the honour to represent a lot of serving soldiers and veterans and their families. My right hon. Friend will understand that feelings are running high in Wiltshire about the treatment of British Army veterans of the conflict in Northern Ireland. Can he assure me that legislation will be brought forward in this Session to protect veterans from further prosecutions or investigations unless compelling new evidence is brought forward?

The Prime Minister: The House will have understood from my opening apology how difficult, how complex and how fraught these issues are, but we are committed to introducing legislation in this Session to address the

legacy of the troubles in Northern Ireland, to introducing a fair package for veterans and to protecting them, as I have said many times before, from unfair, vexatious litigation when no new evidence has been brought forward.

[900365] **Gerald Jones** (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney) (Lab): There were no new measures in the Queen's Speech to tackle youth unemployment. There are over 500,000 unemployed young people in this country, yet the Government's flagship youth unemployment scheme is nowhere near sufficient, only helping around one in 25 young people. My hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent (Nick Smith) and I have already requested a meeting with the Minister to discuss local concerns from training providers and businesses. What exactly will the Prime Minister do to address that and to safeguard the future of a generation of young people in this country?

The Prime Minister: We are putting £2 billion into the kickstart programme for 18 to 24-year-olds and investing massively in the restart programme for those who have been longer out of work. I can also tell the hon. Gentleman that the businesses I talk to are currently facing shortages of workers in many sectors, and we will work flat out to ensure that we get those who want jobs to those who need workers.

[900372] **James Cartlidge** (South Suffolk) (Con): I thank the Prime Minister for the support he has already shown for coming forward with an offshore transmission grid, which he knows will help us to both export our surplus offshore wind to the continent and reduce the infrastructure associated with new wind farm capacity. It is very important to our communities, but there is a question over timing. Given that he has already set out an ambitious and clear timetable for increasing offshore wind generation, will he now come out with an equally ambitious timetable for delivering an offshore grid?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is spot on in what he says about the need for an offshore grid. As well as building the fantastic windmills, it is vital that we bring the energy onshore in a way that has minimal disruption for local communities and enables us to maximise efficiency.

[900370] **Andy Slaughter** (Hammersmith) (Lab): What does the Prime Minister think when he hears Jenny McGee, the nurse who saved his life, say of NHS staff,

"We're not getting the respect and now pay that we deserve. I'm just sick of it. So I've handed in my resignation"?

Surely even he must pause and think about what can be learned from the mistakes of the past year—what Jenny calls the "indecisiveness" and "mixed messages" of his Government. Will he think again about giving nurses more than an insulting 1% pay rise?

The Prime Minister: I think the whole House acknowledges our collective debt to the nurses of the NHS, and I certainly acknowledge my own huge personal debt. That is why, of all the professions in this country in very tough times, we have asked the public sector pay review board to look at an increase in pay for nurses, but in the meantime we have increased starting salary for nurses by 12.8%, and we have put in the bursary worth £5,000—we have restored that—as well as £3,000 for extra help.

But above all, to all nurses—and I know what a tough year they have had, I know how hard it has been on the frontline coping with this pandemic—we have done what I think is the most important thing of all, and that is to recruit many more nurses. There are now about 11,000 more nurses in the NHS today than there were this time last year, and there are 60,000 more in training, and we are on target to reach our target of 50,000 more nurses in the NHS.

[900373] **Dr James Davies** (Vale of Clwyd) (Con): Following on from that theme, patients in England have unfettered access to specialist hospital care anywhere in England, including within world-leading centres of excellence, but my constituents in north Wales have no such automatic choice, with access dependent on restrictive contracts or individual funding requests. So will my right hon. Friend do all he can to ensure that healthcare features prominently within the UK levelling-up agenda?

The Prime Minister: Yes. I thank my hon. Friend for his point, and he knows a great deal about the subject. We have worked very hard with the Welsh Government throughout the pandemic, supporting them with £8.6 billion of additional funding through the Barnett formula, but clearly we need to learn the lessons together as we bounce forward from this pandemic.

[900371] **Justin Madders** (Ellesmere Port and Neston) (Lab): It is now 664 days since the Prime Minister said he had a plan for social care, but the Department of Health and Social Care is advertising at the moment for social care policy advisers to “develop proposals for reform.” Why do that if there is a plan already? Every day, more people lose their life savings to pay huge social care costs, and we cannot even get a straight answer as to whether the Government have a plan to fix social care, never mind find out what it actually is, so just tell us, Prime Minister: do you have a plan—yes or no?

The Prime Minister: Yes is the answer, but the Labour party junked it in—[*Interruption.*] This is something that, for decades, politicians have failed to address: in 1999, Labour failed to address the plan. They had 13 years—13 years—in government. I think it was 13—13 unlucky years for this country—and they did not do it. They did not do it, and this Government are going to tackle it. This Government are finally going to address the issue of social care. If they want to support it with their customary doughty resolve, if they want to support it without wobble-wobbling from one week to

the next on whatever their policy is—without changing like weather vanes, which is what they normally do—if they want to support it and if they want to back it, then I am all ears.

[900374] **Antony Higginbotham** (Burnley) (Con): Throughout this week, businesses across Burnley and Padiham have reopened their doors to customers inside—from Usha and Molly Rigby’s to Bellissimo and Reel Cinema. Would the Prime Minister join me in wishing them all the best of luck as they get back on their feet, and does he agree with me that if we are to support local businesses in the long term, we need to create the environment and the opportunities they need to succeed, and that includes schemes such as the levelling-up fund and the lifetime skills guarantee?

The Prime Minister: Yes. That is why we are investing, for instance, £3.6 million from the getting building fund for the development of Pioneer Place, and Burnley will also benefit from our high streets taskforce, but what Burnley and towns across the country need more than anything else is passionate leadership, such as my hon. Friend shows, in championing their localities and getting the right investment in.

David Linden (Glasgow East) (SNP): The Prime Minister will be aware of Pladis’s proposal to close the McVitie’s factory in Glasgow’s east end, placing at risk 470 jobs. So will he join me in engaging with Pladis’s global CEO, Salman Amin, and call upon him to rethink his plans, which would definitely unleash economic armageddon on a very fragile part of the local economy?

The Prime Minister: McVitie’s has been a proud part of the Scottish economy since 1800, and I know that people at the Tollcross factory and their relatives will be very concerned about what is happening. I thank the hon. Gentleman for raising it. I know that conversations are now going on to see what we can do. I think it is the Turkish company that now owns McVitie’s, and I know that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland is meeting the hon. Gentleman to discuss the situation.

Mr Speaker: I am now suspending the House for three minutes to allow the necessary arrangements for the next business.

12.35 pm

Sitting suspended.

Israel and Gaza: Ceasefire

12.38 pm

Wayne David (Caerphilly) (Lab) (*Urgent Question*): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs if he will make a statement on the UK Government's efforts to secure a ceasefire in Israel and Gaza.

The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa (James Cleverly): Since I was last at the Dispatch Box on 13 May, we have sadly seen further violence and more civilian deaths. I am sure the House will join me in offering condolences to all the families of those civilians who have been killed or injured across Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Mr Speaker, with your permission I will set out to the House the work that the Government are doing, along with others, to bring about a peaceful resolution. We are urging the parties to work with mediators towards an immediate ceasefire to prevent further loss of life and a worsening humanitarian situation. We are supporting United Nations, Egyptian and Qatari efforts to that end, and we work closely with the United States.

We are also prioritising our own diplomatic efforts through both bilateral and multilateral channels. The Foreign Secretary and I, with the support of our diplomats on the ground, have been working to progress the conditions needed for an immediate ceasefire. The Foreign Secretary has spoken in recent days with the Israeli Foreign Minister and the Palestinian Prime Minister; he reinforced our clear message of de-escalation and our desire to work together to end the violence. I delivered similar messages to the Israeli ambassador and the Palestinian head of mission in London.

We have also engaged regional partners at ministerial level. The Foreign Secretary spoke with the Foreign Minister of Jordan on 17 May and just this morning I spoke with a number of ambassadors from Arab states to reiterate the need for an immediate ceasefire, and I underlined our shared goal of a peaceful two-state solution. We are playing a leadership role in the United Nations Security Council, where we are calling for measures by all sides to reduce further violence. We will participate in the emergency UN General Assembly session later this week.

The UK unequivocally condemns the firing of rockets at Jerusalem and other locations within Israel. We strongly condemn these acts of terrorism by Hamas and other terrorist groups, who must permanently end their incitement and rocket fire against Israel. There is no justification for the targeting of civilians.

Israel has a legitimate right to self-defence and to defend its citizens from attack. In doing so, it is vital that all actions are proportionate, in line with international humanitarian law and make every effort to avoid civilian casualties. We are aware of medical institutions, a number of schools and many homes in Gaza that have been destroyed or seriously damaged, and we are concerned that buildings housing media and humanitarian organisations such as Qatar Red Crescent have been destroyed. We call on Israel to adhere to the principles of necessity and proportionality when defending its legitimate security interests.

We are also concerned by reports that Hamas is once again using civilian infrastructure and populations as a cover for its military operations. Humanitarian access is essential, and we urge all parties to allow the unimpeded entry of vital humanitarian supplies. Hamas and other terrorist groups must cease their mortar attacks on these crossings. We urge all parties to work together to reduce tensions in the west bank, including East Jerusalem. The UK is clear that the historic status quo in Jerusalem must be respected. Violence against peaceful worshippers of any faith is unacceptable.

The UK position on evictions, demolitions and settlements is clear and long-standing: we oppose these activities. We urge the Government of Israel to cease their policies related to settlement expansion immediately and instead work towards a two-state solution. The UK will continue our intensive diplomatic efforts in the region focused on securing a ceasefire and creating the conditions for a sustainable peace.

Mr Speaker: I remind people that there are set times that we have to try to stick to.

Wayne David: It is of enormous concern to everyone in the House that in this conflict between Hamas and Israel nearly 300 people have been killed, including 65 children. This is truly appalling. We condemn the rocket attacks by Hamas and the Israeli airstrikes, which have killed so many innocent people and severely damaged schools and medical facilities.

I listened carefully to what the Minister had to say regarding the Government's position and his statement in favour of an immediate ceasefire. We have heard in the last few hours that the French and Jordanian Governments are making real efforts to bring about a UN resolution that would help to secure an immediate ceasefire. We have heard that there have been discussions with the Egyptians and the Germans. The name of the United Kingdom Government has not been mentioned.

I ask the Minister whether he would care to elaborate on what representations he has recently made to secure the objective of an immediate ceasefire. Could I also press him on what efforts his Government are making to provide humanitarian support for the people of Gaza? I urge the Government to do everything they can to restart a meaningful peace process as a matter of urgency. If further conflagrations are to be prevented, we need a process that will uphold international law, end the illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories and create a viable Palestinian state alongside a secure Israel.

James Cleverly: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his recognition of the diplomatic work that the UK Government have put in. I can assure him that we remain fully committed to an immediate ceasefire, and we are working to that end. As I have said, the Foreign Secretary spoke with his Jordanian opposite number only a few days ago, and I spoke to ambassadors from the region this morning.

Some of the diplomatic efforts are done, quite rightly, very visibly through institutions such as the United Nations. Some—I am sure the hon. Gentleman will understand why—are perhaps done more discreetly and quietly. The international community is pulling together, both in the region and in Europe and the United States, to try to bring about a meaningful ceasefire and work

[James Cleverly]

towards what can only be the right way of bringing permanent peace to the region, which is through negotiated political means.

Theresa Villiers (Chipping Barnet) (Con): Israel has the right to defend its citizens from terrorist attack, and I welcome the Minister's strong confirmation of that this morning. Will he go further, however, and send a message about terrorism by proscribing the whole of Hamas as well as the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which is making possible these horrific rocket attacks?

James Cleverly: I thank my right hon. Friend for the points that she has made. She will know that the military wing of Hamas is recognised internationally as a terrorist organisation, and the entirety of Hamas has no contact—we have a no-contact policy—from the UK Government. We enjoy good working relationships with the leadership of the Palestinian Authority. Solutions need to be achieved—they must be—through negotiated political means, rather than through military means. She will also understand that we do not speculate on future proscriptions.

Chris Law (Dundee West) (SNP) [V]: We are witnessing the second week of horrific violence in Israel and Palestine. It has been reported that 10 have been killed by Hamas, and more than 200 have been killed by Israeli airstrikes, including 65 children. The SNP abhors all indiscriminate violence against civilians so, first, what further steps can the UK Government take in demanding an immediate ceasefire? I am incredibly proud that last month my city of Dundee voted to recognise Palestine as a nation state so, secondly, will the UK Government commit today to recognising Palestine as an equal and independent nation state?

The UN Secretary-General has accused the Israeli Government of acting contrary to their obligations under human rights law. Indeed, Amnesty International has highlighted potential war crime by both Israel and Hamas, so, thirdly, what pressures are the UK Government bringing to bear to investigate these shocking breaches? Lastly, UK arms export licences to Israel have increased by over 1,000% in the past two years. This is not neutrality, so, finally, will the UK Government immediately suspend those exports until they have been thoroughly examined?

James Cleverly: I urge the hon. Gentleman, for whom I have a huge amount of respect, not to equate the legitimate Government of Israel with a terrorist organisation—the military wing of Hamas. As I have said at the Dispatch Box a number of times, Israel has a right to self-defence, but we have made it clear that we expect at all times for it to exercise that in accordance with international humanitarian law, and make every effort to minimise casualties. Ultimately, the best way of minimising civilian casualties is to bring this conflict to a conclusion. That is why we are working with both the Palestinian leadership and the Government of Israel, and with our international partners, both in the region and further afield, to bring this conflict to a timely end, and work towards a more permanent ceasefire and, ultimately, a peaceful two-state solution.

Robert Halfon (Harlow) (Con) [V]: Reports indicate that at least 500 Hamas rockets—one in seven of the total number fired—have exploded within Gaza. A Palestinian non-governmental organisation has confirmed that eight Palestinians were killed last week by a rocket that fell short. Does my right hon. Friend agree that Hamas rocket fire not only threatens Israelis, but causes grave harm to ordinary Gazans and must be condemned in the strongest possible terms? Would he also acknowledge that, far from being able to negotiate with a democratic Palestinian Government, Israel is facing existential threats from Hamas and Hezbollah, extreme Islamist terrorist organisations funded and backed by Iran, and that there should be no moral equivalence between democratic Israel and the terrorism of Hamas and Hezbollah?

James Cleverly: The UK enjoys good relations with both the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority. I urge all Members of the House and those further afield to recognise that Hamas, the military wing of which is recognised as a terrorist organisation, is no friend of the Palestinian people. We will work with the leadership of both the Palestinians and the Israelis, alongside our friends and partners internationally, for peace. Ultimately, nobody wants to continue seeing images of fatalities—either Palestinians or Israelis.

Layla Moran (Oxford West and Abingdon) (LD) [V]: Last week, I read the names of four of the then 14 Palestinian children and one Israeli child who had died. A week on, the number of Palestinian children dead is now 63 in Gaza alone. My heart was broken before; it is shattered now.

We need a ceasefire. The UK should not have left it to France to be the main sponsor of a UN resolution calling for it. This Government are shirking their historic responsibility and it is time to step up. Today, I wear my keffiyeh in recognition that if we want lasting peace, we cannot go back to how things were before: the police brutality, the demolitions and the oppression. We need a peace process that is not doomed before it begins. If this Government are committed to a lasting peace, why do they not recognise the state of Palestine?

James Cleverly: I recognise the hon. Lady's passion for the Palestinian people and her own background. I completely understand how painful it is for her in particular, and for all of us, to see images of those who have lost their lives. I can assure her that we are working with international partners, both at the United Nations and more broadly, to bring about peace. When I last stood at the Dispatch Box and responded to her urgent question, I made the point that the UK was pushing towards a cessation of violence and a ceasefire and that we are absolutely committed to a meaningful two-state solution.

Palestinian recognition is, rightly, an issue to be debated in this House, but at this point our focus is relentlessly on bringing about an immediate end to the conflict so that we can work in good time to a negotiated political solution and a two-state solution for the benefit of both the Israeli and the Palestinian peoples.

Felicity Buchan (Kensington) (Con): I welcome my right hon. Friend's statement and the commitment to a two-state solution. Will he update the House on the extent to which we are using our presidency of the G7 to help to broker international consensus for a ceasefire?

James Cleverly: We are using all our diplomatic contacts and our diplomatic leverage. Understandably, the United Nations is the predominant multilateral body through which we are working, but I spoke to a meeting of the Arab ambassadors just this morning. We are ambivalent as to which organisation helps to bring about peace and will work with whomever, wherever we feel able to apply positivity. I assure my hon. Friend that we will leave no stone unturned in our efforts to bring about an end to this conflict.

Dr Rupa Huq (Ealing Central and Acton) (Lab): The sad aftermath of a tragedy in which children who are pulled from the rubble are considered lucky among a three-figure death toll is—the Minister said it himself—people newly displaced from their homes, double refugees and destroyed schools, hospitals and cultural centres, all at a time when we are cutting our aid contribution internationally. Does he agree with his two recent predecessors, Alistair Burt and Alan Duncan, that although UK Government policy is against illegal settlements and for a two-state solution, our long-standing lack of proactivity sometimes makes it look as if we do not really mean that? The only real victor in all this is Netanyahu. Until recently he was a caretaker leader after an inconclusive election; he has now well cemented himself.

James Cleverly: The outcome of democratic elections in the state of Israel is for the Israeli people. We will continue to work with the Governments elected by the Israeli people. It strikes me, however, that that is an important but fundamentally different issue to the subject of the urgent question. We will work with international partners, the Israelis and the Palestinians to bring peace to the region, both in terms of this specific conflict, which we seek to resolve as quickly as possible, and, ultimately, for a sustainable prosperous two-state solution. That remains the UK Government's policy.

Stephen Crabb (Preseli Pembrokeshire) (Con): Iran's role in this conflict is just one more example of Iranian efforts to undermine peace and stability throughout the middle east via its proxy terror group allies. Given that it was exactly that kind of behaviour that many warned was a blind spot in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreement, what assurances can my right hon. Friend give today that the current discussions on resuscitating the agreement will not just repeat that mistake all over again and give a free pass to Iran to continue re-arming its Hamas allies?

James Cleverly: My right hon. Friend makes an incredibly important point. We recognise that in our desire to prevent Iran acquiring a nuclear weapon we cannot be blind to its broader regional destabilising activity. That will remain one of the UK's priorities. It is regularly raised with me by my interlocutors in the region and I can assure him that that will be at the forefront of our minds throughout the forthcoming negotiations.

Richard Burgon (Leeds East) (Lab): How many more Palestinian children have to be killed? How many more Palestinian homes have to be reduced to rubble? How many more Palestinian schools and hospitals have to be bombed before the British Government take the action necessary to force the Israeli Government finally to stop their war on the Palestinian people? Surely now is the time for all UK weapons sales to Israel to be stopped. Surely now is the time for sanctions on the Israeli

Government for their repeated violations of international law. Surely now is the time—this House voted for it back in 2014—to recognise the state of Palestine, because Palestine has the right to exist.

James Cleverly: I remind the hon. Gentleman of the sequencing of the events that unfolded in Gaza and Israel. Israel's actions were in response to indiscriminate rocket attacks from an internationally recognised terrorist organisation. Israel has the right to self-defence. We have urged it at every step to do so proportionately and to take every step it is able to take to minimise civilian casualties. I am sure that like me he is horrified when we see images of fatalities, whether they be Israeli or Palestinian, and that is why, while the issue of recognition is important, it is not for now. Now is about bringing this conflict to an end.

Mr Tobias Ellwood (Bournemouth East) (Con): I welcome the Minister's statement, but given our history and our legacy, could Britain lean into this more? We called for a ceasefire. Let us ask the United States to join us there as well. It is difficult to see how any tactical or strategic advantage could be gained by either side from continuing this conflict. Once we get to a ceasefire, the old legacy challenges will remain and Israel will require a partner to work with. My concern is that Palestinian elections have not taken place for about 16 years and Hamas is now supported by the Iranians. It has no interest in working with Fatah in the west bank, let alone the Israelis. Does my right hon. Friend agree that perhaps the neighbouring Muslim countries, particularly those that have just signed the Abraham accords, could be invited to help to encourage Palestinians to hold fresh elections, so that we get more representative voices that Israel can work with?

James Cleverly: My right hon. Friend makes an incredibly important point. The UK has been fully supportive of elections for the Palestinian Authority, which are now well overdue. We have seen on numerous occasions the Palestinian Authority working and co-ordinating with the Government of Israel, and we are always supportive when that is the case. The actions taken by Hamas are not to the benefit of the Palestinian people. The solution to the conflict, both in the short term and ultimately, will be through a negotiated political solution, and I would urge the Palestinian people to choose a leadership that is respected on the international stage and able to negotiate with international partners.

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP): I thank the Minister for his very balanced response to the questions that have been put. He knows that Hamas is trying to make the Palestinian Authority and Mahmoud Abbas redundant, to make him appear irrelevant and to present itself as the ultimate defender of Jerusalem and al-Aqsa. Our own history in this country proves the folly of doing business with terrorists. Will the Minister take the opportunity today to tell Hamas that the British Government will never do business with terrorists?

James Cleverly: The hon. Gentleman makes the point that the military wing of Hamas is recognised as a terrorist organisation. Ultimately, the future of the Palestinian people should lie in the hands of people who are able to negotiate on the international stage, and Hamas is not in a position to credibly do that.

Suzanne Webb (Stourbridge) (Con): I welcome the Prime Minister's call for both sides to step back from the brink and show restraint. Does my right hon. Friend agree that continued escalation in the region will only lead to further violence and more deaths, and that both sides need to urgently down their arms?

James Cleverly: My hon. Friend makes absolutely the right point. The images that we have seen of fatalities and injuries of both Israelis and Palestinians are heartbreaking. We continue to work with international partners to work to peace and an ultimate, sustainable, two-state solution.

Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Ind) [V]: The images of death, destruction and loss of life all over the region are horrific. The targeted bombing of buildings in Gaza, the tanks on the west bank, and the destruction of education and health facilities is absolutely appalling. Will the Minister explain exactly what is the nature of Britain's military relationship with Israel? What is the nature of that co-operation with Israel? Can he tell the House whether any munitions sold by Britain to Israel have been used to bomb places in Gaza, and whether any drone equipment supplied by Britain or bought by Britain has been used as a surveillance method on either the west bank or Gaza and followed up by the destruction of civilian life and the death of many people, including the tragedy of the deaths of whole families and children? Our public need to know exactly the nature of that military relationship with Israel. Of course, the Minister rightly says that the occupied territories, which are occupied by Israel, are the places that suffer as a result of this bombardment.

James Cleverly: The UK has a robust arms export licensing regime, and all export licences are assessed in accordance with it. I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that the UK takes its arms export responsibilities very seriously. I would also remind him that Israel is responding to rockets fired at it from an organisation closely associated with Iran. We would urge all nations to take their arms export responsibilities as seriously as the UK does.

Alexander Stafford (Rother Valley) (Con): Can my right hon. Friend confirm that he is working with international counterparts on calming tensions in the region and bringing an end the violence, to ensure that all sides can move towards a peaceful dialogue? Can he also give assurances that he will work to ensure that the hard-won Abraham accords between Israel and the Gulf nations remain intact?

James Cleverly: My hon. Friend makes a very important point. I can assure him that the conversation I had this morning with representatives of the Arab nations, including the representative of the Palestinian people here in London, was balanced, thoughtful and productive. I can assure him that our friends in the region share our desire to see peace come quickly to the region, and we are all working closely with one other to pursue that particular goal.

Ms Diane Abbott (Hackney North and Stoke Newington) (Lab) [V]: The Minister will be aware that, around the world, people want to see an end to the violence and the rising death toll—both of Israelis and Palestinians—and to see a ceasefire, and they welcome efforts to that

effect. However, does he also accept that the long-term solution to these issues lies with the UK Government, among others, demanding an end to forced evictions of Palestinians in East Jerusalem; the UK Government insisting that sacred sites, including the al-Aqsa mosque, are treated with the utmost respect; the UK Government asking for an immediate halt to new settlements and an adherence to international law; and the UK Government recognising Palestine as a state, with full membership of the United Nations? The Minister said earlier that recognition of Palestine is not an issue for now, but I say to him that if justice for the Palestinians is not an issue for now, in the midst of this violence and death, when will justice for the Palestinians be an issue?

James Cleverly: Let me read verbatim a section from my opening speech. I said: "The UK position on evictions, demolitions and settlements is clear and long-standing: we oppose these activities. We urge the Government of Israel to cease their policies related to settlement expansion immediately and instead work towards a two-state solution." So our position on the very questions that the right hon. Lady raised is clear and long standing, and I do not understand why she is raising them. Again, on the issue of Palestinian state recognition, the UK position is clear and long standing. We will do so when it is most conducive to advancing the peace effort.

Dr Andrew Murrison (South West Wiltshire) (Con): The Minister's point on the two-state solution does him great credit and it should be clear for anybody to understand. Long-range rockets at scale are not possible without the involvement of a sophisticated, malign state actor that will never be content until the state of Israel is driven into the sea. Does my right hon. Friend agree that there will never be peace in the Levant, never be a two-state solution and never be a solution of any sort until Iran ceases to be a feral bandit state, uncouples itself from its regime and rediscovers the dignity, poise and leadership appropriate to its history and its culture?

James Cleverly: I thank my predecessor and good friend for the point that he raised. I have already said that the UK encourages Iran to be a more thoughtful and less disruptive regional player and to stop arming and supporting terrorist militia groups in the region. We will continue to work towards a two-state solution with the framework that has been explained from this Dispatch Box many times, and I pay tribute to the work that he did in this role to try to make that a reality.

Dr Philippa Whitford (Central Ayrshire) (SNP) [V]: Gaza has been under a suffocating blockade for almost 15 years, which already undermines the delivery of healthcare. Having been involved in breast cancer projects in Gaza for many years, I am aware from colleagues that 14 Government hospitals and clinics, including the covid laboratory, have been bombed, along with those run by international charities. We have been in this situation before, so once a ceasefire is finally agreed, what is the Government's plan to achieve a long-term, yet just solution for both the Palestinians and the Israelis?

James Cleverly: I pay tribute to the hon. Lady's work in this area and more broadly in the provision of health services to communities around the world. We are aware of the reports and, indeed, footage of medical facilities

that have been damaged or destroyed, but we are also deeply concerned about the continued use by Hamas of civilian infrastructure for its military operations. Ultimately, we seek to bring about an end to the conflict so that humanitarian support can get to the people who need it. We remain one of the most generous humanitarian donors in the world and we are working hard to keep those humanitarian access routes open so that our support and the support of others in the international community gets to the people it needs to.

Mary Robinson (Cheadle) (Con): Hamas has consistently chosen to prioritise its goal of the destruction of Israel over the safety and prosperity of Palestinians, but in conflict it is always the innocent, Palestinians and Israelis, who suffer. That must end and a ceasefire must be agreed. Does my right hon. Friend agree that we cannot just condemn Hamas, but must ensure that moderate Palestinians' representatives are supported and championed?

James Cleverly: My hon. Friend is right; we seek, as does the international community, a peaceful life for the Palestinian people and for the Israeli people. That can be done only through international co-operation, and ultimately it has to be done by representatives of the Palestinian people who respect Israel's right to exist.

Chris Bryant (Rhondda) (Lab): My mother always wanted me to take a side, either for the Palestinians or the Jews. I can never decide which side I should take, but is it not profoundly unhelpful for us to take a side? If we are going to take a side, would it not make far more sense for us to be on the side of the families who have been fleeing rocket attacks from Hamas, of the families who have been evicted in East Jerusalem or in the illegal settlements, and of the doctors who have seen their facilities bombed or who do not have any vaccines to be able to deal with coronavirus? I know this sounds terribly pious, but in the end do we not just have to be on the side of the humanity in this?

James Cleverly: The hon. Gentleman speaks with a huge amount of wisdom on this. It is perhaps seductive but ultimately futile to work to reinforce a side of an argument while an argument persists. What we should do is seek to end arguments, end conflict, pursue peace and pursue the right of Palestinians and Israelis to live in peace, side by side, in harmony and prosperity. The Government will continue to pursue that as our primary goal in this region.

Andy Slaughter (Hammersmith) (Lab): The Minister says he has a policy on evictions and demolitions in East Jerusalem and the west bank, on the attacks on al-Aqsa and the expansions of settlements, but the illegal settlement and occupation of Palestinian territories has been going on for more than five decades. What is the Minister actually going to do to tackle the causes of violence? What steps are his Government actually going to take?

James Cleverly: The hon. Gentleman answers his own question, in the fact that the tensions in this region have persisted for decades and have done so under both Conservative and Labour Governments. If it were simple and easy, it would have been done. The truth of the matter is that we are seeking to have a sustainable future for both the Palestinian people and the Israeli people.

We will work with the representatives of those people and more broadly in the international community to pursue that goal.

Jacob Young (Redcar) (Con) [V]: I join the Minister in urging both sides to move to a ceasefire to prevent the further loss of life. We have all seen the images of what is happening in Israel and the Gaza strip, and I have to say thank God for the Iron Dome. Were it not for that outstanding piece of Israeli technology, today we would see thousands of innocent Israeli citizens dead and maimed at the hands of Hamas terrorists and no doubt even worse conflict in the region. Does the Minister agree that we must condemn Hamas and weaken its close relationship with Iran, and work to bring moderate Israelis and Palestinians together through co-existence projects?

James Cleverly: My hon. Friend makes an incredibly important point. There are plenty of thoughtful and passionate Palestinians and Israelis who are determined to bring peace to the region, and we must ensure that their voices are heard. We will work alongside them and our friends more broadly in the international community to that end, and he makes an important point about what might have been the situation had Israeli air defence systems not been as effective as they are.

Munira Wilson (Twickenham) (LD): I am utterly horrified by the scenes unfolding in Gaza, as are hundreds of my constituents who have contacted me to express their concerns. The UK Government are absolutely right to condemn Hamas's rocket attacks, but they must also condemn in much stronger terms the completely disproportionate response from the Israeli Government, which has resulted in the loss of hundreds of civilian lives, including at least 63 children, coming on the back of sustained breaches of international law for many years. So I ask again: given the UK's historic responsibility in the region, will the Minister urgently intensify and accelerate efforts with international partners to broker an immediate ceasefire by both sides, and will he suspend arms exports to Israel?

James Cleverly: I have already made clear our desire to see an immediate end to the hostilities, a permanent ceasefire and a negotiated settlement between the Palestinians and the Israelis. We have also urged that, in their response to rocket attacks from within civilian infrastructure in Gaza, the Israelis exercise all caution to minimise civilian casualties. That will remain the UK Government's position on this issue.

Greg Smith (Buckingham) (Con): Yesterday, Israel facilitated dozens of trucks filled with humanitarian aid, including field hospitals and covid vaccines, to enter Gaza, yet Hamas deliberately fired repeat barrages of mortars at the Israeli crossing terminal, injuring an Israel Defence Forces soldier involved in the aid transfer and killing two foreign workers nearby. Will my right hon. Friend join me in condemning that appalling incident, which shows, as he stated earlier, that the actions of Hamas are categorically not in the interests of Palestinian people?

James Cleverly: My hon. Friend makes an incredibly important point. As I said in my initial response, the targeting of civilians is unacceptable, and the specific targeting of humanitarian support particularly so. I

[James Cleverly]

have urged Hamas and other terrorist organisations to cease their targeting of humanitarian access routes, so that our support and the support of others in the international community can get to the people who need it.

Liam Byrne (Birmingham, Hodge Hill) (Lab) [V]: We heard the Minister's statement of policy; we just do not understand the strategy for advancing it. He has to realise, like the rest of us, that there is no peace without justice. The way to disarm Hamas, to make progress towards peace and to ensure genuine calm and de-escalation can only be through the full realisation of Palestinian rights and the end of systematic discrimination against Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

It is vital that the UK uses its influence with the United States to insist on a ceasefire. It is vital that the UK Government fully support the International Criminal Court investigation into all alleged war crimes, no matter which party stands accused, including those who are launching appalling rockets and those launching airstrikes. It is vital that we suspend the sale of arms to Israel until we know the outcomes of these prosecutions. Crucially, it is vital that the UK understands that the hope of peace is disappearing because people no longer believe that a two-state solution is possible. That is why we have to act now to sustain hope among Palestinians by ensuring recognition of the state of Palestine. We voted for it in 2014. On 7 July 2020, the Government said:

“The UK will recognise a Palestinian state at a time when it best serves the objective of peace”—

Mr Speaker: Order. I think the Minister has got the question.

James Cleverly: I recognise the passion with which the right hon. Gentleman speaks, but there can be no legitimisation of indiscriminate rocket attacks against civilian targets from within civilian infrastructure by an internationally recognised terrorist organisation.

Mr Mark Harper (Forest of Dean) (Con): I thank the Minister for his robust support on behalf of the British Government for Israel's right to defend itself from attack by a proscribed terrorist organisation. Listening to what he said about the prospects for peace, it is clear that Hamas has no interest in dialogue and moving towards peace. What can we do to strengthen the Palestinian Authority, which is a credible partner for peace, and to reduce the influence of Iran, which is trying to strengthen the hand of those who are Israel's enemies and who do not wish to see peace for the Palestinians?

James Cleverly: My right hon. Friend makes an incredibly important point. The Palestinian people have many friends and allies in the international community and they have people within their own leadership who are determined to bring about peace and see a peaceful two-state solution. We should find ways of strengthening their voices and their hands and work with them in pursuit of a two-state solution. There are also people who claim leadership or who aspire to leadership who will never accept the existence of an Israeli state, and we cannot, will not and should not work with them.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Slough) (Lab): The nub of this issue, having visited both Israel and Palestine, is a colonial-era mindset of a gradual land grab: the forcible eviction of people from their homes; the building of illegal settlements; the extreme and shameless violation of human rights and international law; and the sheer suppression and humiliation of an entire nation. At this point in time, however, the efforts of the international community should be focused on securing an immediate end to the bloodshed and hostility. So can the Minister explain: where is the logjam and exactly how much aid have we managed to get through to the inhumanely blockaded Gaza?

James Cleverly: The hon. Gentleman makes the important point that the priority at the moment is twofold: an immediate end to the conflict and the immediate access of humanitarian aid. The UK remains one of the most generous donors of humanitarian support to the Palestinian people and we are very proud of that fact. I am not able to give him an accurate assessment, as humanitarian access routes have been closed because of their targeting by Hamas, but we will continue to pursue the joint aims of bringing about a conclusion to this conflict and ensuring that humanitarian support reaches the people who need it.

Bob Blackman (Harrow East) (Con) [V]: Reports emerged yesterday that Hamas had launched a torpedo at Israel's natural gas field in the Mediterranean and that an armed unmanned aerial vehicle caused an explosion at Israel's Ashkelon power station. Does my right hon. Friend agree that Hamas's ability to acquire these non-conventional weapons is a very worrying development? Will he join me in condemning Hamas for targeting energy infrastructure that will disrupt energy supplies not only in Israel, but in Gaza?

James Cleverly: I am not able to confirm the reports to which my hon. Friend referred, but I reinforce the points that I made about the need for Iran not to be a destabilising influence in the region, for Hamas to step back from this conflict and for both sides to step back and pursue peace so that we can work to a negotiated, permanent two-state solution to the region.

Hywel Williams (Arfon) (PC): I associate myself and my party with the Minister's opening words about the wholly unacceptable deaths and casualties, particularly of children.

Self-evidently, the first step to peace is to stop the violence. President Biden has expressed support for the ceasefire, according to press reports. Can the Minister reassure me that all relevant international partners are actively working for an immediate ceasefire as a prelude to a substantial international attempt to secure a permanent and just solution?

James Cleverly: I can assure the hon. Gentleman that everyone I have spoken to in the international community is absolutely focused on bringing about an end to this conflict and a ceasefire. That is true within the region, and in respect of our European friends and partners and, indeed, the recent conversations that my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has had with President Biden's Administration. That will remain, I have no doubt, the focus of the international community.

Christian Wakeford (Bury South) (Con): Of Hamas's many deplorable aspects, its cynical locating of military infrastructure within densely populated civilian areas is perhaps the worst. This was confirmed again yesterday, as Hamas was found to be launching rockets close to a school. Will my right hon. Friend join me in condemning this double war crime?

James Cleverly: My hon. Friend makes an incredibly important point. The location of military activities within civilian infrastructure is completely unacceptable and demonstrates a disturbing attitude towards the lives of the Palestinians that the leadership of Hamas claim to be defending.

Caroline Lucas (Brighton, Pavilion) (Green) [V]: There are many underlying reasons for this most intractable of conflicts, most notably 54 years of occupation of Palestine and 14 years of the blockade of the Gaza Strip, but the most recent violence and devastating damage and loss of life has been inflamed by Israeli violations of the fourth Geneva convention in occupied east Jerusalem and the rest of the west bank. While I welcome the Government's long-term focus on peace and the two-state solution, can the Minister tell us specifically what consequences the UK is advocating to the international community to deal with Israel's illegal actions? What steps is he taking, beyond raising it in bilateral talks with Israeli Ministers, to ensure the end of all settlement building and the cancellation of all forcible evictions and demolitions in Sheikh Jarrah and elsewhere? He has been asked this before but has not given any concrete details in his response. I would be grateful if he did so now.

James Cleverly: The hon. Lady implies that bilateral conversations with partners are somehow invalid, but that is how diplomacy is done. Speaking with our friends and partners around the world and in the region is how we bring about positive change. The UK's position on settlements, evictions and annexation is well known, and we have been vocal at the Dispatch Box and indeed in our conversations directly with our Israeli interlocutors. That is what we will continue to do. We will continue to work with friends in the international community to seek peace in the region.

Andrew Percy (Brigg and Goole) (Con) [V]: Yet again, we see the distasteful spectacle in this place of a pile-on against the democratic state that is under attack from terrorism, while those who hide their murder weapons among children and civilians are given a near-free pass. It is that, and the misinformation circulating from certain groups with regard to access to religious sites, which is directly contributing to the rising hate against some in this country and what we saw on the streets of London this weekend. Will my right hon. Friend call out all those who spread this misinformation?

James Cleverly: I think in issues as sensitive as this we all have a duty to speak carefully to ensure that what we say is accurate. On my hon. Friend's point about some of the scenes that we saw in London and elsewhere over the weekend, the people who would seek any excuse to perpetrate antisemitic attacks or to say antisemitic things should not be given any justification, whether it be from Members of this House or anywhere else.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy (Streatham) (Lab) [V]: The Minister will be aware that the United States has specifically blocked the adoption of a joint UN Security Council statement calling for a halt to Israeli-Palestinian violence. I am sure that Members right across the House agree that we need a joint international approach to achieve a ceasefire. So what steps will the Minister take to urge the US Administration to stop blocking any call for a joint ceasefire? Today the Minister has repeatedly expressed support for a two-state solution. I would just like to understand how the Government expect to command the confidence of the public and the House on this matter when they will not recognise Palestine, one of those two states, because one plus zero does not equal two.

James Cleverly: The United Kingdom will continue working with the whole of the international community, including our European partners, partners in the region and the United States, towards what is our explicitly shared goal, which is an end to the violence and ultimately peace for both the Palestinian people and the Israeli people. That remains our focus and that is what we will work towards.

Dr Matthew Offord (Hendon) (Con) [V]: Everyone in this House hopes that hostilities will end soon, with a permanent ceasefire. However, the reality is that there will be further rounds of fighting unless the international community ends Iran's bankrolling and arming of Gaza-based terrorist groups such as Hamas. Some Members today appear to be defending the actions of that terrorist group. I am not one of them, so may I ask: as nuclear talks continue in Vienna, can my right hon. Friend outline how the P5+1 intend finally to end Iran's ability to fuel conflict in the region?

James Cleverly: I can assure my hon. Friend that, in addition to preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, a priority is for it to cease its destabilising actions in the region. That will remain a priority in our bilateral relationship with Iran and in our multilateral work with regard to Iran. We will continue to pursue an end to the specific violence that we see in Gaza and Israel, and we will redouble our efforts to bring about a sustainable, peaceful two-state solution.

James Murray (Ealing North) (Lab/Co-op) [V]: I would like to press the Minister to set out specifically what further actions the Government will take to ensure that there is a co-ordinated international response to secure an immediate ceasefire, and then specifically what the UK will do to address the sources of long-term injustice and insecurity, including forced evictions and the expansion of illegal settlements.

James Cleverly: The hon. Gentleman would have heard in my response to the urgent question that we have had a long-standing opposition to settlement expansion, demolitions and evictions. Some of our multilateral diplomatic work is done publicly, and some is done more discreetly and privately, but I assure him that we will work closely with our international partners in the region and further afield to pursue peace in the middle east.

Stephen Timms (East Ham) (Lab): Large numbers of people gather at the al-Aqsa mosque to pray. Does the Minister agree that the attacks that we saw on people praying there, and the large number of civilian casualties that resulted, cannot be justified? Will he urge the authorities there to ensure that there is no repeat?

James Cleverly: The right hon. Gentleman makes an important point about the ability of the faithful to worship and the importance of the status quo of the holy sites of all religions in Jerusalem. It is the UK Government's explicit policy that those holy sites need to be protected, and that worshippers should be able to worship in peace and confidence. That will remain the position of our Government.

Jerome Mayhew (Broadland) (Con): I am very glad that my right hon. Friend has made it absolutely clear today that the current situation was provoked by Hamas firing rockets into Israel, and that Israel has the absolute right to defend itself. The Minister has also referred to the goal of a negotiated political settlement—the two-state solution. We have to accept, do we not, that the continued building of illegal settlements makes that two-state solution ever harder to achieve? What steps can the Government take to dissuade Israel from this policy?

James Cleverly: My hon. Friend makes an important point about actions that might make a two-state solution more difficult. The UK's position is that continued settlement expansion does make a sustainable two-state solution more difficult, and that is why we have been opposed to that and have communicated our opposition to that to the Israeli Government. We will continue to do so, and that will form part of the work that we put forward to make a peaceful two-state solution more likely, rather than less.

Dave Doogan (Angus) (SNP): The UK Government previously halted military export licences to the Israeli defence forces after the attacks in Gaza in 2014, but since 2015 there have followed £400 million of licences to Israel from the UK to date. There exists a profound asymmetry to this conflict, evidenced by the appalling civilian death toll in each territory, with almost 200 Palestinian civilians and 10 Israeli civilians killed—all victims; all wasted lives. Is the UK content to uphold that asymmetry with continued military sales, or will it promote de-escalation dynamically, with renewed limits on military exports to Israel?

James Cleverly: Israel seeks to defend itself against attacks from the military wing of Hamas, which is an internationally recognised terrorist organisation. Our military export licensing regime is very robust, as I have said, and we are proud that we have such a robust arms exports regime in place—all export licences are measured against that. We will work with the Israelis and with the Palestinian people to bring about peace, and once a ceasefire has been achieved we will continue our work to bring about a peaceful, sustainable two-state solution.

Antony Higginbotham (Burnley) (Con): May I thank the Minister for his balanced opening statement in response to this urgent question? Securing a ceasefire will be very difficult, but maintaining it will be more difficult still, so can he confirm that once that ceasefire has been secured, we will offer whatever support we can to the Palestinian Authority, so that they can hold free and fair elections, which are the only way that moderate voices can get into power and then take the country forward?

James Cleverly: My hon. Friend makes an incredibly important point. A ceasefire to this conflict is the beginning of an incredibly important process, which will include ensuring that the Palestinian people have credible voices to speak on their behalf on the international stage, and that we work together—with the Israelis, the Palestinians and the international community—for the thing that we should all aim for, and which I believe the vast majority of people, both in this House and more broadly, seek to see, which is a peaceful, sustainable and prosperous two-state solution.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): I will now suspend the House for a few minutes, in order that arrangements can be made for the next item of business.

1.36 pm

Sitting suspended.

Post Office Update

1.42 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Paul Scully): With permission, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to update the House on changes to the Post Office Horizon IT inquiry. Over a 20-year period, the Post Office Horizon computerised accounting system recorded shortfalls in cash, which were allegedly caused by sub-postmasters, leading to dismissals, recovery of losses and, in some instances, criminal prosecutions. I know that Members across the House are aware of the terrible impact that this has had on affected postmasters and their families. The life-altering implications of these accounting errors cannot be overstated.

The Post Office Horizon IT inquiry, led by Sir Wyn Williams, was launched in September 2020 as a major step towards righting the wrongs of the past. The inquiry was established on a non-statutory basis to enable the chair to work quickly to establish a clear account of the implementation and failings of the Horizon computer system over its lifetime.

On 27 April, I made an oral statement to the House following the decision by the Court of Appeal on 23 April to quash the convictions of 39 postmasters who had been convicted for Horizon-related shortfalls. As I said then, the Government recognise the gravity of the court's judgment and the scale of the miscarriage of justice that it makes clear.

Sir Wyn and I are both of the view that the context for the inquiry has changed in the light of the judgment by the Court of Appeal and that now is the right moment to convert the inquiry to a statutory footing. Therefore, I can now inform the House that, with the agreement of the Prime Minister, I will convert the inquiry to a statutory footing on 1 June 2021. I have also agreed that Sir Wyn will now have more time to undertake his work. The inquiry is now expected to report in autumn 2022, rather than summer 2021.

Together, these changes will give Sir Wyn the powers and the time that he needs to conduct an in-depth analysis of the decision-making processes that led to the Horizon scandal. He will be able to compel organisations to provide documents and witnesses to give evidence, under oath if necessary. It is now for Sir Wyn to consider his next steps, and I expect that he will provide more information on his proposed approach soon. In the short term, the inquiry will complete its planned engagements through May, but public hearings that had been expected to take place in June will be delayed.

I have always said that the inquiry should proceed quickly to get the answers that postmasters and their families are seeking. Sir Wyn has gathered a lot of evidence from key parties and engaged with many affected postmasters; I have therefore asked that he provide a progress update to his original timeline of summer 2021, to make public the progress to date and any initial findings. I hope that still more affected postmasters will choose to engage with Sir Wyn as he continues his work on a statutory footing.

The inquiry's overarching aims—to ensure that the right lessons have been learned and to establish what must change—will remain. However, there will be some changes to the terms of reference in the light of the

Court of Appeal judgment. I have today notified the House of the updated terms of reference in a written ministerial statement.

I thank Sir Wyn for his quick progress on the inquiry to date and for taking the time with me in recent weeks to consider the next steps for it. I am pleased to confirm that he has agreed to remain as chair of the inquiry for the next phase.

Finally, I note that converting the inquiry to a statutory footing and proceeding over a longer period will, of course, have cost implications, but I assure colleagues across the House that they are being fully considered with my colleagues in HM Treasury.

The Horizon saga has wrecked lives and livelihoods. We cannot undo the damage that has been done, but we can establish what went wrong at the Post Office and ensure that nothing like it is ever allowed to happen again. The events surrounding the dispute have long been shrouded in darkness, and this Government are determined to bring them into the light. The landmark Court of Appeal judgment changed the context for the inquiry. Following it, the Government did not hesitate to act to give the inquiry more teeth and equip Sir Wyn with more powers. To affected postmasters and their families, my message is that we are listening and we will get to the bottom of this appalling affair. I commend this statement to the House.

1.46 pm

Seema Malhotra (Feltham and Heston) (Lab/Co-op): I thank the Minister for advance sight of his statement. My hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle upon Tyne Central (Chi Onwurah) is not able to attend today but, like me, she welcomes today's statement, including the much belated conversion of the inquiry to a statutory footing and the extension of its scope, although we believe that it does not yet go far enough.

This is indeed the largest legal miscarriage of justice in our history. It is estimated that there have been 900 false prosecutions in total—each one its own story of persecution, of fear, of despair, of families destroyed, of reputations smashed, of lives lost and of innocent people bankrupted and imprisoned. I thank and congratulate everybody who has campaigned over so many years—for more than a decade—to reveal the truth, including the Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance and the Communication Workers Union. I also congratulate right hon. and hon. Members across the House who have fought for justice for their constituents; I mention in particular my right hon. Friend the Member for North Durham (Mr Jones), who has worked tirelessly on the issue.

The campaign for justice has been long fought, and there is still a long way to go. The Minister's announcement is a step in the right direction. The Labour party and the Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance have always said that the inquiry must be statutory, but less than a month ago in this Chamber, four days after the Court of Appeal's decision, the Minister rejected calls for a statutory inquiry on the grounds that it would take

“three, four or five years”—[*Official Report*, 27 April 2021; Vol. 693, c. 254.]

Can he tell us what has happened to change his mind?

The horrific miscarriage of justice did not happen overnight. For a decade, we have known that there were serious problems with the Horizon system, but the Post

[Seema Malhotra]

Office denied all wrongdoing, pursuing the victims and imposing huge lawyers' fees on the claimants. Even after the High Court ruling vindicated postmasters in 2019, the Government refused to act. The next step has been delayed and victims' lives have been disrupted by this Government.

It is important to remember that having a statutory inquiry is not, of itself, justice. There remain a number of urgent questions for the Minister that he did not answer a few weeks ago. The Government are the Post Office's only shareholder, yet time and again, the Post Office was allowed to abuse its power over postmasters. That was the finding of the Court, and it is a really important point. Will the Minister acknowledge the Government's failure of oversight and due diligence with regard to public money? Will he apologise to the victims and their families today? The postmasters were criminalised for a culture that assumed technology is infallible and workers dishonest. How will the Minister change that, and what are the implications for the management of human teams relying on AI or computer algorithms?

We welcome any new powers for Sir Wyn and the review. It was reported—and this seemed to be in the statement—that Sir Wyn will have the power to summon witnesses to give testimony under oath and to force the Post Office to hand over documents. Can the Minister confirm that, and will that power apply to any other entity or organisation from which evidence is sought? While the terms of reference have been updated, they do not seem to reflect the issues raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle upon Tyne Central previously. For example, compensation still appears to be out of scope of the inquiry—why? Who has been consulted on the revised terms of reference?

Fujitsu was the one that provided faulty software. An independent investigator, Second Sight, drew attention to that as far back as 2013, yet the Government do not appear to be doing anything to hold Fujitsu to account. Instead, the Horizon software has been renewed, rewarding Fujitsu with a new £42 million contract. Will ongoing Government contracts with Fujitsu be reviewed? Paula Vennells led the Post Office during this time and was honoured with a CBE, along with a long list of others. Is it right that she and others continue to be honoured?

The Minister has referred to a “full and final settlement” for some postmasters with the Post Office. However, he will know that of the £58 million settlement approved in the High Court case, only £12 million will go to the victims, with the rest taken up in legal fees. Does the Minister agree that they should be considered for appropriate compensation?

The JFSA and Labour want there to be a public consultation to guarantee that the inquiry will deliver for all the victims and provide conclusive answers. The Post Office is a Government-owned company that has been found to be at fault. It is vital that the Government act to improve the corporate structure of the Post Office, to prevent this kind of thing from ever happening again. It should never have been allowed to develop into this scandal, but all we can do now is ensure that we get to the truth, that those wrongly convicted get justice and that lessons are learnt.

Securing this statutory inquiry is a big victory for sub-postmasters, trade unions and justice, but despite the Government's U-turn, this is only the start. The Government have failed to live up to their responsibility to prevent this scandal from occurring, and they have, until today, stood in the way of justice. I urge the Minister to apologise, to own the Government's mistakes and to start work to ensure that justice is served and that a scandal of this magnitude can never happen again.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): I did not want to interrupt the hon. Lady, but Mr Speaker would be annoyed with me if I did not point out that she has taken a minute longer than she ought to have had, and that is a minute that will not be taken later today by some other Member who wishes to speak.

Paul Scully: I send my best wishes to the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne Central (Chi Onwurah); I understand why she cannot be here. I appreciate the response from the hon. Member for Feltham and Heston (Seema Malhotra), and I will try to answer some of her questions.

The hon. Lady talked about Ministers' role in this. Clearly, the role of our Department, Government and Ministers will be included in the inquiry. We do want to learn the lessons, and that will be the case, but as we have seen from the judgment, the Post Office consistently maintained that Horizon was robust and was misguided in its approach to the issue, leading to the decision to prosecute these postmasters. We pressed management on issues regarding complaints brought by postmasters about Horizon and received repeated assurances that the system was reliable. As I say, the inquiry will look into that.

In terms of the Government's response, we clearly recognise the impact that convictions have had on individual postmasters and their families. That is why the Prime Minister and I met with a small group of them last month, to hear directly from them. They had some incredibly tragic and terrible stories, and I can understand why they find it difficult to trust anybody in this regard after many, many years of difficulty and the impossible situation that they and their families have been in.

On Horizon itself, the Post Office is looking into that. It cannot, unfortunately, just switch off a system and change midstream, but clearly it will be looking to work on the successor CRM—customer relationship management—system. Yes, the terms of reference and the statutory footing allow Sir Wyn to compel people to give evidence and documents, and there are sanctions on them if they should fail to do so, under the Inquiries Act 2005. One of the reasons for that, as we move to the second stage and, I hope, engage more sub-postmasters to give their stories, is that we want to give them the confidence that people will be giving their evidence. I must say that, to date still, everybody involved in this whom Sir Wyn has asked to do so has given their full undertaking and worked on it. Nobody has resiled from the inquiry, but it is important that we do this.

On the terms of reference in relation to compensation, an inquiry, whether statutory or not, cannot determine liability in itself—that still has to be done through the courts—but sub-postmasters clearly can raise, and I would fully expect them to raise, the issue of the losses and difficulties as they outline the difficulties they have had.

On Fujitsu, as I have said, clearly the Post Office will be looking at what it does in further compensation, and that will include Fujitsu. There are criminal investigations going ahead, so that is outside the scope of the inquiry, but the GLO—group litigation order—settlement was a full and final settlement. The Government did not have a part in the litigation. It is not part of the inquiry itself, but none the less, this is one part—an important part, but one part—of making sure that we get to the bottom of this and get sufficient justice for the postmasters so badly affected.

Lucy Allan (Telford) (Con): I warmly congratulate the Minister on his statement, and I think it is fantastic news for sub-postmasters. I would like to thank the Prime Minister for meeting sub-postmasters, including my constituent Tracy Felstead, and for understanding the terrible injustice that they have suffered for so long. Can the Minister assure me that compensation will be paid to all those affected, including those who were party to the horrendous struggle that was the group litigation? Does he agree that these sub-postmasters should not be penalised for shining a light on the conduct of the Post Office, and they should not be required to fund the pivotal judgment of Mr Justice Fraser, without which no convictions would have been overturned? Can he please agree with me that compensation must be fair to all sub-postmasters?

Paul Scully: I thank my hon. Friend, who has been really dogged in her championing of Tracy Felstead and many others who have been affected. I was pleased to meet Tracy—who gave such tragic testimony—alongside the Prime Minister. On compensation, the Post Office is engaging in the compensation process. I will, in my regular meetings with the Post Office, make sure that we keep on top of that, because we want to ensure justice and fair compensation for all who have been affected.

Marion Fellows (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP): It is a real pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Telford (Lucy Allan), who is a member of the all-party parliamentary group on post offices. I thank the Minister for advance sight of his statement, and I welcome the statement that the inquiry into the Post Office's Horizon scandal is to be put on a statutory footing—something for which MPs across the Chamber have been calling for months. However, if this is the case, it should have been set out properly by the UK Government in Parliament, not briefed beforehand to the press.

The Horizon scandal has been a serious miscarriage of justice, potentially carried out knowingly. It is a grave injustice that some, sadly, have taken their own lives and others have been imprisoned. The SNP has repeatedly called for a judge-led statutory inquiry, and the Minister and I have had discussions on this previously. Entire lives have been ruined, and it is critical—critical—that no stone is left unturned in securing real justice for those affected. The UK Government must agree to meet all costs as a result of any compensation due, so that the post office network is not impacted. We must not lose sight of that. We absolutely welcome the statutory inquiry, as I have said, but we must also make certain that those responsible are held to account. This is really important.

I want to thank the Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance, the Communication Workers Union and the long-standing members of the APPG, who have fought tirelessly for

this outcome. I look forward to seeing the Minister next week in my capacity as chair of the APPG, when he comes to talk to us further.

Paul Scully: I always welcome meeting the hon. Lady, and I congratulate her on her work for the all-party group. I appreciate her support for this change and I absolutely agree with her that we have to make sure that in getting justice and righting the wrongs of the past we do not jeopardise the future of the Post Office, with the social value it gives, as well as the economic value, for so many people across this country. We must make sure that we restore confidence for not only future postmasters within the network but its customers, so that it is there for many years to come.

Andrew Bridgen (North West Leicestershire) (Con) [V]: I am delighted that the Minister has announced that we will get the full public inquiry that we have needed for so long, to finally draw a line under this tragic fiasco and get to the truth. Following his and the Prime Minister's recent meeting with a few of the sub-postmasters caught up in this debacle, including my constituents Mr and Mrs Rudkin, does my hon. Friend agree that the sub-postmasters are ordinary, honest and credible people, who have been caught up in incredible events that were not of their making and not their responsibility, but which have had a massive detrimental effect on their lives and the lives of their families?

Paul Scully: Let me again thank my hon. Friend for his work in raising the case of Mr and Mrs Rudkin and other postmasters, and he is right. Mr Rudkin was one of the leading witnesses who blew a hole in the evidence and this led to success for those postmasters in various stages of the court case and, unfortunately, Mrs Rudkin was left to carry the can in her experience as postmaster. She is very typical of many postmasters who have been affected: ordinary people who are stalwarts of their villages, towns, communities. That is why we must redouble our efforts to seek justice and fair compensation for them.

Darren Jones (Bristol North West) (Lab) [V]: I thank the Minister for an advance copy of the statement. My Select Committee and I called for this inquiry to be on a statutory footing from the beginning and so we welcome the statement today. However, if I have understood it correctly, the terms of reference are still being decided by Ministers and not by the independent chair, Sir Wyn Williams—why?

Paul Scully: No, that is incorrect; this is being done in collaboration with Sir Wyn. I spoke to Sir Wyn shortly after the Court of Appeal's judgment and comments. He asked for more powers—not just statutory ones but to be able to look further back—and that is why we made changes. Although the inquiry would not explore matters of substantive criminal law, which of course should be decided by the criminal courts, he felt that he could look at this better, first, within the statutory footing and, secondly, with some of the changes to the terms of reference that we have expanded today. That was done in collaboration with Sir Wyn.

Duncan Baker (North Norfolk) (Con): Just a few weeks ago, I asked about this at Prime Minister's questions, so I thank the Government for listening and I welcome

[*Duncan Baker*]

the statutory footing. Justice and peace of mind is one thing, but adequate compensation for the victims is another. Fujitsu must not be let off the hook. What assessment has the Minister made to ensure that Fujitsu contributes to the fund to ensure that people who are still hugely at loss are properly compensated?

Paul Scully: I thank my hon. Friend, a former postmaster himself, for that. He absolutely understands the situation and has been a dogged champion. We did say that if things should change, we would change. Things have clearly changed as a result of the Court of Appeal judgment. He raises a pertinent point about Fujitsu. It is for Post Office Ltd to work out the terms of compensation around this issue, but I am sure it will hear what he said and raise that incredibly pertinent point as redress is sought.

Mr Kevan Jones (North Durham) (Lab): I thank the Minister for his statement. I also give him credit: in the 10-plus years that I, the hon. Member for North West Leicestershire (Andrew Bridgen) and Lord Arbuthnot have been campaigning on this issue, this is the first time that a Minister has admitted that when things go wrong he will change them.

It is right that we get full disclosure of the facts and justice for those who have been wronged. May I ask the Minister about disclosure? Will that include the ministerial submissions from the Post Office throughout this scandal and the role of the Government shareholder on the board of the Post Office? That is key to the reasons why things were not questioned. Also remember that in 2019 the Post Office spent £100 million of taxpayers' money defending a civil case that was, frankly, completely indefensible.

I stress one last thing to the Minister. I know that Ministers like to hide behind the Post Office, saying that this is its fault. It is not: it is a wholly owned company of the Government. The Government have to take responsibility for some of this; they cannot just blame the Post Office.

Paul Scully: I thank the right hon. Gentleman, who has rightly been pushing on behalf of postmasters in general for a number of years.

Yes, nothing is off the table. We want to get justice and answers for people, and that clearly includes the role of the Government and shareholders. The fact is that, yes, we are the single shareholder through UK Government Investments, but that allows Post Office Ltd to work operationally independently of the Government—otherwise, there would be no point in splitting it that way. None the less, as I say, our representatives on the board have been asking that question. We were assured that Horizon was robust in all these areas. None the less, within the inquiry those questions will no doubt be asked and I expect them to be answered.

Simon Fell (Barrow and Furness) (Con): I warmly welcome my hon. Friend's statement and the work being undertaken by Sir Wyn in what is now a statutory inquiry. It is right that the inquiry should look at how on earth this was allowed to happen in the first place—most pertinently, why the Post Office and Fujitsu completely ignored the red flags being waved by trusted sub-postmasters across the network.

Compensation will be key. Sub-postmistress Isabella Wall from Barrow lost her home and business and was left with nothing. Can my hon. Friend guarantee that fair compensation for those who have been completely wronged through this process will be the focus of the Government?

Paul Scully: Through you, Madam Deputy Speaker, I pass my best wishes to Isabella Wall; I can only imagine what she and her family have been through. We will continue to talk about these issues over the next year, as the inquiry goes through.

Yes, the inquiry looks at what went wrong and goes back historically to give confidence to those affected and in the future network. But clearly we want to make sure that postmasters get fair compensation as well as justice.

Karl Turner (Kingston upon Hull East) (Lab) [V]: I thank the Minister for finally recognising the need to make this a statutory inquiry. As he knows full well, at every turn the Post Office has done everything it can possibly do to defend the indefensible. The inequality of arms in terms of legal representation has enabled these persecutions of innocent hard-working men and women. What discussions has he had with the Treasury for funds to be put aside to ensure that these innocent victims get fair and equal representation in this now statutory inquiry?

Paul Scully: I thank the hon. Gentleman, who has been persistent in standing up for postmasters.

The situation has been going on for 20 years—a long, long time—and it is so important that we get to the bottom of it. Clearly, we have already been speaking to the Treasury, which has supported the Post Office in a historical shortfall scheme, and we will continue to do so. It is so important that people get fair redress and compensation and that we put the Post Office on a good footing for the future. Although this issue has been going for 20 years, I should say that Post Office Ltd now, under chief executive Nick Read, is determined to look positively to the future while standing up and supporting us in getting the answers about those last two decades.

Mark Pawsey (Rugby) (Con): I was a member of the Select Committee that in March last year heard really distressing accounts from Post Office staff, including constituents of my hon. Friends who were wrongly convicted of discrepancies, and we heard about the devastating effect on their lives. I am really pleased that the Minister, the Secretary of State and the Prime Minister have heard about that for themselves, and I really welcome today's action. I also heard from Binley Wood's sub-postmaster, Shailesh Patel, who tells me that he has increasing amounts of hours' work for reducing commissions. What steps can Minister take to ensure that the Post Office properly looks after its staff who perform such a valuable role in our local communities?

Paul Scully: I absolutely agree with my hon. Friend about the role that post offices play in communities, which is all based on postmasters. I speak regularly to the chief executive and other people in Post Office Ltd and fair remuneration for postmasters is absolutely at the heart of our discussions to ensure that they keep adding social value.

Mr Alistair Carmichael (Orkney and Shetland) (LD): You know, Madam Deputy Speaker, that I am not the sort of man to stand here and say, “I told you so,” but on 20 June last year I told the Minister that this was exactly what was going to happen. I hope that the work Sir Wyn Williams has done thus far will not be wasted and will not have to be repeated. The Minister also knows that of the £58 million settlement given to sub-postmasters by the Post Office, £46 million went in the payment of legal fees. Those legal fees were only necessary because the Post Office sought to defend a case that it should not have been defending. If the Minister really wants to reset the relationship between the Government, the Post Office and sub-postmasters, he could do no better than to give an undertaking today to give that money back to the postmasters.

Paul Scully: First, I can say that the work of Sir Wyn to date will not be wasted. That is exactly why we are converting the inquiry into a statutory inquiry rather than stopping and starting again—to allow him to continue his work until we get to phase two. On the group litigation settlement, I have talked about the fact that it was a full and final settlement, but I understand exactly where the right hon. Gentleman is coming from. That is not within the scope of the inquiry, but we will continue to look at what we can do to give a fair settlement of compensation for postmasters in the different tranches of the stages of the civil and criminal cases.

Andrew Jones (Harrogate and Knaresborough) (Con): I thank my hon. Friend for his statement. I welcome the changes to the Horizon scandal inquiry, and I think it will help those seeking justice and compensation. I think it will also help boost trust in the inquiry. Trust is central to a thriving Post Office and trust is necessary for people to take on the role of sub-postmaster or sub-postmistress with any certainty or security. If people do not take on a Post Office licence, then post offices will disappear from our high streets and the critical role they play in our communities will be lost. How will my hon. Friend work with the Post Office to rebuild that trust to ensure our post office network serves our communities long into the future?

Paul Scully: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. My uncle was a postmaster. I remember him retiring and putting his savings into a post office in Leicestershire many years ago, pre-dating the knowledge of the Horizon situation. I wonder whether he would have done that again years later. That is why it is so important that we get these answers and get that settlement to give former postmasters justice. It is also really important—I know this is happening—that Post Office Ltd recalibrates its relationship with postmasters to ensure they feel a valued part of the company as well as the community, rather than distant stakeholders.

Alison Thewliss (Glasgow Central) (SNP) [V]: The last time the Minister came to the House, I asked him if full legal costs would be compensated. He said then that he would lean in on that and ensure everyone was adequately compensated. It may be that his idea of adequate may not be same as those affected, so I ask him again: will full legal costs be included in compensation packages?

Paul Scully: As I say, compensation packages are a matter for Post Office Ltd and we will continue to work with it on that. Post Office Ltd is working with wronged postmasters to determine how that compensation package should look.

Scott Benton (Blackpool South) (Con): I know my hon. Friend understands the financial and emotional suffering that this process has caused many postmasters and their families, including some of my constituents, and I welcome this statement today. Is he able to reassure the House that the Government will do everything within their power to encourage affected postmasters to come forward and engage with the inquiry so that their voices can be heard?

Paul Scully: Absolutely. It is incumbent on us all, and I really hope that we can give confidence to sub-postmasters—not just those who have had their convictions quashed, but wider members of the group litigation. All postmasters should feel some confidence that they can come forward, tell their stories and know that we are determined to get them answers.

Ian Byrne (Liverpool, West Derby) (Lab): The Post Office scandal is one of the gravest miscarriages of justice in this century. It destroyed many lives and families, and justice must be given to these families in full. While I welcome the premise of a statutory inquiry, will the Government address the limited remit of the inquiry, which does not cover compensation or the accountability of managers in this scandal?

Paul Scully: To be fair, the accountability of managers will absolutely be in the inquiry, because that is part of the expansion of it. Sir Wyn can now look right the way out to the settlement of the group litigation and ensure that it is not just about the wrongs of the 20 years, but the lead-up to that civil case as well. I have answered the question about compensation in as much as an inquiry, statutory or not, cannot determine liability in itself. That needs to go through the courts, but I dare say that postmasters giving evidence will share their experiences of their financial losses, as well as the emotional impact on them and their families.

Mike Wood (Dudley South) (Con): The behaviour of the Post Office and the failures of Fujitsu have destroyed the lives of many hard-working and innocent postmasters. The Minister is clearly right to put this inquiry on a statutory footing, but what will he be able to do to ensure that, whatever the inquiry concludes, the Post Office acts on those recommendations and the report is not simply allowed to gather dust in a drawer?

Paul Scully: Part of the inquiry is to measure whether the Post Office has put into place the things that it has promised to do as a result of the civil litigation and the many, many pages of evidence and comment by Mr Justice Fraser. There are many areas there that should put the Post Office on a firm footing for the future relationship with its postmasters. This part of the inquiry is testing whether they have done so already.

Jonathan Edwards (Carmarthen East and Dinefwr) (Ind): Last week, we received news that Barclays was closing its last branch in Ammanford, the main town in

[Jonathan Edwards]

my constituency, leaving only one remaining bank—a fate shared by all the market towns in my constituency, some of which have been left with none. That leaves the Post Office the last remaining financial provider of everyday vital services for our communities. That fate is, I would imagine, shared across the whole of Wales and the rest of the UK. Is it not time to give sub-postmasters the option of being recognised as employed workers, as opposed to independent contractors, so that they are remunerated properly for the vital role they play in our communities and as a means of righting the wrongs served upon them by the Horizon scandal?

Paul Scully: The Post Office speaks regularly to the unions and to postmasters in general. Two postmasters have been elected to serve on the board, but the hon. Gentleman is absolutely right to talk about access to cash. The Post Office has good plans to pilot new ways of access to cash to replace the last bank in town, an issue that he rightly articulates.

Richard Graham (Gloucester) (Con): As a former chair of the all-party group on post offices, I welcome the Minister's announcement that this inquiry into the absolute disaster of the Post Office-Horizon IT issue will be put on a statutory footing. This issue has already damaged the lives of many people and shaken confidence not just in our ability to have effective public sector software contracts, but indirectly in our justice system which, because of wrong information, delivered wrong verdicts. The opportunity to provide redress for many of those involved is surely vital for us all. Will the Minister confirm that all possible technical advice will be provided to the inquiry so that some of the technical issues, such as the data library and so on, will be exposed—and, above all, who knew what? Will he also confirm that the role of the National Federation of SubPostmasters will be looked at closely to see what alarm bells it sounded and what communication there was between it and Post Office Ltd?

Paul Scully: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. Sir Wyn will look at both those things—he will look at those alarm bells—because that is so important to learn those lessons. We cannot learn them any other way, so he is right to do that. Clearly, with this being a computer software issue over two decades, Sir Wyn is getting the technical advice that he needs, and he will always have that support from us. We will make sure that he gets whatever he is asking for in terms of technical support.

Maria Eagle (Garston and Halewood) (Lab) [V]: Serious concerns have been expressed about the conduct of many of the private prosecutions that led up to the 900 or so wrongful convictions of innocent sub-postmasters, including some of my constituents, so why have the Government declined to accept the Justice Committee's recommendation to introduce a binding and enforceable code of standards for private prosecutors and an inspection regime that would have identified these abuses at a much earlier stage? Will the Minister now accept that recommendation?

Paul Scully: The private prosecutions themselves, and the use of private prosecutions, are not within the scope of the inquiry, but clearly the way that the Post Office

investigated this absolutely is. The Post Office has not used a private prosecution since, I think, 2013 and has pledged not to use them, but we will always look into the systems of prosecutions. As I said in my last statement, there are clearly wider lessons to be learned for the justice system in general.

Virginia Crosbie (Ynys Môn) (Con): I thank the Minister for his statement. On behalf of my constituents on Anglesey, I welcome the news that those wrongly accused will not face prosecution. I have many happy memories of spending time as a child at my great-grandfather's post office, and I have seen at first hand how vital the role is that postmasters play in the community. Will the Minister confirm that the recommendations from the inquiry will be used to ensure that this travesty, which has torn apart lives, including those of people such as Margery Williams and Noel Thomas, both of Ynys Môn, will never happen again?

Paul Scully: Yes, I assure my hon. Friend, regarding Noel Thomas and Margery Williams, that we must right the wrongs for these people and for many, many others. I just want to correct her on one thing because, yes, the Post Office will not be prosecuting any more, but we clearly have to get through the judicial process for the many, many people who have been prosecuted and to see exactly how many of them have been prosecuted with Horizon being a significant factor in the prosecution. The Court of Appeal has a lot of work to do following this statement.

Chris Elmore (Ogmore) (Lab): I welcome the Minister's change of heart. It will provide much-needed reassurance, as he mentioned, to sub-postmasters, including my constituent, John Bowman, whom I mentioned to the Minister previously. What will happen now for the sub-postmasters who have lost everything so that they have the financial confidence to get evidence to Sir Wyn's inquiry? If they cannot afford to give that evidence, if they require legal support, what work is the Minister doing with the Treasury to ensure that those postmasters who have lost everything, including, in some cases, their homes, have the funding available to take part in this now statutory inquiry?

Paul Scully: We absolutely want sub-postmasters to give evidence. There is obviously a cost implication in extending the inquiry and making it statutory. I am working through that process with my colleagues in the Treasury, and we want to make sure that everybody and anybody who has been affected can come forward to give that evidence with confidence, no matter what their financial situation is.

Theresa Villiers (Chipping Barnet) (Con): My sympathy goes to everyone affected by this appalling scandal. Looking to the future, does the Minister agree that one of the best ways that we can support sub-postmasters and the post office network, which means so much to our constituents, is by using it to deliver more Government services? Up to now that has been made difficult by EU procurement rules, which we can now change.

Paul Scully: Those are exactly the things that each Government Department that has traditionally used the Post Office will continue to explore. None the less,

the Post Office does not necessarily just need to be limited to Government services. There are plenty more things that it can do to modernise and ensure that it better reflects customer demand. I push the chief executive Nick Read on this point, although he does not need pushing on it because he is very front-footed on the situation himself.

Liz Twist (Blaydon) (Lab): I welcome the move to a statutory inquiry, but also note the extension of the timescale for the inquiry; it has been extended, I think, by some nine months or so. John and Pat Moir had a post office in Winlaton Mill in my constituency and were caught up in the Horizon scandal. They are now constituents of my hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle upon Tyne North (Catherine McKinnell), who had hoped to ask a question herself. Mr and Mrs Moir have spent more than a decade fighting this case and fighting to clear their name. Clearly they welcome this inquiry, but what assurances can they have that it will work to the timescales, so that they and others can see the outcome before more time passes?

Paul Scully: The hon. Lady is absolutely right to ask that question. One of the key reasons why I originally set it up as a non-statutory inquiry was to ensure that we were not overly burdened with bureaucracy and the need to “lawyer up”, which tends to extend statutory inquiries to three years and beyond. I have said to Sir Wyn that I do want an interim report to the original timescale, so that we can show the public progress, but we are going to have an extra year to ensure that extra evidence is considered. We will hold him to time as best we can, but we do want to ensure that we get the answers.

Christian Wakeford (Bury South) (Con): The importance of the Post Office has increased in every community across this country, especially as high street banks continue to close, as is the case in Radcliffe in my constituency, where there are now no banks. Does my hon. Friend agree that postmasters truly are the backbone of the Post Office, that it is those postmasters who have delivered such vital services up and down the country, particularly in towns such as Radcliffe, Whitefield and Prestwich, and that we need to strengthen that relationship? Does he therefore share my concern about the way in which many have been treated by the Post Office through this scandal?

Paul Scully: My hon. Friend is absolutely right, and that is what is so galling for the postmasters who had those roles in the past. They were the stalwarts and the backbone of their community; the stigma of being accused of false accounting or fraud must have been so unbearable, as we know from the incredibly tragic testament that we have heard. As well as getting answers on that, we want to reset the relationship with postmasters so that they can go back to being the centre of their community, adding such social value, and bringing and keeping communities together.

Alexander Stafford (Rother Valley) (Con): I am sure that the whole House will join me in welcoming the fantastic news that the sub-postmasters wrongly accused across the UK will no longer face prosecution, meaning that this hugely difficult time for them is finally at an end. I shall always stand by Rother Valley’s hard-working

sub-postmasters and postmasters. It is incredibly important that full and timely justice is served. Will my hon. Friend therefore commit to holding the Post Office’s feet to the fire, ensuring that it studies carefully whatever recommendations may arise from the inquiry to ensure that this can never ever happen again?

Paul Scully: This is the end of the beginning. Clearly, there is a long way to go to ensure that we get the answers, but in holding the Post Office’s feet to the fire, I do not want to add stigma to the Post Office moving forward; for the reasons that we have heard today, post offices are right at the heart of all our communities, so it is important that we have that day zero to reset the Post Office’s future relationship with postmasters and its communities while getting answers, justice and fair compensation for those who have been wronged over the last two decades.

Gavin Newlands (Paisley and Renfrewshire North) (SNP): I do welcome the statement, but it has taken far too long for it to happen. My constituent was held responsible for missing funds, charged, convicted and sentenced to 13 months in prison. It cost her not only her home, which she had to sell to meet these debts, but her marriage. She was left penniless and had to move out of the area, and is understandably concerned that nearly 40% of the compensation awarded is just swallowed up by legal costs. As others have said, that has to be addressed. My constituent has lost everything. What does appropriate compensation look like for people like her?

Paul Scully: I hope that the hon. Gentleman’s constituent will feel confident in coming forward and outlining her case and those financial losses, exactly as he has described, so that Sir Wyn can take a holistic view. On compensation, as I say, the Post Office now needs to ensure that it works with the postmasters and addresses issues such as Fujitsu, which my hon. Friend the Member for North Norfolk (Duncan Baker) talked about earlier, and that it compensates all these wronged postmasters in a fair way.

Bob Blackman (Harrow East) (Con) [V]: My hon. Friend will be well aware that the overwhelming majority of men and women who run our post offices are small business owners who work extremely long hours and have to deal with extremely complex and different sets not only of accounts but of transactions. Given the circumstances that have arisen under the Horizon scandal, what actions will he take to ensure that the position is rebalanced between those small business owners and the vast monolith of the Post Office, so that we get justice for everyone running these businesses?

Paul Scully: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. That process is already taking place under the leadership of Nick Read, who comes from an independent supermarket background, where he managed to grow a culture very similar to the relationship that he describes wanting to see in the Post Office. That is why I am confident that, if we can get these answers and get recompense, justice and fair compensation for those who have been wronged, we can recalibrate the relationship between Post Office Ltd and the sub-postmasters—those small business people in their communities that my hon. Friend mentions.

Points of Order

2.31 pm

Chris Bryant (Rhondda) (Lab): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. You will recall that in 2013, the former Prime Minister set up an independent panel to investigate the failed investigations by the Metropolitan police of the horrific murder of Daniel Morgan. That independent panel was meant to be completely independent of Government. It produced its report last week. The terms of reference make it very clear that the only role that the Home Secretary has is in arranging publication of the report to Parliament. The panel thought that that would happen the next sitting day, which should have been this past Monday. For some unknown reason, the Home Office has decided to delay it. There is no guarantee when the report will be published at all.

Is there any means of our making sure that the Government publish the report and that, when it is published—I have not seen it, but it might raise very serious issues for policing and of corruption in this country—the Home Secretary comes to the House in person and makes an oral statement on the back of it?

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): I thank the hon. Gentleman for having given me notice of his point of order. I can answer his main question simply by saying that I have not received any notice from the Home Office that it intends to make a statement about this matter. That does not mean that Ministers will not possibly decide to come to the Chamber next week to address the matter.

The hon. Gentleman knows that Ministers' appearances in the Chamber are not a matter for the Chair, but he also knows that there are many ways in which he can seek to require that a Minister comes to the Chamber, and I am sure that he will pursue those lines of inquiry. I also note that those on the Treasury Bench will have taken note of what he has said and what I have said, and that those matters will be conveyed to the appropriate Ministers.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck (South Shields) (Lab): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. On Monday at the Dispatch Box, the Secretary of State for Health stated:

The truth is that when we put Pakistan and Bangladesh on the red list, positivity among those arriving from those countries was three times higher than it was among those arriving from India.—*[Official Report, 17 May 2021; Vol. 695, c. 430.]*

However, the data he referred to, which he directed me to in the same debate, states that India's positivity rate was 5%, Bangladesh's was 4% and Pakistan's was 6%, from 25 March to 7 April. It is during that two-week period that Bangladesh and Pakistan were put on the red list, so it is clear from that data that the positivity rates were not three times higher, and that in fact India's positivity rate was higher than Bangladesh's when Bangladesh was

put on the red list. As the Secretary of State is here, Madam Deputy Speaker, can you urge him to clarify his comments?

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): The hon. Lady knows that that is not a matter for the Chair. She is seeking to continue a debate or an exchange of questions and answers that occurred earlier in the Chamber—*[Interruption.]* The hon. Lady must not interrupt when I am answering her question. She cannot answer back.

Mrs Lewell-Buck: Sorry, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I accept her apology. I was about to say that we are about to have a debate, and that the right time for the hon. Lady to raise these matters will be during the debate. However, I notice that the Secretary of State is at the Dispatch Box, and if he would like to deal with the matter now, I will exceptionally allow that to take place. However, I do not encourage Members to raise points of order in this sequence of events.

Matt Hancock: Further to that point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I thought that point might come up in the forthcoming debate, but since it has come up now, I can address the question. Of course it is important that parliamentary debates use accurate statistics, so I want to correct the hon. Lady. I can give her the statistics on which the decision was taken. The positivity rates on which we took the decision to put Pakistan, but not India, on the red list were 1.6% in India and 4.6% in Pakistan, which is three times higher, as I said.

There is a further point that is important in this debate, which is that the dates covered by the data that the hon. Lady just gave, and that were widely circulated in the media this morning, included dates after the decision was taken. It is perfectly reasonable to hold politicians to account for the data on which their decisions are taken, but unfortunately we cannot take decisions based on data that has yet to occur. I have just given the facts, and we will now be able to have a debate not only on those facts but on others. It is important that we stick to the facts.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I thank the right hon. Gentleman for his clarification of that point of order. I reiterate that points of order should not be used in this way. That was a matter for debate, and it is exceptional that I have allowed this exchange, because I recognised the matter to be exceptional and important. I do not encourage hon. Members to bring forward points of order in this way in future.

I will now briefly suspend the House in order that arrangements can be made for the next debate.

2.37 pm

Sitting suspended.

Debate on the Address

[6TH DAY]

Debate resumed (Order, 18 May).

Question again proposed,

That an Humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, as follows:

Most Gracious Sovereign,

We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Majesty for the Gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament.

A Plan for the NHS and Social Care

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): I inform the House that Mr Speaker has selected the amendment in the name of the Leader of the Opposition, which will be moved at the start of the debate, and amendments (j) and (g), which will be moved at the end.

Chris Bryant (Rhondda) (Lab): Not amendment (e)?

Madam Deputy Speaker: No. I can assure the hon. Gentleman that his amendment was not selected.

2.41 pm

Jonathan Ashworth (Leicester South) (Lab/Co-op): I beg to move an amendment, at the end of the Question to add:

“but respectfully regret that the Government has provided insufficient information for its proposals properly to be scrutinised; and therefore beg leave that she will be graciously pleased to give directions that the following papers be laid before Parliament: the DHSC internal review of their operation during the pandemic as referenced by the Prime Minister's official spokesman on 12 May.”

May I take this opportunity to note that although amendment (e) in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Rhondda (Chris Bryant) has not been selected, its contents, which relate to brain injury, are important and welcome? I hope that Ministers take on board its recommendations.

Chris Bryant: It is all too tempting to intervene; I have never objected to temptation. On brain injury, I just want to say that I really want us to think about legislation now. The United States of America has made dramatic changes—it has introduced legislation four times now—and I think it is time we went down that route.

Jonathan Ashworth: I completely agree. I hope that Ministers on the Treasury Bench have listened carefully. If they are prepared to bring forward legislation, we would work constructively across the House to ensure its speedy passage. May I thank my hon. Friend for the reference in his amendment to the impact of alcohol abuse on children? He knows that it is a subject very close to my heart; on behalf of the children of alcoholics community, I am grateful that he referred to it in his amendment.

Although we have often said this in the House, I still think that the whole House will want to remember today the 127,691 people so far who have lost their lives to covid-19, this awful disease, including the 850 health and care workers. Although repeating the numbers has become almost routine in this House, that does not make the scale or gravity of the loss any less shocking.

We grieve as a nation and we all pay tribute to our healthcare workers, our social care workers and our public sector workers.

I am sure that the whole House will want to dedicate itself in good faith to learning lessons for the future. Sadly, we are in an era when, according to the experts, pandemics are becoming more predictable and will become more regular because of climate change and biodiversity loss, so learning lessons is about preparing better for the future rather than settling scores.

We know that the B1617.2 variant is spreading. From the data that I have seen, it appears to have a growth rate advantage of about 13% over the B1117 variant. It could well become the dominant strain in the United Kingdom. Although vaccination should mean that many are much safer and ought to avoid hospitalisation, the Government still have a responsibility to do all they can to contain its spread, minimise sickness and ensure that the 21 June target is not disrupted, if at all possible.

That is why I said on Monday that we need more surge vaccination in hotspot areas. We know that with vaccination there are always pockets where rates are lower than necessary, and we need to drive those rates that up. We have seen that throughout history—with measles, for example. So we urge the Government again to do all they can to drive up vaccination rates in Bolton, Bedford, Blackburn and other areas where we know there is an issue. We also need the Government to do more to contain the virus through test, trace and isolate. We need more surge testing. We need more enhanced contact tracing locally, with local authorities given the resources to carry it out. We need sick pay and isolation support fixed as well.

For those who are going in to work, or for those who are now socialising in premises, those buildings and premises need proper air filtration systems. There are experts now who can easily fix filtration systems in buildings to make them much more covid secure, and we should be inspecting workplaces in all these areas to ensure that every workplace is covid secure.

We need transparency in decision making as well. For the first time in my life, I think, I find myself agreeing with Mr Dominic Cummings. I know the Secretary of State does not often agree with Mr Dominic Cummings, but I find myself agreeing with Mr Dominic Cummings, who tweeted yesterday:

“With something as critical as variants escaping vaccines, there is *no* justification for secrecy, public interest unarguably is *open scrutiny of the plans*”.

Mr Cummings, on this occasion, is correct. *[Interruption.]* A wry laugh from the Secretary of State. Mr Cummings may well have been saying something different when he was in government; I do not know, but at least his public statement yesterday is correct. That is why our amendment calls for the publication of a Government lessons-learned review; not so that we can try to undermine the Government or find some hole to use across the Dispatch Box, but so that we can learn the lessons in our efforts to contain variants, and ensure that we are better prepared for the future. I hope the Secretary of State looks sympathetically upon that request, and perhaps joins us in the Division Lobby this evening.

I now turn to the contents of the Gracious Speech more generally. This should have been the Queen's Speech that unveiled a new NHS plan to bring down the

[Jonathan Ashworth]

elective waiting list, which now stands at 5 million. This should have been a Queen's Speech that outlined proposals to tackle the backlog of 436,000 people waiting over 12 months for treatment—many of them waiting in pain and anxiety, many of them facing permanent disability as a consequence of those waits.

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Jonathan Ashworth: I will certainly give way to my fellow Leicester City fan.

Jim Shannon: The shadow Minister and I, and many others in this House, shared that wonderful victory on Saturday. After 139 years of Leicester City, we won the FA cup; it is great news.

I chair the all-party parliamentary group for respiratory health. This morning, we were given some very worrying figures. They indicated that the halting of the lung cancer screening pilots restricted access to diagnostic tests, contributing to a 75% drop in urgent lung cancer referrals. Does the shadow Minister agree with me, and share my concern, that the outcomes for patients with the fastest-progressing cancers, such as lung cancer, are indeed very worrying?

Jonathan Ashworth: The hon. Gentleman is spot-on. I will come on to cancer in a few moments. He is a great champion for improving cancer care, and I thank him for reminding the House that Leicester City won the FA cup on Saturday. It is a reminder that even when the odds are stacked against them, a small team can still beat a well-funded, complacent opposition.

I will now move on to elective waiting lists. Where is the plan in this Queen's Speech to bring down the rocketing waiting lists for treatment and surgery? Where is the plan to roll out technology such as in ophthalmology, for the thousands in our constituencies awaiting cataract operations? There are already 81,762 of our constituents waiting over 12 months for orthopaedic surgery. Where is the plan to get on with the hip replacements and knee replacements that many of our constituents will be raising with us in our surgeries, and how much longer will they have to wait? Where is the plan for the 24,407 of our constituents who are now waiting over 12 months for gynaecological surgery? How much longer will they have to wait?

Everyone understands that there has been a pandemic and that that has meant a disruption in care pathways, but the NHS was forced into this unprecedented position because we went into the crisis on the back of 10 years of Tory underfunding and cutbacks. We went into this crisis on the back of a 6% reduction in bed numbers between 2010 and 2019. That is why, at the beginning of 2020 when we debated the last Gracious Speech, 4.5 million people were on the waiting list for treatment. The target of 92% of patients beginning treatment within 18 weeks of referral from their GP had not been met for five years. We need a resourced plan now because the queues are set to lengthen further, as those who may have delayed seeking treatment for fear of covid infection will begin to emerge once again. Even though the NHS is dealing with significantly fewer covid patients, it is still operating at a much-reduced capacity and is unable to treat everyone in need of care.

Infection control measures meant that the number of beds fell by 9% in the first quarter of last year. It has only partially recovered in the past three months, but the number is still 6% lower than the previous year. What that means when we look at the most recent figures is that, on average, there are almost 4,000 fewer patients in NHS general and acute beds than the equivalent pre-covid period.

The Prime Minister has delayed the review of social distancing for entirely understandable reasons, but we must have a plan to drive up this capacity in the NHS. The solution to these capacity issues in the NHS cannot be a multi-billion pound deal with the private sector. The loss of capacity in terms of beds in the NHS is actually far larger than the whole capacity offered by the private sector. In order to reopen those closed and empty general and acute beds in the NHS, we need more capital investment. This investment needs to be built up now, so that the NHS can get on with the routine surgery that it will clearly have to confront in the coming years. I am afraid that, both the Queen's Speech and, indeed, the Budget from a few weeks ago, failed to deliver that.

James Cartlidge (South Suffolk) (Con): Is the hon. Gentleman saying that under no circumstances would he use the independent sector to reduce the pressure on elective surgery waiting lists?

Jonathan Ashworth: If the hon. Gentleman thinks that the answer to driving up capacity is just a four-year £10 billion deal with the private sector, then we will not be in a position to reopen the beds over the coming years in the NHS. That is the issue. It undermines capacity in the NHS. We need capital investment in the NHS, so that we can drive up capacity.

James Cartlidge: Let me repeat the question: is the hon. Gentleman explicitly ruling out using the independent sector at all to drive down that backlog?

Jonathan Ashworth: The independent sector is not the answer to this. The answer is investing in capital in the NHS. In the hon. Gentleman's local area, there are 8,485 patients waiting for diagnostic tests—that is 25% when the operational standard is supposed to be 1% or less. He should be arguing for capital investment in the NHS, but he is not, and he is not sticking up for his constituents.

James Cartlidge: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Jonathan Ashworth: I want to make a bit of progress. If the hon. Gentleman wanted more beds in the NHS and greater diagnostic capacity, he would have been arguing for capital investment in the NHS, which we did not get in the Budget and we did not get in the Queen's Speech.

That brings me to diagnostic capacity—I have just given the hon. Gentleman his local diagnostic figures. [Interruption.] This is not about new hospitals; this is about diagnostic capacity. The Secretary of State knows that we still have some of the lowest numbers of computerised tomography scanners and magnetic resonance imaging scanners per capita in the OECD. We still have only average amounts of RTE radiotherapy machines. We need investment in this technology, which we are not getting in sufficient amounts. That is why, in the past year or so, we have seen 4.6 million fewer diagnostic

tests for cancer. Some 46,000 fewer people are starting cancer treatment. We should not have to choose between covid care and cancer care, but, for too many, that has been the reality of the past year, and it means that 4,500 additional avoidable cancer deaths are expected in the next 12 months. It means that progress in survival rates for colorectal cancer, breast cancer and lung cancer is expected to be undone. The proportion of cancers diagnosed while still highly curable has dropped from 44% to 41%.

The long-term plan, on which the Secretary of State fought the election, promised rapid action on cardiovascular disease. Experts now predict the highest cardiovascular mortality in a decade, and they predict 12,000 additional heart attacks and strokes over the next five years. The Queen's Speech needed to include proposals to expand access to the appropriate cardiovascular healthcare facilities, but it also needed to include real interventions to tackle smoking and alcohol rates, and to reduce salt intake. Yes, there is a commitment to a tobacco control plan, but will there be a reversal of the 17% cuts to smoking cessation services? Given that 7,400 people died last year from alcohol abuse—a record number—will the Secretary of State reverse the cuts to drug and alcohol addiction services, with budgets being cut by 15% over the past three years?

We have been promised action, again, on banning junk food advertising, but when? I have heard the Secretary of State—and, to be fair, his predecessor—make that promise at the Dispatch Box many, many times, but when will we have the ban? When will he reverse the cuts to public health weight-management services?

Narrowing health inequalities should be at the heart of every Government policy, but there can be no levelling up while life expectancy advances stall for the poorest in society. Levelling up and tackling inequalities apply to mental health outcomes as well. More people suffer from depression in the poorest areas of the country than the richest. We know that the mental health problems are prevalent among certain minority ethnic communities—black men, in particular, are more likely to be detained under the Mental Health Act 1983, more likely to be subjected to seclusion or restraint, and less likely to access psychological therapies. We therefore welcome the commitment to reform the Mental Health Act, as we welcomed it last year, and I look forward to working constructively with the Secretary of State on reforming the Act. I would like to put on record my thanks to Sir Simon Wessely for his pioneering work on this front. Simon is a committed Chelsea fan, so I dare say that he will be more responsive to my felicitations this morning than he might have been on Saturday evening.

We face a crisis in mental health now, and we need action now. Two hundred and thirty five thousand fewer people have been referred for psychological therapies; eating disorder referrals for children have doubled; and the pandemic—again, because of infection control measures—has meant a reduction of almost 11% in beds occupied, which is equivalent to 1,700 fewer patients over the past three months compared with a year earlier. When will the Government implement their promise of significant increases in staff and resources for mental health, to ensure that mental healthcare is genuinely given parity of esteem with acute services?

That brings me to staffing more generally. Given that we are short of 200,000 staff across the health and social care sector, why was there nothing new in the Queen's Speech to recruit more doctors, nurses and social care staff? Why was there no plan to give our NHS staff the pay rise that they deserve? NHS staff, including nurses who have cared for those with covid on wards, and district nurses who, in the first wave, cared for those who were discharged from hospital earlier than planned so that they could stay at home safely, have gone above and beyond, yet they feel that the 1% pay rise, which could well turn out to be a real-terms cut because of inflation, is a kick in the teeth. Is it any wonder that nurses are leaving the profession, including the nurse who cared for the Prime Minister, blasting Ministers for treating NHS workers with a total lack of respect? It is simply not fair. Our NHS staff deserve better.

The gaping hole in the Queen's Speech is the plan for social care. Two years ago, the Prime Minister stood on the steps of Downing Street and said he had a plan to fix social care. He said:

“we will fix the crisis in social care once and for all with a clear plan we have prepared to give every older person the dignity and security they deserve.”

It was not a plan to be developed, or work in progress; no, this was a plan that was already done—oven-ready, you might say, Madam Deputy Speaker. But two years on, where is it? Has the Health Secretary seen it? What do we need to do to see it—perhaps we could pay for some cushions in the Downing Street flat? The Government promised us cross-party talks. They now brief that cross-party talks have taken place, but when—did they forget to send the Zoom link?

However, there is a consensus on social care, isn't there? Care workers should be paid the living wage and proper sick pay. There should be a cap on costs, as this House legislated for. When the Institute for Public Policy Research, social care and older people's charities and a House of Lords Committee, which, at the time, consisted of true-blue Thatcherites such as the noble Lords Lamont and Forsyth, have all called for reform of free personal care, why is the Secretary of State not engaging in that debate with us? To be frank, though, lack of cross-party talks is not an excuse for not getting on with reform. A Prime Minister with an 80-seat majority should be able to show some leadership and get on and fix social care.

If the Health Secretary wants to talk social care reform, I am free this afternoon. He knows where I am. I am happy to sit down with him at any time and discuss it. I think we would have very constructive conversations on this one, because it is true to say, as Members have detected, that we have developed something of a bond these past 12 months. The Health Secretary has been so friendly to me across the Dispatch Box that I am half expecting to win a lucrative PPE contract by the end of the day.

Because we have this new friendship, I have, as we say on the Labour Benches, some comradely advice for the Health Secretary. I know he is bringing forward a Bill to neuter the independence of the NHS chief executive and bring powers back to the Secretary of State. I have been around a long time and I remember when Tory MPs used to complain that the NHS needed independence, but we will leave that to one side. I just suggest that he ought to be careful what he wishes for, because I have been reading the *Evening Standard*, where Mr Tom Newton Dunn

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reveals not only that Simon Stevens, whom the Secretary of State is trying to neuter, was best man at the Prime Minister's wedding, but that the Prime Minister is said to be about to appoint Simon Stevens—I beg your pardon, Lord Simon Stevens—to, yes, you guessed it, the newly empowered post of Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. It brings a whole new meaning to the phrase, “the best man for the job”, doesn't it? But this is a Secretary of State who set up Test and Trace, who was responsible for PPE procurement and who failed to protect care homes. Dominic Cummings said the Department under his leadership was a “smoking ruin”—and now he wants more control.

The Queen's Speech was remarkably unspecific in its description of the contents of the coming health and social care Bill, so perhaps the Secretary of State can reassure us today. Can he commit to ensuring that neither the NHS nor the partnership force to be set up in each integrated care system will permit the inclusion of private sector participants? Will he rule that out? Can he guarantee that as statutory bodies ICSs will meet in public, publish board papers and be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000? What guarantees can he give this House that the establishment of integrated care systems will not lead to more private corporations taking over GP practices, as has happened recently with Centene, or services currently delivered by NHS providers? I hope he can give us those very simple reassurances today.

With nearly 5 million people on the waiting lists and rising, ever-lengthening queues in our constituencies waiting for hip replacements and cataract removals, cancer survival rates worsening, mental healthcare in crisis, social care reform kicked into the long grass, and a costly, morale-sapping reorganisation on the way, we needed a fully resourced 10-year rescue plan for our NHS. I commend our amendment to the House.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): Order. At the beginning of this debate, I fear it was not quite clear which other amendments had been selected by Mr Speaker. I have now had an opportunity to look at my notes on my Order Paper. For the sake of clarity, let me tell the House that Mr Speaker has not selected amendment (e) in the name of Mr Bryant, as I predicted earlier. He has selected amendment (g) in the name of the hon. Member for Walthamstow (Stella Creasy), the right hon. Member for Haltemprice and Howden (Mr Davis) and others. He has also selected amendment (i) in the name of the leader of the Scottish National party.

I remind hon. Members that, although their contributions should address the terms of these amendments, it is in order for them also to refer to other matters relevant to the Gracious Speech.

3.6 pm

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock): I start by thanking the right hon. Member for Leicester South (Jonathan Ashworth) for his comradely advice, and I just correct the record because, thanks to his steadfast support for the Government's action through the pandemic and the very grown-up approach he takes to these exchanges, Her Majesty the Queen was pleased to invite him to join the Privy Council, which we on the Government Benches welcome.

I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for describing the bond that has grown between us. It is true that, even while challenging each other from time to time in times of pandemic, sometimes relationships are strengthened in the heat of responding to something so serious. That is absolutely true. I think he is a wonderful man. I know that occasionally he has to criticise, because he has to please his Back Benchers, but I know he does not really mean it.

Throughout these great challenges and these difficult months, we have protected the NHS and protected and supported the amazing people who work in it, and we are determined to give the NHS all it needs as we emerge from this pandemic. The Queen's Speech underlines that commitment, first, with a total focus on beating covid through our unprecedented vaccination programme, and then through an ambitious programme of support for our whole health and care system to tackle the backlogs caused by the pandemic, which the right hon. Gentleman rightly described, and a health and care Bill to set the NHS fair for the future—a Bill whose ideas and central propositions come from the NHS itself—alongside social care reforms to tackle injustices that have remained for far too long, public health reforms to learn the lessons of the pandemic and to promote the health of the nation, mental health reforms to bring that legislation into the 21st century and digital health reforms to harness all the opportunities that modern technology provides. That is our mission, a mission to ensure that, in support of all this, we also turn our nation into a life sciences superpower.

The last year has proved beyond measure the value of the NHS across Britain, the importance of social care and the strength of feeling that people rightly have for these cherished institutions. Our task in this Parliament is to help them further strengthen and build back better, and that is what this Queen's Speech will allow us to do.

I turn first to the immediate task of tackling covid. With more than 70% of adults now having had a first dose and almost two fifths already double vaccinated, we have much to celebrate. Vaccination underpins our road map, which means we can now have pints in pubs and hugs in homes. Yet, as I updated the House on Monday, the race between the virus and the vaccine has got a whole lot closer. I can tell the House that 2,967 cases of covid-19 with the B1617.2 variant have now been identified. We are protecting the progress we have made and the progress that everybody has worked so hard to achieve, with the biggest surge in local resources of this pandemic so far. That means surging vaccines and testing. In the last week across Bolton and Blackburn with Darwen, we have given 26,094 jabs, as well as delivering 75,000 extra tests.

But this challenge is not restricted to Bolton and Blackburn. We have used the extensive biosecurity surveillance system that we have built and new techniques to identify the areas we are most concerned about, where we will now surge testing and vaccinations further. We, of course, look at the data on cases, variants and hospitalisations, all of which we publish, but we are now able to use further tools. Mobility data shows how often people travel from one area to another, and we look at that in deciding where the virus is likely to spread. We now analyse waste water in 70% of the country, and we can spot the virus and the variants in the water to identify communities where there is spread.

As a result of all that analysis, I can tell the House that we will now surge testing and vaccinations in Bedford, Burnley, Hounslow, Kirklees, Leicester and North Tyneside, and we are supporting the Scottish Government, who are taking similar action in Glasgow and Moray. In practice, this means that we are putting in place more testing and more testing sites, and we are making more vaccinations available to everyone who is eligible. We are not yet opening up vaccinations to those who are 35 and younger, because across the whole country, the message is crystal clear. This episode shows just how important it is that every single person who is vulnerable to covid-19 gets not just one but two doses, because the vaccine offers the best possible protection against this disease.

Turning to our programme for the future, we must learn from the success of this vaccine roll-out, which shows how we can deliver huge projects with huge flexibility at huge pace. We must apply these lessons to how we tackle the backlog, and I want to set out clearly to the House the sheer scale of the challenge left by the pandemic. I agree very much with the analysis that the right hon. Member for Leicester South set out in respect of the scale of the challenge.

We now have 4.7 million people in England waiting for care and more in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Before the pandemic, we had succeeded in getting the 12-month waiting list down from 18,700 in 2010 to just 1,600 in the months leading up to the pandemic. Now, 380,000 have waited more than a year for care, but these figures do not yet include the returning demand of those people who have a problem but have not yet come forward during the pandemic, often because they have been trying to reduce the burden on the NHS, but are now rightly regaining the confidence to approach the NHS. So the real waiting list is far larger than those figures, and as people re-present with problems that they might not have wanted to bother the NHS with in the past year, we will see the waiting lists go up.

We know that, during the pandemic, 6.9 million fewer patients were added to the waiting list for diagnosis and treatment. The scale of the pent-up demand that will come forward is unknowable, but to give the House a sense of the scale of the challenge, since the start of the pandemic, the NHS performed 70% fewer electives than in a normal year. Some of those will have been resolved without the need for hospital treatment, and that is fine, but some will return. We do not yet know how many will present themselves and add to the waiting lists, but we do know that the NHS needs to operate at a scale never seen before across the whole United Kingdom to clear the backlog, so we are working hard to support the NHS to accelerate the recovery of services.

Chris Bryant: The Secretary of State will know that people with traumatic brain injury might well have been treated because they have been in a car crash or something like that over the last year, but then the ongoing neurorehabilitation simply will not have been made available to them. On top of that, we have a new set of people who have neurocognitive problems because of covid. May I urge him to think of putting a single person in charge of the whole sphere of neurorehabilitation and brain injury, to try to get this back on course?

Matt Hancock: I will absolutely consider that. The hon. Gentleman raises one example of the sort of backlog that has not yet presented itself in many cases to the NHS, and I know that he met the Minister for Health recently to discuss how we can tackle this further.

James Cartledge: The Secretary of State heard the intervention I made on the right hon. Member for Leicester South (Jonathan Ashworth). Is he aware that, in January, Ipswich Hospital was able to more than double the number of intensive care unit beds it had available, from 11 to 25, precisely because it moved cancer patients to the Nuffield hospital in the independent sector? Does that not show the danger of ideologically ruling out the use of the independent sector, which immediately reduces the capacity of the NHS?

Matt Hancock: Yes, my hon. Friend is absolutely right. I thought that his exchanges with the right hon. Member for Leicester South were disappointing, because we know that the Opposition spokesman supports the use of the private sector in the NHS, because he was the guy behind the private finance initiative projects of the last Labour Government. Mr PFI there is a huge fan of the use of the private sector in the NHS, but he cannot admit it, because of the people sitting behind him, and the right hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Angela Rayner) sitting next to him, keeping watch over him from the hard left of the party.

Jonathan Ashworth: For goodness' sake, I was not responsible for a single PFI contract. Actually, I remember that it was for the previous Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, that the right hon. Member was the chief lickspittle and bag carrier in signing off PFI contracts when he was first appointed to the Treasury. He can go through all the Treasury documents and he can FOI it until the cows come home, and he will find that I was not involved in any PFI contracts when I worked in the Labour Government, but I was responsible for helping invest in the NHS, which brought waiting lists down to their lowest level ever.

Matt Hancock: Well, it did not actually, because after 2010 we then had to bring waiting lists down, and we brought them down. The 52-week waits came down to just 1,600 before the pandemic, and it is our task and our mission to make sure that we get them down once again. However, this will take time and it will take all the resources that are possible—yes, extra staff, and that is happening; yes, extra capital investment, and that is happening; and yes, extra diagnostics, and that is happening. We have to use all the capacity of everything that we can—north and south, revenue and capital, public and private. What people care about and what our constituents care about is whether they can get the problem fixed, and last year has demonstrated that without doubt. So on the Government side we will use everything in our power to support the NHS. It is only those on the other side of the House who have the ideological divisions, and that just demonstrates once again that we are the party of the NHS.

In March, we committed £7 billion for further funding for healthcare services, including £1 billion to address backlogs from the pandemic, and that has taken our additional funding for covid-19 to £92 billion. We are also helping the NHS to recover medical training, and

[*Matt Hancock*]

today I can confirm to the House an additional £30 million for postgraduate medical training. The formula for beating this backlog is looking closely at the demand as we emerge from the pandemic, putting in the right resources to meet this demand and putting in place an ambitious programme of improvement in the NHS.

That brings me to the third thing I want to talk about, which is how we are going to build back better. The Queen's Speech outlines improvement in almost every area of healthcare, applying vital lessons that we have learned from the pandemic, including from the successful vaccination programme, when the whole health and care system has worked as one in the face of challenge and adversity. The vaccination programme brought a jigsaw of academics, the private sector, volunteers, the NHS, civil servants and many more, and put this together, revealing a bold picture of what is possible in this country when we pull together. That is the spirit and the energy that will underpin our reforms, and all of them have a common thread, which is to improve the health of the nation, based on the principle that prevention is better than cure.

Turning to our health and care Bill, as outlined in Her Majesty's most Gracious Speech, one of the lessons of the crisis is the importance of integrated working. We knew this before, but it has come right to the front of mind. For years, people in the NHS at all levels have called for stronger integration within the NHS, and between the NHS and others they work so closely with, such as local authorities. The Bill will allow for a more preventive, population health-based approach to how we spend NHS money, helping people to stay healthy in the first place, and that is at the core of our Bill.

The right hon. Member for Leicester South asked about the new integrated care systems. They will bring together decision making at a local level between the NHS and local authorities to ensure that decisions about local health can be taken as locally as possible. The Bill will tackle much of the bureaucracy that makes it harder to do the right thing and free up the system to innovate and embrace technology as a better platform to support staff and patient care.

Her Majesty also set out our commitment to reform adult social care, and we will bring forward proposals this year to give everyone who needs care the dignity and security they deserve. Throughout the pandemic, we have sought to protect the elderly and the most vulnerable, and this will remain our priority as we look to end the care lottery and ensure that people receive high-quality, joined-up care.

This country understands the importance of the NHS and social care, but I also think that there has never been a greater appreciation of the importance of public health. Never have the public been more engaged, and never have we learned quite so much in such a short space of time. We must capture the lessons of the pandemic on how we do public health in this country and put that together with the innovations of the last decade—in data, genomics, population health, science and research.

One of the lessons that we have had to learn quickly is that health security and health promotion each need a single-minded focus. The people who get up in the morning and think about how we increase healthy life

expectancy must be different from the people focused on fighting novel pandemic threats. Each is important and each needs dedicated focus. We have split these functions into two purpose-built organisations so that we are better at both.

The new UK Health Security Agency will have a dedicated focus on responding to the current threats, planning for the next pandemic and scanning the horizon for new threats in good times as well as bad. Of course, pandemics do not respect administrative boundaries. The UKHSA's role is specifically to promote and protect the security of the United Kingdom as a whole.

Next, the job of our new Office for Health Promotion will be to lead national efforts to improve and level up our health—addressing the causes of ill health, not just the symptoms, such as through our plans to tackle obesity and make healthier choices easier and more accessible, and through supporting our colleagues in primary and community care. General practice, after all, is at the forefront of all population health measures and GPs are the bedrock of the NHS. General practice will be central to our levelling up the health of the nation because we know, and they know, that prevention is better than cure. A greater proportion of our efforts will now be directed at preventing people from becoming patients in the first place.

All of that brings me to mental health reforms. To truly level up health and reduce health inequalities, we must level up every part of our health, including mental health. I am determined to see mental ill health treated on a par with physical ill health, and to ensure that support is in place for those struggling with their mental wellbeing. We have provided record levels of funding for mental health services, especially to meet the additional burdens of the pandemic, but we need a better legislative basis—a mental health Act fit for the 21st century.

We are modernising the Mental Health Act to improve services for the most serious mental illnesses and support people so that they can manage their own mental health. The new Act will tackle the disparities and iniquities of our system and improve how people with learning difficulties and autism are supported. Ultimately, it is going to be there for every single one of us if we need it.

Dr Ben Spencer (Runnymede and Weybridge) (Con): I know that my right hon. Friend shares my passion for legislative reform of the Mental Health Act. We go through this process every 20 years or so. I was wondering whether he could unpack how this will go forward, bearing in mind the need to get the law right while delivering it very quickly so that patients get the benefits.

Matt Hancock: My hon. Friend has enormous expertise and wisdom in this area. He is right to make the argument that we need to support everybody's mental wellbeing, but that we also need a specific focus on very serious mental ill health, much of which has been, in many cases, exacerbated by the privations that have been necessary during the pandemic. He says that this is a process that happens once every 20 years, but it is almost 40 years since we had a new mental health Act. We want to do this with stakeholders on a consensual basis—I am very glad to hear the reiteration of cross-party support just now from the right hon. Member for Leicester South. Our goal is to bring forward a draft Bill in this Session and a Bill potentially in the next

Session, so that we ensure it is legislated for during this Parliament. That is a timetable on which we have worked with the many experts who have informed the process, led by Sir Simon Wessley, of course, whose report sparked off this work. I look forward to working on that with him and the Minister with responsibility for mental health, my hon. Friend the Member for Mid Bedfordshire (Ms Dorries).

Chris Bryant: I think the Secretary of State just said that we have not had a mental health Act for 40 years, but I remember sitting on the Public Bill Committee for the Mental Health Act 2007. I know that everybody is against lobbying, but my experience as a member of that Committee was that the lobbyists from the mental health charities, the British Medical Association and the pharmaceutical companies were absolutely invaluable in ensuring that we got the legislation right. Will he make sure that is available again this time?

Matt Hancock: Yes, I am absolutely happy to stress that point. This is a consensual process taking into account all the expertise from those who rightly want to influence. The hon. Gentleman almost made a joke about lobbying. The truth is that listening to people who have an expertise and an interest is absolutely critical to getting such a sensitive piece of legislation right. The legislation that this will replace was introduced in the early '80s, so it is essentially 40 years old. There have been some updates, but there are still some extraordinarily antiquated things in our current mental health legislation. For instance, if someone does not declare then it is automatically assumed, if they are unmarried, that their father should take decisions on their behalf, rather than them choosing who might take those decisions—not their mother and not just one of their parents, but their father. That is just one example of the antiquated practices in this area that we need to address.

Finally, turning to our digital reforms, the pandemic has shown that one of the greatest allies we have in our battle for the nation's health is data and technology. Digital health has truly come of age over the past year. There is no doubt about it: data saves lives. As we reshape health and social care, we will do it underpinned by a modern data platform, so we can get the most out of this powerful new technology. I am glad, again, that this is an area of cross-party consensus. Telemedicine has taken off. The NHS covid-19 app has been downloaded almost 24 million times and the wider NHS app, on which we can now demonstrate our vaccine status, was downloaded more times on Monday this week than on any previous day. If Members have not downloaded it yet, I recommend that they do. They can see their medical records and show somebody when you had the jab. NHSX committed to delivering the app by the ambitious schedule of 17 May, and it delivered. I am grateful to everybody who worked on this incredibly important project. The lesson of our data-driven vaccine roll-out must be applied everywhere. As citizens, we value the ability to see our data—after all, it is about us and it effectively belongs to us—and we want to see it used to drive better decisions, better research, better treatment and better support for colleagues on the frontline.

My view is that for years the health system has shied away from the modern use of data, and struggled on with paper forms, fax machines and clunky systems that

do not talk to each other—but no longer. The pandemic has proved without doubt the incredible value to patients and clinicians alike of the modern use of data. Because of the gift of a universal NHS, we have the opportunity to have the best data-driven healthcare in the world, and I am determined that we seize it. Our health and care Bill and our new data strategy will drive a whole new approach to unleash that potential.

In addition to all those changes, we must, throughout, support all those who improve our health, including those in our life sciences and those who work in the NHS. Last week, I attended with colleagues a service to commemorate the life of Florence Nightingale. In his bidding, the Dean of Westminster reminded us that in Florence Nightingale, compassion and care had the power to deliver not just healing, but change. That must be our mission too: not just to heal, but to change. I am proud to be a member of a Government who deliver on our commitments. We delivered on our commitment to Brexit. We delivered on our commitment to protect the NHS. We are delivering on our commitment to vaccinate all. This Queen's Speech is a commitment for healing and for change, for a United Kingdom that is stronger, healthier and more prosperous together, and I commend it to the House.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): It might be helpful for the House to know that the initial time limit on Back-Bench speeches will be five minutes, and in that cohort of five-minute speeches we have two maiden speeches this afternoon. I can see the hon. Member for Twickenham (Munira Wilson) looking at her notes, and I am sorry to have to say that when we come to her and those after her on the list, the time limit will reduce to three minutes. *[Interruption.]* She is taking it very well. *[Laughter.]* Now we go by video link to Dr Philippa Whitford.

3.31 pm

Dr Philippa Whitford (Central Ayrshire) (SNP) [V]: I rise to speak to amendment (i), which stands in my name and those of my colleagues. At the start of my speech, I wish to pay tribute to all health and social care staff, right across the UK, for everything they have done this past difficult year. Although there are real concerns about the rise of the Indian variant in multiple areas, we are all hoping that we can continue, slowly, to open up our society. Our attention is therefore now turning to patients who have been waiting many months for treatment or who have not yet even come forward with their health concerns. All four health services are working on recovery from the covid pandemic, and the Scottish Government have put in place their 100-day plan, to utilise some of the innovations used in the past year to increase the diagnosis and treatment of both elective and cancer patients.

However, the wellbeing and recovery of NHS staff must also be put front and centre, otherwise we will simply lose staff who are worn out. Especially after Brexit, the UK already faces workforce challenges. All NHS staff have worked above and beyond over the past 15 months, and the public have shown how much they value them, by clapping on their doorsteps and sticking rainbows in their windows. It has to be said that the derisory 1% pay rise for NHS staff in England is not exactly making them feel valued; you can't spend claps

[*Dr Philippa Whitford*]

in the supermarket. For NHS staff, this feels like a kick in the teeth. Many feel disrespected and are considering whether they will stay in their profession.

By contrast, in Scotland, where our NHS staff were already higher paid, they will get a 4% pay rise, the largest since devolution. Our nurses still get a bursary of £10,000 a year and do not pay tuition fees. That means that the Scottish Government invest £20,000 a year in every student nurse, so that they do not start their careers £50,000 to £60,000 in debt. NHS staff in Scotland have faced the same horrendous pandemic year, but we are trying to say thank you with a simple bonus of £500 and by focusing on their wellbeing and support services during recovery. The four national health services across the UK are not about hospitals or machines; rather, this is about the NHS staff who diagnose us, treat us and care for us, and now it is vital that we look after them so that they can recover.

There can be no NHS recovery without allowing staff to recover. It is only by supporting staff that they in turn will be able to look after patients and contribute to the huge task of treating those who have had to wait because of the pandemic and those who come forward now. Clearing the backlog of cases will take many months, but it will also require significant investment, yet the additional covid funding in England has already started to be removed since April. Although English trust debts were wiped last year and the NHS was told it could have whatever funding it needed, analysis by the King's Fund shows that the core health and social care budget actually fell by £1.7 billion.

The main piece of health-related legislation in the Queen's Speech is the health and care Bill, which, less than 10 years on, will repeal some aspects of the Tory-Lib Dem Health and Social Care Act 2012. It was that policy that brought me into politics. I had been following the proposals since 2011, in sheer disbelief that anyone could think that breaking up the NHS in England would somehow make it work better. Although I and others will be glad to see the back of section 75, which forced GPs to put services out to tender, this Government's management of the covid response does not suggest that they are any less keen on outsourcing.

Exactly how commissioning will work is not at all clear, and that is causing concern for key community services such as dentistry and community pharmacies. Although the Secretary of State rightly highlights that prevention is better than cure, public health in England was decimated by funding cuts and reorganisation before covid hit and even went through further upheaval at the height of the pandemic. With regard to the White Paper and the Bill, the devil will be in the detail. Personally, I am concerned about how the United Kingdom Internal Market Act 2020 is reversing devolution, and particularly about how the procurement Bill might be used to undermine our integrated public NHS in Scotland.

Overall, it is easier to talk about what is not in the Queen's Speech than what is. The most glaring omission is the long awaited social care Bill. That is in keeping with its complete absence from the Budget in March, but it is unforgivable. Not only has the pandemic highlighted the vulnerability of the social care sector, particularly

those living in care homes; it also brought home to all of us the important role played by care staff, whether in care homes or looking after people in their own homes.

During the 2019 election, the Prime Minister claimed to have his fully prepared social care plan, but maybe he was mixing it up with the oven-ready Brexit deal that he was boasting about at the same time. Far from being ready to go, it has yet to see the light of day. Various Ministers have recently tried to blame delays on Opposition parties taking too long to sign up to a cross-party approach. Well, I have certainly never seen it, and I note that the shadow Care Minister, the hon. Member for Leicester West (Liz Kendall), has said the same. I do not know why the Government are finding it so difficult to make contact with us; our email addresses are all in the parliamentary directory.

We have not just been waiting since December 2019 or even last July; a Green Paper on social care has been promised since 2017—four years ago. During that time, social care in England has been allowed to wither on the vine, with the gap between what is funded and what is needed growing to between £8 billion and £10 billion. The Scottish Government spend 43% more per head on social care, which allows us to provide free personal care, letting people stay in their own homes for longer, which is something that all of us would prefer.

After the experience of the covid pandemic last year, the Scottish Government commissioned the independent Feeley review, which has proposed a human rights approach to social care—valuing and enabling participation in society, rather than always looking on care support as a burden. The report outlines the route to establishing a national care service, with Scotland-wide service standards, staff training, and national terms and conditions.

Another key element missing from this Queen's Speech is any real detail about rebuilding a better society and economy than the one that was driving poverty and inequality before the pandemic brought life to a shuddering halt. We all know that we need a different economic model ahead of 2030 if we are not to burn or consume the planet. With the added economic damage of Brexit, it will take the investment of time, energy and money to recover from covid. We therefore have a choice about what kind of society we want to rebuild: one that exacerbates inequality or one that focuses on the wellbeing of everyone who lives here.

Wellbeing is not about healthcare or the NHS. It is much more than an absence of physical or mental illness. It comes from having a decent start in life, a warm and safe home, enough to eat, and fair opportunities at school and beyond. Scotland already has a broad range of wellbeing policies for all ages, from the baby box to welcome newborns, through to free personal care to support our older or vulnerable citizens. The Scottish Government are founders of the Wellbeing Economy Governments group with Iceland and New Zealand. They have already committed to a wellbeing and sustainability Act to ensure that every level of Government and every public body in Scotland puts the health and wellbeing of local people at the heart of all policy decisions.

We have seen the impact of covid on those in low-paid and insecure jobs, who, without decent sick pay, simply could not afford to isolate when they tested positive. Failing to properly support people to isolate has been one of the biggest mistakes in the UK Government's covid response, yet we see no evidence that any lessons

have been learned and no proposals for change. Where is the employment Bill that we heard about? Where is the plan to tackle child poverty, which has been driven up right across the UK since the first welfare cuts in 2012 and exacerbated by the benefit freeze and heartless policies such as the two-child limit and the rape clause?

There is nothing in this Queen's Speech about genuine levelling up for the most vulnerable. That is just a slogan for blatant pork barrel politics. In Scotland, the Government pay the bedroom tax and are providing the Scottish child payment to help fight to child poverty, but more people are beginning to recognise the effort and money that is spent just trying to mitigate the policies of Tory-led Governments that repeatedly put the heaviest burden on the weakest shoulders.

Poverty is the biggest driver of ill health, and a decade of Tory austerity has been the biggest driver of poverty, but the Chancellor has already stated that the uplift to universal credit will be cut in September, signalling the start of yet another decade of Tory austerity. The people of Scotland certainly aspire to something better—a fairer society that looks out for those who need support. As we rebuild from the pandemic, we need to move away from an economy based on relentless growth in consumption to a more sustainable one that values people rather than just GDP.

That demonstrates the clear blue water between the UK Government's plan for yet more austerity, poverty and inequality, and our vision for a fairer, healthier and more sustainable independent Scotland. The people of Scotland have the right to choose between those two visions. In Scotland, more people are beginning to recognise that we need the full powers of a normal independent country to be able to direct our recovery from covid and build the better country we want to live in and pass on to our children and grandchildren.

3.42 pm

Jeremy Hunt (South West Surrey) (Con): Let me start by thanking the NHS and care staff who looked after my constituents in South West Surrey so magnificently in the last year. Every resident of Farnham, Godalming and Haslemere is in their debt and incredibly grateful. As this is Dementia Action Week, I also particularly thank those who looked after people living with dementia, whether care home staff, home visitors or family members.

It is to the quality and safety of NHS care in normal times, as well as during pandemics, that I shall address my comments this afternoon. I will never forget the first members of the public who came to see me when I was Health Secretary to talk about issues of quality and safety. They were a young couple from Devon called Scott and Sue Morrish, who lost their three-year-old son Sam to sepsis. An independent inquiry ultimately decided, in two investigations, that every single NHS organisation that they had dealt with—the GP surgery, the out-of-hours service, NHS Direct, as was, and the hospital—had failed Sam in his care.

Scott and Sue are a modest couple—the last people to kick up a fuss—but they said that when they asked politely for a meeting to discuss Sam's care a few months after his death, the shutters came down and no one was prepared to talk to them; it was like talking to a brick wall. Ultimately, it took them six years to uncover the truth of what happened to Sam. We should never, ever put a grieving family through that kind of agony.

That is why I focused on safety and quality. It is why I introduced Ofsted-style ratings for hospitals, care homes and GP surgeries, which I think have had some success. Indeed, I am happy to say that they have had particular success at the hospital where Sam was treated, where there has been a big change in culture. However, that is the reason why, with these new reforms, it is absolutely essential that safety and quality is at the heart of what we ask from the new integrated care systems. It is vital that they are outward-looking to the needs of patients and not upward-looking to the requirements of NHS bureaucracy. I am delighted that the Secretary of State wrote to me yesterday confirming that safety and quality would be one of the core requirements being asked of the new integrated care systems. On that basis, I will support the reforms and the Bill, as, I believe, will the Health and Social Care Committee, based on the report that we published last week.

However, there were two omissions from the White Paper that I do need to mention. The first—social care—has been mentioned this afternoon, and I know that the Secretary of State will say that reforms are on the way. I just want to say to him, as the only person here this afternoon who has done his job, that I had four winter crises in a row because we tried to fix the problems of the NHS without trying to fix the problems of the social care system at the same time. If we fix one system and not the other, the social care system will continue to export its most vulnerable patients into hospitals, where they are much more expensive to treat and it is much worse for them, particularly people with dementia. I know that money is a big issue—this is a very expensive thing—but if the NHS really is a priority for this Government, the social care system has to be as well, and I urge him Godspeed and all strength in the battles ahead to secure the reforms for social care that are so urgently needed.

The second omission is around workforce reform. We have an NHS where there are gaps in nearly every medical specialty, as well as in nursing. I was proud to set up five new medical schools and that had a big increase in the number of doctors, nurses and midwives we trained, but even with 50,000 more nurses and 6,000 additional doctors, we need a major overhaul of workforce planning. The obvious reform is to give Health Education England the statutory duty to publish annually long-term workforce requirements to act as a kind of Office for Budget Responsibility-style discipline on the Government to train enough doctors and nurses. I hope that the Secretary of State will consider that.

In conclusion, integration of care—offering joined-up care to patients—is a vital objective, but without enough doctors and nurses to do it, and without a social care system that is able to integrate with the NHS, the worthy objectives that we all have for these reforms will not meet the aspirations that people on both sides of the House rightly have.

3.47 pm

Chris Bryant (Rhondda) (Lab): Alison was 68 when she fell down a long flight of stairs and hit her head. She was bright as a button until that moment but the damage has left her feeling befuddled and trapped.

Heather was seven when she was hit by a car as she turned a corner on her scooter. Thank goodness she survived, but she suffered a terrible blow to the head. She is now 13 and she still struggles to concentrate.

[Chris Bryant]

Gareth played rugby from the age of 10 until he retired as a professional rugby player in his 30s. He took blow after blow to his head in the game and was repeatedly concussed, and kept on going back on the pitch. He now suffers from panic attacks, depression and anxiety. He thinks of taking his life every day. He fears dementia.

Rhys is in his 80s. He gets terribly confused and forgetful. He half-remembers that he has been diagnosed with dementia, but sometimes, paranoia sets in and he gets very angry with those who are looking after him.

Kate is 19. She was in a car with three friends when another car suddenly appeared on the wrong side of the road and crashed into them. The ensuing crash left her paralysed from the neck down and with significant cognitive impairment. She feels completely trapped.

Mark is now 19 and lives on his own. He finds it difficult to control his emotions and perform normal executive functions such as turning up on time. His doctor thinks that that is because the boiler in his childhood home was pumping out carbon monoxide for years without being spotted.

Richard and Jane adopted Kia when she was three months old. She suffers from foetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

Nick is a former fusilier in the British Army. He was caught by an improvised explosive device in Iraq, but because there was no physical sign of an injury, he was never checked for brain damage. He, too, suffers from depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts.

Faisal had covid last year. He has never shaken it off. He suffers from terrible fatigue and brain fog all the time.

Maria is 42. She was in a horrible abusive relationship for a decade, but never dared go to the doctor when her partner smashed her head repeatedly against the kitchen worktop. She suffers from terrible paranoia and has just been sent to prison for possession of illegal drugs.

These people—I have changed their names—and the 1.4 million people like them really need legislation now. A brain injury Act would do five things. First, it would guarantee neuro-rehabilitation for all, bridging the gap between acute services and community services, which so many people miss out on. Secondly, it would put proper protocols in place on concussion in all sports, both professional and grassroots, and make them identical so that children who play more than one sport do not end up terribly confused. Thirdly, it would help to prevent brain injury by legislating on carbon monoxide poisoning and employers' duties towards their staff, including in the British armed forces.

Fourthly, the Act would ensure research into the causes, effects and treatment of brain injury. It seems remarkable to me, as the child of an alcoholic mother and as somebody who has seen various forms of brain injury in my own family, that we still do not really understand how the mind sits inside the brain. We really need to invest much more dramatically in research in that area.

Finally, the Act would require that all public bodies, including schools, the police, Department for Work and Pensions assessors and the courts, be trained in brain

injury. One thing that repeatedly comes back to me is that people know that their injury is not visible to everybody else. The strength of the internal agony that they might be suffering changes from day to day and from week to week. To banish some of the taboos in this field, it is essential that, when they deal with somebody in our public services, they know that that person fully understands. Amendment (e) has not been selected today—I never thought it would be—but I hope that one day we will have proper legislation in the field.

I end by paying enormous tribute to the people in the Rhondda who have been doing the mass vaccination programme. I have seen the work that they do every Friday afternoon when lots of people have not turned up: they are so desperate not to waste a single dose that they ring anybody they know to get them in. That is an enormous tribute to them.

3.52 pm

Damian Green (Ashford) (Con): It is always a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Rhondda (Chris Bryant).

Like other Members across the House, I welcome the performance and incredible dedication of NHS and social care staff throughout the pandemic. In the specific context of the Queen's Speech, I also welcome the Government's commitment to greater integration. The NHS is a great institution full of massively dedicated people, but my observation over the years has been that it is also a series of individual institutions, all of which are tenacious in the defence of their own interests. GPs are wary of hospital trusts, community services have a separate set of interests, and so do ambulance trusts and others such as pharmacies, which play a vital role but too often do not feel engaged enough.

The integration that the promised health and care Bill seeks to bring about is exactly the right solution, in a number of fields. Technology is clearly key—not just technology at the cutting edge of diagnostics or life sciences, but straightforward stuff so that systems talk to one another and patients do not have to repeat the same set of symptoms to doctor after doctor in different settings because their records have not been passed on. That kind of frustration has no place in the 21st century and should disappear.

The biggest prize of all is proper integration between the health and social care systems. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is absolutely right to focus on that in one of his White Papers, and I welcome that as well, but with two caveats. This must not be a takeover by the NHS of social care. The White Paper suggests integrated care systems, which are fine, but I slightly raise my eyebrows at the proposed dual system where the NHS effectively gets its integrated decision in first and then shares it with the social care system. It is vital that social care has a voice at the table where the decisions are taken.

My second caveat is that the social care voice must be properly representative. Too often when people say, "We have consulted social care", what they mean is, "We have consulted the local authorities." Clearly, local authorities have a key role to play in this, but they are not the whole social care sector. There are third sector providers and private sector providers, and their voices need to be heard as well. There are 1.6 million workers in the sector—it is larger than the NHS—and their voices need to be heard.

Of course, all this will mean something only if we have a stable and sustainable solution to the social care conundrum that has defined Governments since the 1990s. On that, I want to make four quick points. The first is on funding, which lies at the root of many of the frustrations. It must come out of national, not local, taxation, and it must certainly involve extra state spending, possibly through a hypothecated national insurance increase for some people. It should also involve extra personal savings from those who can afford it, perhaps based on a small percentage of total assets rather than a flat figure for the whole country.

We need to solve the question of funding to solve this, but as well as that, we need a proper workforce plan, not just with better pay, though that is needed, but with a career structure, so that a social care career can be seen as the equivalent of a career in the NHS. The great value of social care workers should be reflected not just inside the system but in wider Government policy, including, for example, in the immigration system.

We also need changes to our attitude to housing and planning. We need to build homes so that people can live in their own homes for longer than they too often can now. Everyone prefers to live in their own home. And, fourthly, to assist that, we must do much better with technology. We need to use the technologies that are now available—it is not cutting-edge technology—to allow people to spend much more of their life in their own home, living a life in comfort before they may have to go into residential care. That is not only better for people, it is much cheaper for the taxpayer and for the families.

All these reforms are necessary if we are going to have a long-term, stable system. Along with my right hon. Friend the Member for South West Surrey (Jeremy Hunt), I have called for a 10-year plan for social care to go along with the long-term NHS plan. That is absolutely essential. It is also essential that this is the year in which we start down this path. We have talked for too long about social care: we need to act.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): We are in for a treat now: one of two maiden speeches today. I remind everybody that, by convention, there will be no interventions. We are not putting the clock on the maiden speeches, but both Members have been told about the time constraints, so good luck! To make her maiden speech, I call Anum Qaisar-Javed.

3.58 pm

Anum Qaisar-Javed (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. It gives me immense pleasure to be making my maiden speech during an incredibly important debate on the NHS, and it is a pleasure to follow the right hon. Member for Ashford (Damian Green). I thank my constituents for voting SNP—[HON. MEMBERS: “Hear, hear!”]—and for bestowing upon me the greatest honour of my life by electing me as the Member of Parliament for Airdrie and Shotts. I want to take this opportunity to send a strong message to my constituents: I am here for you. I pledge to stand strong and work tirelessly for you, your families and our communities across the constituency.

I would also like to use my maiden speech to pay tribute to my predecessor, Neil Gray, and to congratulate him on his election to the Scottish Parliament. In this place, Neil showed himself to be a fierce advocate for

his constituents and for social justice. I very much look forward to working with him in the constituency we now share and delivering for our community from Westminster and Holyrood.

I must confess, Mr Deputy Speaker, I am not altogether unfamiliar with this place, having had the privilege of working for my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow North West (Carol Monaghan) some years ago. I subsequently followed my other passion and retrained as a teacher. Teaching modern studies and politics has been a delight. In fact, it was only recently that I showed my high school democracy pupils video clips of this very Chamber. It was suggested to me by a colleague that I would miss my school pupils, because no matter how rowdy they were, the House of Commons was much worse. I am pleased to say, however, that my experience so far has not confirmed that.

Some say Scotland is cold, but in Airdrie and Shotts, you will feel a warmth you will remember. The people are friendly, welcoming, honest and thoroughly decent. At the beating heart of the constituency are hard-working activists—people like Sharon Craig, who has continually championed her local community in Craigneuk, and Sarah Quinn, whose dedication knows no bounds and is making young voices heard via the Fortissat Youth Forum.

Upon entering this place, I did in fact ask for an internal map—there are lots of corridors. I was told that the best way to navigate myself through the building was to simply get lost. I must take this opportunity to thank all the House staff, who have been very kind and welcoming, even though they were telling me to get lost—in particular Kate Emms, who has been a source of guidance, and Doorkeeper Sarah Binstead-Chapman, who found me wandering while I was wishing there was a parliamentary sat-nav app.

It is fitting to make my maiden speech while we discuss the NHS. It was in fact a campaign by my SNP predecessor that kept the Monklands hospital in Airdrie. I have witnessed at first hand the sacrifice and dedication of our NHS staff, not least by my husband, Dr Usman Javed, who is sitting in the Gallery today. I take this opportunity to thank all the healthcare workers in my constituency and beyond for the sacrifices they have made this last year.

I wish to make one more plea that goes slightly beyond the NHS. The NHS would have collapsed without overseas staffing and immigrants who have made valuable contributions to this country. This may not be popular in some circles, but the points-based immigration system championed by the Government is deeply flawed. Were it in use when my father planned to come to this island, he would have been blocked and this country would have been deprived of one Member of Parliament, one doctor and one medical student—myself and my siblings. That is one of the reasons why Scotland needs independence, so that policies best suited for our people's needs are developed and delivered by those in Scotland.

So I end my maiden speech with a plea: please let Scotland be free. In the short term, devolve immigration so that we can set policies that are reflective of the needs of Scotland.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): Congratulations. My maiden speech was shocking. [*Interruption.*] A bit like my other speeches, I know. But yours was accomplished, so many congratulations.

4.4 pm

Stephen Crabb (Preseli Pembrokeshire) (Con): May I start by saying what a pleasure it is to follow the hon. Member for Airdrie and Shotts (Anum Qaisar-Javed)? It was an outstanding maiden speech, and we congratulate her on her success and wish her every success during her time in this House. We wish our best to her predecessor, whom many of us enjoyed chatting to on many different subjects.

I would like to begin my short speech by paying tribute to and thanking the local NHS teams in west Wales, particularly Pembrokeshire, for their outstanding work over the past 12 months, particularly the teams working at Withybush Hospital in Haverfordwest. The national health service occupies a unique place in our national life. It is an institution—more correctly, it is an idea—that fosters national unity in our society. It is an idea that is wrapped in a fair degree of mythology, and one of the key myths about the NHS today is that we have a single national health service. The truth is that we do not have a single NHS, not in a legal sense nor, increasingly, in a practical sense. If someone logs on to www.nhs.uk they will find a website with no information about any UK-wide health services, and no signposting for residents who live in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland—there is precious little of the UK about it at all. Increasingly, the NHS across the UK is about a different set of institutions, a different set of published core values, different policies, different approaches and different governance arrangements.

When I speak to staff in the NHS I get the sense that they genuinely believe that they are working for one integrated, unified organisation and movement, but increasingly the truth is that that is not the case. The point that I want to make is not an active devolution point at all—that is not where I am coming from—but I believe that the experience of the past 12 months has reinforced the importance of better co-ordination and communication, as well as the importance of data. An early argument made by proponents of devolution was that it would enable different policies to be tested in different parts of the United Kingdom, and there may be some truth in that. We should also recognise, however, that we have no meaningful way of judging those different policies—there is no set of UK-wide health metrics. The Nuffield Foundation and the Health Foundation both tried in the past to do studies looking at comparative data on different health services in different parts of the UK, but doing so has become more difficult given the increasing divergence that is under way.

We do not have meaningful debates about the performance of health systems in different parts of the UK, and the debate by Members from different parts of the UK is akin to cheerleading for their party if it is in power in their part of the United Kingdom. I thought the contribution from the hon. Member for Central Ayrshire (Dr Whitford), who is usually very good, characterised that. She seemed to be saying, “The NHS in Scotland is much better than anywhere else,” without any real evidence or information to back that up.

There are things that can be done to strengthen the NHS and create a more unified service without undermining the devolution settlement. I believe that we can strengthen the data sharing protocols between different parts of the system across the UK. The Secretary of State himself spoke about the importance of data. “Data saves lives,”

he said. Well, we need to strengthen the way in which the NHS can communicate data between different parts of the UK. We need to improve the way we collect and publish truly comparative data across the UK. I will go even further: I would introduce a more unified inspection regime across the UK. I believe that we should develop stronger, UK-wide health standards so that it should not matter where someone is in the UK—they should have the same right to basic standards of healthcare, whether that relates to cancer care, bereavement care or child and adolescent mental health services. I do not believe that developing a more unified UK approach undermines devolution one bit.

When it comes to learning from the pandemic, I strongly welcome the Prime Minister’s commitment to a public inquiry, which must not tiptoe around the issue of the four-nations approach to the pandemic. This morning, the National Audit Office published a report about its initial learnings from the Government response to the pandemic, and talked about a mixture of devolved competencies and UK-wide competencies, but not once did it mention devolved government. If we are truly to have a meaningful inquiry we need to meet that challenge head-on and have a genuine UK-wide debate.

4.9 pm

Mr Virendra Sharma (Ealing, Southall) (Lab) [V]: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak in this vital debate on the NHS and social care.

I want to speak about social care, which is in the midst of a severe crisis. Tragically, 40,000 older people have died in care homes since the beginning of the pandemic. In response to this tragedy, only one sentence of the Queen’s Speech last week was afforded to fixing the care system. In the memory of those people, the Government must put in place a proper social care system that will prevent such an injustice from ever taking place again. Instead, another year goes by where the Prime Minister has nothing to say to the hundreds of thousands of older people neglected by a broken system that still denies them the care that they so desperately need. This Government have been in power for 11 years and have done nothing to act on the matter.

Over the past 20 years, there have been at least 12 Government reviews, royal commissions, consultations, and Green and White Papers, yet still we have no change. During this time, Germany, Austria, France and Japan have all solved the issue. Even the Scottish Government, under a Labour Administration, were able to institute free personal care. This Government have dodged the issue for 11 years to the detriment of the 400,000 older people who go without the care they need. This is a failure of leadership, but it is also a collective failure of our political class to solve one of the defining issues of our time by ensuring that the older generation, after a long life of hard work and contribution to our society, are afforded the dignity that they deserve in older age.

It cannot be right that more than 10% of older people spend virtually all of their life savings on care. When the Prime Minister came to office, he committed to “fix the crisis in social care once and for all.”

Now, nearly two years on, he needs to do something to fix this problem once and for all.

When it comes to who needs access to care, it is often smokers, so we need to commit to support reduced-risk products as the best way to help people move off cigarettes. We cannot let those in deprived areas continue to suffer from further smoking-led health inequalities. We must establish two distinct categories of regulation to differentiate between the most harmful tobacco products, and the reduced risk products such as vapes and “heat not burn” cigarettes. I am deeply concerned that public health advice is not getting to my constituents. Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities must have access to the right information and advice to quit cigarettes or to move to less harmful alternatives—that could prove to be a distinct success.

As a result of these pressures, we see more and more care homes close every year, with fewer people able to find the beds they need. I urge the Secretary of State on behalf of the thousands who need help today to take two parallel courses of action. First, I urge the Government to immediately commence cross-party discussions in good faith to create consensus, not over the problems, but to find solutions. Over the past half century, at every turn, politicisation has disturbed what window of opportunity we have had available, and the adversarial nature of our politics has not solved this vital problem.

Secondly, the Government must have faith in local government, and give councils the tools and resources to build and then run a cohesive system of social care. Local authorities have performed admirably during covid-19, and have shown that they are truly capable of running such a system. We should take the lessons learned over the past 14 months and put them into action. Local government knows how to run programmes; the Government should give them the resources to do it. Acting now is not a political white flag. It is not compromise; it is showing decisive leadership. It is weak to leave this issue unaddressed. Strength is acting to save lives, and the dignity of everyone forced into the arms of social care. The Prime Minister is—

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): Order. I am sorry, Virendra; you have just run out of time. I do apologise. No offence is intended.

I call Robin Millar to make his maiden speech.

4.15 pm

Robin Millar (Aberconwy) (Con): It is a privilege to rise and speak in this debate, and indeed a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Ealing, Southall (Mr Sharma). I must say it has been a particular pleasure, too, to listen to speeches in this Chamber for the past 17 months, and I am humbled by the eloquence, the learning, the quick humour and concerns that hon. Members across the House bring to debates such as these.

My predecessor, Guto Bebb, was a man who followed his principles. As a Back Bencher, his campaign on interest rate swaps led to 11 bully banks paying out more than £1.5 billion in settlements to more than 15,000 businesses. He went on to become a Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales and then Minister for Defence Procurement. In short, he was a three-time winner of general election campaigns, a two-time Minister of State and an effective advocate for the exploited. He earned the respect of colleagues and opponents and secured the affections of his office team. Those are

considerable accomplishments, and they have guided me since entering the House, so it is a pleasure to recognise them with these few words today.

I was born and raised in north-west Wales. That is where I learned the importance of family, where I found my Christian faith, and where lifelong values were formed. It is also where I had my first political experience, as a six-year-old in 1974, campaigning for the late Wyn Roberts MP, more recently Lord Roberts of Conwy. Even now I remember his campaign cry of “Win with Wyn”, and I still proudly wear the campaign rosette he gave me to thank me for my decisive contribution to his successful re-election campaign that year.

In Wales we have a word, *cynefin*, which loosely translates as habitat; but it means much more than that, and carries a sense of belonging and being in the right place. So, although I left family and home for education, a career and for love, it was perhaps inevitable that I should return to Wales and end up in politics. To be sent to Westminster by the people of Aberconwy is a very special personal honour and a great privilege, and I will do all I can to repay the trust and the confidence they have placed in me.

For centuries the beauty of Aberconwy, its heritage and culture have drawn visitors from around the world, including many hon. Members from this House. Many who have come have stayed, and the houses they have built tell a fascinating story of ambition and influence, dispute and resolution. The Victorians enjoyed our seaside towns and villages so much that their houses line the promenades from Llanfairfechan to Llandudno. The Groes Inn on the shoulder of the Conwy valley is the oldest licensed pub in Wales, and has been a place of rest and refreshment for weary travellers since 1573.

Each of the castles of Aberconwy, along the Conwy valley—Deganwy, Conwy itself, Gwydir and Dolwyddelan—offer different perspectives on our rich history of English kings and Welsh princes in their mountain passes. Further up the valley and deep into Snowdonia—or Eryri, as we call it—is Tŷ Mawr, the house of Bishop William Morgan. His translation of the Bible into Welsh not only saved the Welsh language but changed the history of Wales, and it serves as a testament to the relevance of timeless truths to us today in this place.

These are rich seams, and points that I will return to another day, but the subject of today’s debate is the Health and Care Bill and Her Majesty’s Gracious Speech. The UK has a growing and ageing population. Around 18% are over 65 years old, but in Aberconwy that figure is closer to 27%. While there is no cure for old age yet, the challenge that we face is to reduce the burden of care and help ensure longer, better lives. So I support the Prime Minister’s aim to give every older person the dignity and security they deserve. On this one point I will make a simple observation.

This UK Government ensured that residents in all parts of the UK could benefit from the furlough scheme and receive financial relief at a time of crisis; this UK Government ensured that residents in all parts of the UK would benefit from a world-leading and lifesaving vaccination programme; and this UK Government can use the Health and Care Bill to ensure that residents in all parts of the UK will have access to consistent minimum standards of healthcare.

[Robin Millar]

While residents of Aberconwy in north Wales are served by the gifted and hard-working professionals of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, it was in special measures for six years until just a few months ago. Workers there have coped superbly with the pandemic response and are delivering hundreds of thousands of vaccines, yet some 6% of residents in north Wales have been on a waiting list for treatment for over a year. These are UK residents, they need the support of their UK Government, and this Bill, surely, is an opportunity for us to enable that support.

That is just one of the challenges we face in Aberconwy. We must build back a balanced economy, improve our road, rail and telecommunications links, develop green energy schemes, tackle flooding, and more. But whether on climate change, public service finance, social care, national security, our economy or international trade, these challenges are best faced together. I believe that our United Kingdom is the best response to the global challenges we face today. I do not underestimate the difficulty of building solutions across political parties and Parliaments, but we must strengthen the ties that bind us to best serve those we are here to represent.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): Congratulations, Robin, and thank you for the Welsh lesson on “cynefin”. I used to see it outside houses in Swansea and always wondered what it meant, so now I know.

We are now going to a three-minute limit on speeches. I call Munira Wilson.

4.21 pm

Munira Wilson (Twickenham) (LD): This Government, with their 80-seat majority, are in an enviable position. They could put forward an ambitious and visionary plan to improve the country’s health and wellbeing and put social care at the forefront of their agenda. Yet here we are, following the biggest health crisis in 100 years, at a watershed moment, and the Queen’s Speech presents us with a Government who prioritise unnecessary and discriminatory legislation to introduce voter ID over ensuring that people can get the care that they need and over ensuring that we have a plan to train the next generation of doctors and nurses whom we will all rely on. What a waste of a precious opportunity of a mandate to bring about transformational change to the quality of British citizens’ lives.

Just nine words in the Queen’s Speech were devoted to social care, despite the Prime Minister’s promise on the steps of Downing Street 22 months ago to

“fix the crisis in social care once and for all”,

and there is still nothing on unpaid carers. Instead, reform keeps being kicked into the long grass for this overlooked and critically important sector. Although it is welcome that the health and care Bill seeks to improve integration between health and social care, it does not address the fundamental issues facing our care system in terms of structure, workforce and funding—problems that were highlighted so tragically through the pandemic. Ministers need urgently to commit to cross-party talks. They have a clear choice: to leave a lasting legacy or be responsible for an abject moral and political failure on one of the biggest public policy challenges that this country faces.

If the Prime Minister really wants us to believe that the NHS is safe in Conservative hands and that he genuinely cares about social care, then we need urgent action to ensure that we have enough doctors, nurses, carers, physios and other healthcare professionals both in the short and the long term. In 2019, there were about 100,000 full-time-equivalent vacancies in the NHS, and after a gruelling year, as we saw only yesterday with the nurse who treated the Prime Minister when he was in intensive care, many are needed. They are burnt-out, stressed and fed up of their good will being taken for granted.

With record waiting lists for both physical and mental health treatment, we clearly need some short-term solutions, but we must not shirk the long-term challenges. These shortages predate the pandemic. The Liberal Democrats support calls from the Health and Social Care Committee for a transparent and independent annual workforce report, with requirements for future staffing that cover the next five, 10 and 20 years and regular updates to Parliament on progress and resourcing. I implore the Minister to think big and not to squander this unique opportunity to bring about lasting, positive and long-term change in our health and care services and to improve the wellbeing of the British people.

4.24 pm

Douglas Ross (Moray) (Con): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Aberconwy (Robin Millar) and the hon. Member for Airdrie and Shotts (Anum Qaisar-Javed) on their excellent maiden speeches. Whether it takes 17 months or less than seven days to make a maiden speech, we have seen two politicians on both sides of the Chamber who have come to this place to represent their local constituencies and get things done and who are passionate about really making a difference; I am sure that they will both do that in their respective roles.

It is a pleasure to speak in today’s debate on the NHS. What our NHS has done over the last year is nothing short of remarkable. In Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland, our NHS staff have risen to the enormous challenge that they faced with this global pandemic, and they have responded in such a magnificent way.

Because time is short, I want to focus on my local area of Moray. Moray is one of two local council areas in Scotland that, sadly, did not see an easing of restrictions in the last week. While the rest of mainland Scotland moved from level 3 to level 2, and the islands thankfully moved to level 1, Moray and Glasgow remained in level 3. I am very optimistic that, at the end of this week, Moray will come out of those restrictions. I would say to anyone watching that, hopefully towards the end of this week, Moray will once again be open for business, and I know that our tourism and hospitality sector is ready to welcome people back to our wonderful area. We are only in such a positive position because of the response from our local NHS staff.

One of the keys to getting our spike in cases down has been more testing, rapid testing and an increase in vaccinations. I went along to the Fiona Elcock vaccination centre in Elgin on Sunday and was amazed by the professionalism of the staff and how they have converted a former Topps Tiles shop into a vaccination centre that is even allowing people without appointments to walk up and get a vaccination. We now have 85% of our

population in Moray vaccinated with their first dose in response to the spike in cases, and 20% of those have been vaccinated in the last few weeks. That is down to the hard work of Alison Smart and her team in turning that derelict retail unit into a vaccination centre.

Every single member of NHS staff, the Elgin Rotary Club team who are volunteering and everyone involved in that operation have done an outstanding job. As I walked out, Edith Campbell asked me whether there was any way that I could highlight the great work they were doing, and I thought, “Yes, I can.” So today in the House of Commons, I thank Edith, Alison and everyone at the Fiona Elcock centre for what they are doing to get Moray back on track. That is just one example of how our NHS has gone above and beyond to get us out of this crisis.

4.28 pm

Liz Twist (Blaydon) (Lab): For a few glorious moments at the start of the debate, I thought that I might have five minutes, but this will be the abbreviated version of my speech.

First, I want to touch on social care. Many Members have mentioned the value and importance of social care in this pandemic, which has really brought out the value of the people who provide social care and the importance of doing so. It is disappointing, therefore, to see no concrete plans being brought forward. We need a plan for social care that looks at not only caps on care costs but properly resourcing and valuing social care workers and giving them parity of esteem with NHS staff. I would also like to mention the role of unpaid carers, who have done so much to support people through this pandemic.

Secondly, I would like to look at the NHS and say a big thank you to all its staff. They deserve so much more than the 1% that the Government are suggesting is appropriate. We have seen a tremendous response from the NHS, but we know that there is a great deal of catch-up to do to ensure that people are followed up. So many organisations have contacted all of us, I am sure, about that. This morning in the all-party parliamentary group for respiratory health, we talked about the importance of catching up on lung cancer tests; it is the same with breast cancer tests. I also want to draw attention to the need for mental health treatment to be improved and caught up with, as too many people have lost out.

I turn briefly to public health. I heard the Secretary of State talk about public health, but we need not just talk, but action and funding. The pandemic has shown the real value of public health, which we know lies behind so many other issues. It is important that we have an effective local public health system. That links to my next point, which is really about child poverty. End Child Poverty has today produced a set of figures that sadly shows that child poverty has increased in the north-east, where my constituency is. More than 4,300 children in my constituency are living in poverty. That must be addressed. We need to retain the £20 universal credit uplift, expand it to legacy benefits and focus on child benefit.

There is so much more that I would like to say about planning reform and accessible housing, but I do not have time. I end by commending the hon. Member for Aberconwy (Robin Millar) on his maiden speech, which showed that he knows his constituency well and cares about it; I wish him well in his future career.

4.31 pm

Sir Paul Beresford (Mole Valley) (Con) [V]: Mr Deputy Speaker, with your ceiling of three minutes, I am going to focus on one aspect of one Bill—namely, the proposal to change the approach to the fluoridation of community water supplies. I am a dentist and a member of the British Fluoridation Society. It is therefore with considerable enthusiasm that I support the proposed change of the procedure for introducing fluoridation of domestic water supplies. Our western nation comparators have between 60% and 80% of their domestic water supplies fluoridated. This country has a shameful 10%.

When I first came to this country as an ethnic minority immigrant, I worked in the national health service in a deprived area of London. I was appalled by the general state of my patients’ teeth, particularly by the state of children’s teeth. Trying to maintain children’s dentition was and still is, as a colleague put it, like trying to fill a bath with the plug out. Far and away the biggest reason for referral of children for general anaesthetics to hospitals in England is to remove rotten teeth. In 2019, hospitals throughout England carried out an average of 177 operations a day on children and teenagers, just removing decayed, rotten and abscessed teeth that should not be in that state. The annual cost is more than £40 million.

Tooth decay is essentially highly preventable. Water fluoridation is the single most effective public measure that could be taken to prevent tooth decay. Implementation of fluoridation is in the powers of the local authority, but little progress has been made since that was introduced in 2013. The costs are to local councils and the cost benefits are to the national health service. The process of consultation is lengthy and tedious, and it is enabling a platform for protestors of the same genre as the anti-vaccination people.

On a more practical point, there are considerable difficulties for both the local authorities and the water companies in that their boundaries are rarely, if ever, coterminous. It makes eminent sense for the implementation process for new schemes of fluoridation to be put in the hands of and driven by central Government. In doing so, I hope the Government will curtail the procedures on consultation, as they only permit continuous reception and repetition of scaremongering stories from people who are basically cranks.

The safety, efficiency, cost-effectiveness and benefits of fluoridated water supplies, whether natural—and they are in many parts of the world—or as an additive, have been proven worldwide for what must be approaching 100 years. With this proposed step and Government determination, rather than lagging behind the rest of the world, we could actually lead.

4.34 pm

Paul Blomfield (Sheffield Central) (Lab) [V]: Mr Deputy Speaker,

“we will fix the crisis in social care once and for all, and with a clear plan we have prepared”.

I am not the first to quote the Prime Minister’s words as he took office and I am sure I will not be the last, and of course I recognise that the Prime Minister has a loose relationship with the truth and a willingness to make commitments with no intention of honouring them, but the Health Secretary has said that the Government will

[Paul Blomfield]

bring forward proposals this year, with the Prime Minister now claiming that he wants cross-party working to develop a plan. I hope he means it, and that there will also be real engagement with those in receipt of care, those who work in care and the hundreds of thousands of unpaid carers.

The pandemic has shone a spotlight on the crisis in social care, but the failure of the system has been clear for a long time. In developing a new approach, we must have real ambition, as our predecessors did in establishing the NHS, with an entirely new model, not just tinkering with payment mechanisms, and viewed in the same way as the NHS, with a comprehensive system of high-standard residential and domiciliary care that ensures no one is denied support because they cannot afford it.

We should take the same approach to those who work in the system, raising the status of carers to that of other healthcare professionals, and training them, supporting them and, crucially, paying them in a way that reflects the critical nature of their work. Of course, it will be expensive, but we need an honest national debate about the costs of reforming the care system and how we pay the price, not branding proposals as a “death tax” or a “dementia tax”, or talking about unaffordability.

We should also recognise that, however good the system, there will always be an important role for unpaid carers, and they must be recognised in the plan too, not cast adrift. According to the Carers Trust, the number providing over 50 hours’ care a week has more than trebled in the past decade, but only one in 10 says they have enough support. They need that support, they need respite and they deserve an adequate carer’s allowance.

We must also do more specifically for the invisible army of young carers—extraordinary children and young adults with huge resilience and strength, facing all the demands imposed on adult carers with the added challenges of schooling and making the most of their young lives. Ministers should act now to require schools and GPs to identify young carers and point them to the support they need, which we must ensure is available in every part of the country.

A Green Paper was newly published in 2017 and in almost every year since. The limited mention of social care in the Queen’s Speech suggests the Government are delaying again. It is not good enough. Millions of people are looking for better. We need a real commitment to act.

4.37 pm

Richard Graham (Gloucester) (Con): There is time enough today to focus on two things: first, a suggestion about how Members of Parliament can work most efficiently with their local NHS trusts; and, secondly, a look at hypothecation—in other words, a dedicated fund to help boost the ways of funding health and care in the future.

It is now 14 months since the leaders of the three NHS trusts, our director of public health, the leader and chief executive of our county council and the six Members of Parliament for Gloucestershire got together virtually—every week, and more recently, fortnightly—to cover all the issues involved in the pandemic. During this process, we have all had a much better understanding of the immense

debt we owe them and their staff, GP surgeries and volunteers for all they have done to give my constituents in Gloucester and across the county a service and a vaccination that has given people reassurance and confidence, and I am very grateful for that. I believe that there are opportunities for other parts of the country to benefit from a similar form of partnership, because this resolves problems faster, acts as an early warning signal back to Government, communicates more effectively with our constituents and, ultimately, saves us all a lot of time in helping to get things done.

The second thing I would like to highlight, because inevitably we are going to need more money if we are to resolve the issue of social care, is the possibility of hypothecation. In March 2017, I wrote a paper for the then Chancellor the Exchequer, laying out the case that I and the then hon. Member for Grantham and Stamford made for using hypothecation as a means of linking increases in taxation directly to improved health and social care services. At that time, the Chancellor had already said to us that he would only look at it in more detail if we could find a reputable think-tank to advocate for it, as well as us. We therefore encouraged the King’s Fund to write a report, which it did, recommending hypothecation. The former permanent secretary of the Treasury, now Lord Macpherson in the other place, also agreed that this would be a huge step forward. The reason is this: ultimately, the national insurance fund is not used to insure anything or anyone in particular, but were it to become a health and care fund, with the self-employed and the employed contributing equally, and those who have passed retirement age also contributing, then there would be an opportunity for our constituents to realise that additional taxation into the fund would help them and their families.

4.40 pm

Barbara Keeley (Worsley and Eccles South) (Lab) [V]: This is a Queen’s Speech that lacks the ambition to deliver the transformative change that our country needs and wants. Despite repeated promises, the Government have no plans for how to fix the biggest challenges facing our country today. They have no solution to the rising problems of insecure and low-paid work, they have no solution to address the ever-increasing backlog of treatment needed in the NHS, and they have no solution to tackle the climate emergency. Nowhere is this lack of ambition clearer than on social care.

More than 10 years after the Conservatives entered Government, they still have no solution to the problems facing our broken social care system. Since 2017, the Conservatives have promised 10 times to bring forward proposals for social care and every time they have broken their promises. This continual kicking the can of reform down the road is letting down the people who need care: unpaid family carers and care staff. People deserve to be able to access care to support them to live independently in their own homes for longer, supported by care staff who are paid at least a real living wage. Instead, they face rising charges for care services, shrinking support packages, wage freezes for care staff and no respite for unpaid carers. A Health Minister told me in a debate I led on a carers strategy that only 45,000 carers had received respite care in 2019-20. That is a disgraceful record from the Government when there are now 13.6 million unpaid carers.

The Secretary of State said earlier that the long-promised reforms to mental health law will come in the next Session, rather than this one. We are coming up to the 10th anniversary of the revelations of abuse at Winterbourne View and the Government have failed dismally on the promises they made to close abusive in-patient units and support people to live in the community. Delaying to the next Session will mean two more years in abusive settings. I call on the Secretary of State to bring forward new legislation in this Session, so we can finally change this appalling situation.

With our Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham, we have seen the difference that radical local government can make to people's lives, with action on homelessness and radical plans to create a public transport system that works for everyone. Instead of building on those plans to deliver transformational change, the Government are content to let people down with this thin Queen's Speech. Rather than giving our hard-working nurses and doctors a real pay rise to recognise the work they have done this year, they are tinkering with NHS structures and handing more powers to the Secretary of State. Rather than bringing forward plans to ensure older and disabled people can continue to live in their own homes, they are once again kicking the can of social care reform down the road. Rather than bringing forward legislation to protect people at work and end the appalling practice of fire and rehire, they are seeking to roll out unnecessary voter ID legislation. The people of this country deserve better and I urge the Government to change their approach, live up to their promises, and deliver the real change this country needs.

4.43 pm

James Cartlidge (South Suffolk) (Con): It is a real pleasure to be called in this important debate on the NHS in the Queen's Speech. I join others in paying tribute to the amazing effort of NHS and social care staff in South Suffolk: all the staff at Colchester, Ipswich and West Suffolk Hospitals, our care homes, and the community pharmacy and vaccine teams in primary care who performed such an extraordinary job. Finally, I would particularly like to mention those volunteers who were standing in the snow of winter when we started the vaccine roll-out to help us to achieve what is basically a miracle of delivery of the vaccine. It should make us all proud of the NHS and proud, frankly, to be British.

I just want to make one key substantive point today, given that we are talking about a Bill that will reorganise the NHS: however we do that, we must maintain diversity of provision. I will refer to three key areas. The first is community pharmacy. I am a great fan of community pharmacy. It does a huge amount already, but it has earned its spurs during the pandemic, giving out over 3 million jabs to date—more than the entire population of Greater Manchester. I have seen in my constituency how community pharmacies can really make a difference. My constituents have chosen them as their preferred place to receive a jab and it shows what more they can do. We must give them a deeper role in the delivery of healthcare in this country.

The second part of this is the voluntary sector, and I am thinking in particular of mental health. In Norfolk and Suffolk we have a struggling mental health trust, but when constituents have come to me with mental health problems in my surgeries—this was pre-pandemic—

and I have been able to refer them to local mental health charities, they have often achieved great improvement in their mental health. Ed Garratt, the brilliant head of our local clinical commissioning group, supports this. We should look at more of the funding that goes to our NHS trusts going directly to those charities so that they become part of mental health capacity.

Finally, we should talk about the independent sector, and on this point I come back to my two earlier interventions on the shadow Secretary of State, because it was extraordinary what we heard today. As I said, Ipswich Hospital was able to double the number of ICU beds it had by moving cancer patients to the local Nuffield hospital. If someone was ideological enough to say, "We won't work with the independent sector," they are literally denying that capacity to people who use the NHS and saying, "You can only pay for it." That is an extraordinary political point and it shows that the Labour party has not moved on from the depths of its dogma. We should deliver the best possible outcomes within the universal NHS, and that means diversity of provision at the heart of its delivery.

4.46 pm

Stella Creasy (Walthamstow) (Lab/Co-op): I join the hon. Member for South Suffolk (James Cartlidge) in thanking the NHS for all the work it does, but I would ask him to look at the cost of using the private sector, because the lesson we have learnt in London is that it is not always the best value for money.

In the short time available to me, I wish to speak to amendment (g), which is about the groups of people who have been forgotten in this Queen's Speech. If we do not speak for them in this place, nobody else will. I am talking about some of the most vulnerable people in our communities, particularly children who have been orphaned and victims of domestic abuse. They are people for whom the courts in this country have spoken. I am sure everybody in this House would agree that if we do not uphold the rule of law, how can we ask constituents to do so? Sadly, the Government have yet to act on those court rulings.

Let me tell the House about these two particular instances. Every 22 minutes in this country, a child loses a mother or father. It is estimated that 26,000 children become orphans each year. I know that stat from the Child Bereavement Network, not because this country monitors that—we monitor how many children might be affected by divorce, but we do not recognise death as damaging for children, yet we know that clearly it is. It is estimated that 2,000 families a year who find themselves in that horrific situation—many more will have done so because of covid—are not then eligible for financial support, and the reason for that is very simple: the state has decided that, because their parents are not married, those children must be pushed into poverty. It is estimated that 3,000 children a year—eight children a day—find themselves losing a parent and then possibly losing their home or family circumstances.

The courts said in 2018 that it was wrong to deny children in that situation that funding. In 2020 the Jackson ruling made that point again. Children, such as the children of Joana and Ros in my community, are being divided simply by whether their parents were married or not. The Government know that they have

[Stella Creasy]

to remedy this situation, because otherwise we are punishing children for the decisions that their parents have made, and I do not think anybody in this House would want that. Let me be clear what remedying it means. It means making sure that we put this right for every child and every family in this situation, including those who brought the court cases, and making sure that no family is punished by the tax or benefit system, by having that money put right.

This is not just about those children; it is also about the domestic violence victims who are paying the bedroom tax because they have a panic room in their house. Again, the courts told us several years ago that this was wrong and that the Government should act, but they have not yet done so. Let us be clear about what remedying that means. It means helping those already affected, who have spent years struggling as a result, so that whenever regulations are made, they do not have to pay this. I ask the Minister to think clearly about those people, who need our voices in this House to ring out loud and clear. We have 54 MPs across the House backing this amendment, saying, "Let's get it right now."

4.49 pm

John Lamont (Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk) (Con): I welcome the measures set out in the Gracious Address to deliver the national recovery from the pandemic, which will make all the United Kingdom stronger, healthier and more prosperous than before. I welcome the fact that this Government are pursuing an agenda that will be for all parts of the United Kingdom, including Scotland and my constituents in the Scottish borders.

It is also clear from the Gracious Address that the Government are committed to the Union. I welcome the measures to enhance transport infrastructure, with investment promised to improve connectivity within the United Kingdom. I look forward to seeing more detailed plans in due course, but for my constituents in the Scottish borders there are exciting opportunities to improve cross-border transport links: by getting the borders railway extended to Hawick and Newcastleton and on to Carlisle, and by upgrading the A1.

A theme of today's debate is the NHS and social care. It is important for me to pay tribute, as others have done, to those across the NHS who have worked tirelessly to deliver the national vaccine roll-out—nurses, doctors and many others within the NHS family have been working incredibly hard to get jabs into arms as quickly as possible. We have been leading the world. We should also recognise the efforts of UK Government Ministers, who have secured a robust profile of 450 million coronavirus vaccines for all the United Kingdom—something from which Scotland has undoubtedly benefited. This weekend, I will proudly roll up my own sleeve and finally become part of the daily statistics, receiving my vaccine at the Borders Events Centre in Kelso. It is worth pausing to reflect that the SNP Scottish Government would have preferred Scotland to have been outside the UK-wide procurement scheme and part of the EU vaccine process instead.

The SNP's desire to be outside the UK leads me to the conclusion of my contribution, but before I finish I want to congratulate my colleague and friend Rachael

Hamilton MSP, who was re-elected to the Scottish Parliament last week. We should also recognise my hon. Friend the Member for Moray (Douglas Ross), leader of the Scottish Conservatives, for his achievement in the election. He took over the leadership in August last year, and in that short period he has dedicated himself to stopping the SNP majority. Many in the press thought that he could not outperform our previous best ever Scottish election performance in 2016, achieved by Ruth Davidson. But not only did he secure 31 Scottish Conservative MSPs last week; he also attracted 100,000 additional Scottish Conservative votes. Crucially, he stopped that SNP majority and a mandate for a second independence referendum.

The SNP went into the election saying that securing a majority would give it a mandate for a referendum; Scottish voters thought otherwise. It should be focusing not on a referendum but on the day-to-day priorities that matter most to Scottish voters: the education system, the NHS and all the other pressing issues that need to be resolved. I congratulate my hon. Friends in the Government for producing this programme for government, and I wholeheartedly support it.

4.52 pm

Debbie Abrahams (Oldham East and Saddleworth) (Lab) [V]: As you will be aware, Mr Deputy Speaker, this is Dementia Action Week. I am co-chair of the all-party parliamentary group on dementia. In conjunction with the Alzheimer's Society, we are arguing in the #CureTheCareSystem campaign that there is a desperate need to reform social care. While covid cases are going down in most places in the UK, dementia cases are only going to go up. By 2040, it is estimated that well over 1 million people in the UK will have some form of dementia, with a cost to the economy of £94 billion.

During the pandemic, people with dementia have been the worst affected. Figures from the Office for National Statistics show that more than one in four of those who have died from covid also had a diagnosis of dementia, making dementia the most common underlying condition among those who have died from the disease. We know that the number of excess deaths of people with dementia—those not with a covid diagnosis—was about 5,000 higher than in the previous year.

There are a number of reasons for these data. The Government did too little to protect care homes at the height of the pandemic. Hospital patients were quickly moved from hospitals to care homes, all without testing, spreading the virus amongst vulnerable residents. There were also problems in accessing PPE and testing for care staff. Many of us can remember cases of care staff using bin-bags as aprons, or having to make round trips of hundreds of miles to access testing.

The second cause of the excess deaths has been the worsening of people's conditions, primarily because of the isolation that many have experienced and the lack of ability to use basic skills, such as speech, which they are at risk of losing. For people with dementia living in the community, it is estimated that family and friends have provided an extra 92 million hours of care during the pandemic.

People with dementia and their carers need more than warm words. They need action to address the dementia premium in care home fees. On average, someone living with dementia or their family will pay £100,000 for their

care. For them, for their carers, and for the dementia moonshot, we needed much more from the Government in the Queen's Speech. With the Government's proposed integration of the NHS and social care in their new Bill, the principle that healthcare and social care should be provided universally and free at the point of need is fundamental. I argue that it should be provided through progressive taxation.

Finally, on health inequalities and the UK's appalling, high and unequal covid death toll—driven, as Professor Sir Michael Marmot has said, by the key causes of rampant poverty and inequality, a decade of austerity, the underfunding of the NHS and a political culture that fuels division—I repeat my challenge to the Health Secretary and the Prime Minister to adopt Sir Michael's covid review recommendations and build back fairer.

4.56 pm

Mr Philip Hollobone (Kettering) (Con): I welcome the Government's health service proposals in the Queen's Speech, the unprecedented commitment and support to the NHS during the pandemic, and particularly the Government's continued commitment to the hospital building programme, which has resulted in promised commitments to Kettering General Hospital of £46 million for a new urgent care hub, £350 million in health infrastructure plan 2 funding for 2025 to 2030, and a write-off last year of £167 million of trust debt at the hospital.

However, the Minister will know that promises are one thing and delivery is another. I know that as hospitals Minister he has the words "value for money" imprinted on his mind. In that vein, may I press him on the value for money that the Kettering General Hospital redevelopment offers? The problem is that at the moment the hospital faces two funding streams—£46 million for the urgent care hub and £350 million for the phased rebuild—but they are not yet meshing together. Building the original urgent care hub is no longer an option on a stand-alone basis, because there would not be enough room on the hospital site for the health infrastructure plan funding that follows.

The value-for-money solution is to integrate the two funding streams. The best way to do that, which I commend to the Minister, is to designate Kettering General Hospital as an early progress project in the hospital building programme. Kettering General Hospital is ready to go: it owns the land, so no land deals are required and no extra public consultation is needed, and it already has written support from local planners and the regional NHS. This is a phased approach that would deliver visible and real benefits, is shovel-ready and has far lower risks than other hospital build projects.

In developing the whole site plan, the hospital has identified the best way of delivering value for money to get these buildings up and operating, serving local people. Will the Minister look closely at Kettering General Hospital so that Kettering people can have the long-awaited hospital rebuild that we have long been promised and that will be so valued in the local community? The Department needs to be flexible in its funding streams. Let us have an early advance of the HIP2 funding and permission to mesh it with the £46 million for the urgent care hub. We can then have the hospital that Kettering will be proud of for the future. The decision lies in the Minister's hands.

4.58 pm

Mike Kane (Wythenshawe and Sale East) (Lab) [V]: Wythenshawe Hospital in my constituency is built on the site of Baguley sanatorium, which opened in 1902 to lead the way in tuberculosis treatment, planting the seeds of the excellent heart and lung unit at the hospital now. Those specialisms have been joined by an internationally recognised burns unit, by the fabulous Nightingale Centre breast unit, and recently by a world-class A&E facility after a campaign championed by my late, great predecessor, Paul Goggins.

Last week, the Government announced ambitions that the UK will lead the world in life sciences. I share that ambition and, with co-operation from Government, Wythenshawe and our hospital can be in the vanguard. Wythenshawe Hospital's strategic regeneration framework sets out a vision for the campus, which will be supported by a world-class research and innovation business park alongside a redeveloped, modern and inviting hospital. Great companies such as Chiesi and Hologic are already based in my constituency. There is now an opportunity, with the SRF, to ensure that the fabric of the site reflects the world-class services at the hospital and the exciting prospect of leveraging the medical park to help Manchester and Britain to continue to be a world-class leader in life sciences.

Inward investments, high-skilled jobs and life-saving research are now more important than ever. The Minister will be pleased, I am sure, that I am not asking today for a pot of public money for this redevelopment. The cherry on top of this masterplan is that it will require no funds from Treasury. In fact, it can be funded on site with the correct commercial partners. I am so proud of this project, and I really wish to discuss it with the Minister at some stage in the near future. We need a mechanism from the Treasury to allow the vision to be realised and Wythenshawe Hospital to become the 21st-century leader in healthcare, research and innovation that we know it can be.

5.1 pm

Dr James Davies (Vale of Clwyd) (Con): It is a pleasure to rise in support of the Queen's Speech today. The past year has highlighted the challenges facing our health and social care systems, and I welcome the Government's legislative agenda, which will tackle some of the most pressing issues. In the short time available, I will focus on three issues: plans to tackle obesity, the potential benefits of UK-wide comparable healthcare data, and the need for better access to, and choice of, secondary and tertiary healthcare for the residents of north Wales.

In the UK, 63% of adults are overweight or living with obesity. This places an enormous strain on the NHS, reduces quality of life and stifles economic productivity. The Government have a clear agenda to tackle obesity, and I welcome, among other measures, the confirmation of a total online ban and a 9 pm TV watershed for the advertising of high-fat, salt and sugar products. The commitment to legislate for calorie labelling in cafés, restaurants and takeaways is also welcome. Although I acknowledge certain concerns on behalf of those with eating disorders, I believe this policy will have a clear net benefit for our national health.

Can progress also be made on introducing calorie labelling for alcohol products? I am in no way anti-alcohol, Mr Deputy Speaker, as you know—in fact, I am a proud

[Dr James Davies]

member of the beer, and wine and spirits all-party parliamentary groups—but I believe that there is currently poor awareness that alcohol consumption is a significant contributor towards our national obesity crisis. An alcohol calorie labelling programme would be a useful tool to enhance the plans already outlined in the Queen's Speech.

The availability of comparable data on covid infection rates and vaccination roll-out throughout the country has been a key driver in our response to the pandemic, yet looking at healthcare more broadly, comparisons between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be difficult to draw. My personal experience as a GP, anecdotal evidence and basic comparisons indicate that, despite the hard work and commitment of health staff, patients in Wales often receive inferior levels of service when compared with their friends in England.

By introducing UK-wide health data, politicians at all levels will be held to account, practitioners and policy makers can better share best practice, and, ultimately, equal health outcomes will be promoted. Such an approach would be complemented by the establishment of independent UK-wide healthcare inspection, safety and audit mechanisms. In short, we have opportunities that I believe we must seize to level up healthcare. I ask the Minister to consider what the UK Government can do, beyond the legislative programme already announced, to protect and promote the health of all British citizens.

I am looking forward to seeing the progress of the health and care Bill. I hope that, as part of the legislative process, the Government will consider the challenges that Welsh patients currently experience, whereby access to specialist healthcare treatment in England is typically dependent on restrictive contracts or individual funding requests. Improving access to specialist care—

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): Order. Sorry, James.

5.4 pm

Margaret Greenwood (Wirral West) (Lab) [V]: A recovery plan for the NHS and social care is urgently needed. Almost 5 million people in England are waiting for NHS treatment, and a quarter of people with mental health problems are having to wait months to get help. NHS staff are exhausted from battling coronavirus, and there are nearly 90,000 vacancies across the NHS in England. Social care is in crisis following over a decade of savage cuts by the Conservatives, and 1.5 million older people are not receiving the social care support that they need. Care workers, many of them paid below the real living wage, have been working in extremely difficult circumstances.

However, instead of addressing these issues, the Government have come forward with a damaging White Paper that says very little on care but proposes a major reorganisation of the national health service. To do so at a time when staff are exhausted and millions are waiting for treatment is reckless and irresponsible. It is not acceptable that the Government have not carried out a consultation on their White Paper, and Ministers have failed to communicate the impact that the changes would have on patients and staff.

It beggars belief that the Secretary of State said on Monday that his proposed reforms would help to deal with the backlog. Nothing could be further from the truth. Sir David Nicholson, former chief executive of NHS England, has warned that the Government's impending shake-up of the NHS could prompt a lot of staff already exhausted by covid to quit.

The Government's damaging plans to put 42 integrated care systems across England on a statutory footing, with each ICS setting its own plan for health and social care, would embed a postcode lottery, with the health and social care services that people could access varying depending on where they live. The plans would open up the opportunity for private companies to have a say in what health and social care services are provided in an area, and the very same private companies could potentially then provide those services, representing an opportunity for huge conflicts of interest. The plans would also give the Government the power to remove a profession from regulation, with potentially serious implications for patient safety and for the employment status and terms and conditions of workers.

Professor Kailash Chand, honorary vice-president of the British Medical Association, said:

"The core thrust of the new reforms is to deprofessionalise and downskill the practice of medicine in this country, so as to make staff more interchangeable, easier to fire, more biddable, and, above all, cheaper."

The plans would also allow the discharge of vulnerable patients from hospital before they have been assessed for continuing healthcare, leaving patients at risk and families to pick up the pieces. The Government's plans would create immense uncertainty for NHS staff and open the door to widespread cronyism and increased privatisation.

On Monday, the Secretary of State told me that my party's Front Benchers welcome the reforms. He is wrong. Labour's Front Benchers have not welcomed these reforms. He really should get his facts straight. I call on the Government to pause the whole process of their reorganisation of the national health service until after all covid restrictions have been lifted and they have carried out a full public consultation, so that patients, NHS staff, care workers and unpaid carers can have their say on the proposals.

5.7 pm

Craig Whittaker (Calder Valley) (Con) [V]: I wish to put on the record my support for a robust strategy to tackle obesity, but I question plans to ban broadcasters and online platforms from advertising food and drink that are high in fat, sugar and salt before 9 pm. If the Government are going to have any form of impact, even foods that we consider to be health foods will be covered by the ban. Eggs, cheese and avocado—the list of foods that include those items is endless.

Let us take a look at the ramifications of a ban on TV commercials. I started my retail career with the Pizza Hut chain of restaurants 40 years ago, which is probably long enough ago for me not to have to declare an interest today. Before the pandemic, the UK's three biggest chains, Pizza Hut, Papa John's and Domino's, got 90% of their sales of pizza online and from apps such as Just Eat, Deliveroo and Uber Eats. That is 60,000 jobs directly at risk and tens of thousands more

in the supply chain, and that is just three companies in the UK. Do the Government seriously consider that a price worth paying?

Similarly, let us look at breakfast cereals. Under these proposals, we will ban the advertisement of some of our everyday breakfast items. The ironic thing is that over 50% of breakfast is no longer bought from a supermarket, but from cafés and greasy spoons around the nation. That immediately puts at risk major brands such as Kellogg's, which have spent millions of pounds reformulating their products to reduce fat, sugar and salt, yet under the proposals they will be banned from advertising them before 9 pm. Meanwhile, our mainstream TV companies will lose out on approximately £75 million to £100 million of advertising revenue—revenue on which tax is paid in this country.

The Sun reported in March that the Government were considering doing a U-turn on banning online adverts, as evidence showed that it would have little effect. That has instantly created a chasm between mainstream broadcasters and online platforms that contribute little to the financial wellbeing of the nation because they are offshore companies. Millions of small businesses rely on online advertising to promote their businesses in this country, including in Calder Valley. There is absolutely no evidence that the proposed blanket ban for mainstream broadcasters and online advertising would make one iota of difference to reducing obesity, and I urge the Government to rethink these draconian measures.

5.10 pm

Neale Hanvey (Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath) (Alba): I want to begin by thanking NHS colleagues from University College London Hospitals and from services all the way up to Scotland, including in my Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath constituency, for the incredibly hard shift that they have put in over the last year. The warm words of the Prime Minister telling them that he knew how hard it had been for them must be replaced by swift action.

All that the nine words in the legislative programme demonstrate is that the Government fail comprehensively to understand the interdependencies of care services, from intensive and acute care to social, palliative and end-of-life care. In his first speech as Prime Minister on 24 July 2019, the right hon. Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Boris Johnson) promised to

“fix the crisis in social care once and for all with a clear plan”.

In his 2019 manifesto, he stated that his Government would seek cross-party consensus. In January 2020, he claimed that he would

“get it done in this parliament”,

yet in October last year, the Minister for Care could not give any commitment in Parliament to the Health and Social Care Committee about action on social care.

We must face the reality of a social care system that at the start of the pandemic was underfunded, understaffed, undervalued and at risk of collapse. Any response to covid-19, however fast or comprehensive, would need to contend with that legacy of political neglect. Despite the Government's espoused commitment to improving the social care system and introducing proposals in 2021, there is nothing on how they will do so, never mind fixing the system. Integration is undoubtedly the

way forward to make the system work, but that requires funding and services that are in good order before it begins. Without social care reform, a robustly funded and continuing cancer recovery plan, as well as core funding for palliative and end-of-life care, services will continue to struggle and people will suffer.

There is an absolutely foreseeable risk. Expecting integrated care systems to find the capacity to reorganise and find end-of-life care pathways with fragile resources is recklessly putting the cart before the horse. This all matters in Scotland. As ever, we are more reliant on Barnett consequential. All the while, the UK Government find ways to squirrel money away, preventing them from triggering our share. The Alba party amendment to the Gracious Speech recognises unequivocally the recent majority for independence parties in Scotland, calling for immediate progress on independence. The fact that that sentiment has been dismissed by the UK Government comes as no surprise, but the fact that it has been neither echoed nor supported by the victors of that election will not go unnoticed at all.

5.13 pm

Dehenna Davison (Bishop Auckland) (Con) [V]: I would like to begin by congratulating my hon. Friend the Member for Aberconwy (Robin Millar) and the hon. Member for Airdrie and Shotts (Anum Qaisar-Javed) on their excellent maiden speeches. I remember all too well how daunting that is, having made my own maiden speech in the Queen's Speech NHS debate in January last year.

Since then, our NHS has had the most turbulent of times. I pay tribute to the dedicated healthcare staff in my constituency, working day and night to keep us safe from coronavirus. I pay special tribute to Dr Poornima Nair, a dedicated and well respected GP at the Station View medical centre who died with coronavirus last year. In the House, I have talked about the light at the end of the covid tunnel. Thanks to the success of the UK's vaccine roll-out, we are now beginning to see that light.

It was a UK grandmother who became the first person in the world to be given the Pfizer covid jab and, from then on, it has been onwards and upwards. The Government's early focus on securing an extensive vaccine portfolio means that over 57 million doses have been given in the UK. The pandemic has really highlighted the importance of local healthcare and, as I mentioned in my maiden speech, it is one issue that unites every corner of my constituency. That has never been more true. From Bishop Auckland Hospital caring for covid patients to local GP surgeries and pharmacies vaccinating us to get us out of this pandemic, all parts of my constituency have pulled together.

Local healthcare provision matters, and that is why I will never stop banging the drum in this place for improved health services at Bishop Auckland Hospital. I am campaigning to restore the A&E that was lost under Labour, and I am grateful to both the Health Secretary and the Minister of State for Health for meeting me to discuss the campaign. So far, the Government have invested £450 million to upgrade accident and emergency facilities in more than 120 trusts, so I know they understand how vital A&Es are to local healthcare provision, and I hope my ministerial friends will hear me clearly when I say I will continue to fight for the restoration of our A&E in Bishop Auckland.

[Dehenna Davison]

The Queen's Speech has healthcare at its heart, and I want to focus on one aspect that is close to my heart and to my politics: mental health. I have talked in the past about my own struggles around mental health. The importance of talking about it cannot be overstated. Every speech, every conversation, every time we talk about our own challenges that we have faced, we chip away at the stigma, but it is clear that talking about mental health alone is not enough. I am glad, therefore, that the Government are pushing ahead with their reform of the Mental Health Act 1983. Work is already under way on improving access to community-based mental health support, with £2.3 billion a year as part of the NHS long-term plan, but I am looking forward to seeing what further changes are proposed. The stigma around mental health needs to end, and every time we talk about it we help chip away at that stigma. Let us press ahead with improving the situation on the ground, improving mental health support and helping to ensure that no more lives are lost through poor mental health.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): Thanks, Dehenna. Sadly, we had to cut the video—we had a still of you—and the audio was not brilliant. Perhaps you could have a chat with the technicians to try to establish what the problem was.

5.16 pm

Alex Cunningham (Stockton North) (Lab): On Monday, the Health Secretary told the House that he was looking at what more he could do to invest in the NHS on Teesside. I have been making representations on this for 11 years, including in conversations with the Health Secretary. To tackle the health inequalities in my area of Teesside, Stockton needs a new hospital, so when will he make good on his word on dealing with health inequality and build the new hospital that we need—a hospital that his Government cancelled 11 years ago?

Last month, the all-party parliamentary group for longevity's report on levelling up health noted that health inequality between the north and south cost £13 billion a year in lost productivity. Indeed, even before covid-19, health inequalities in England were estimated to cost the NHS an extra £4.8 billion a year, so I was bitterly disappointed that the Queen's Speech did not contain improved funding for public health. Cancer Research UK has said:

"If the UK is to tackle inequalities and make sure no community is left behind... then health must be hardwired into the Government's 'levelling up' agenda."

Let me give the Minister a sense of the scale of the problem we face, although these figures are from before the pandemic and will now be much worse. I will begin with lung health. In England, 6.5% of the population suffer from asthma; in Stockton North, that rises to 7.4%. The level of chronic pulmonary obstructive disease among the population is 1.9%. That rises to 3.1% in Stockton North, yet we have not seen the level of progress we need to tackle the inequalities in health. In fact, we are stagnating. The Government committed in the Prevention Green Paper to making England smoke free by 2030. They are on course to fail, but they could succeed by following the advice of Action on Smoking and Health and making the polluter pay. I ask the Minister: will she?

Turning to cardiovascular health, the level of coronary heart disease in England is 3.1%, but it is 4.1% in Stockton North. In England, 14.1% of people have high blood pressure; that rises to 16.2% in Stockton North. If the Government have learnt anything in the past year, it should be about maintaining good public preventive healthcare, but instead questions remain about the future of Public Health England. On mental health, 11.5% of adults in England have been diagnosed with depression. In my constituency, the figure is 16.1%. Mental health services were overstretched before the pandemic hit and many people face waiting for years. Some do not get any treatment at all. There is no sign of that pay rise for our NHS heroes in the Queen's Speech either, and disappointingly, no sign of the long-promised blueprint for social care. It is time to address inequality in my constituency. Please Minister, give us the hospital that we need.

5.19 pm

Danny Kruger (Devizes) (Con): I have spoken to two constituents this week who have both given me permission to share their stories. The first is Lachlan Robertson, the son of Christine Robertson, who was a dementia sufferer with some additional medical needs. Mr Robertson described to me what he called "the Kafkaesque chaos" of trying to get someone—anyone—in the health and social care system to take responsibility for his mother's care. Very sadly she died last year, quite unnecessarily, after a fall that took place in hospital that should never have happened.

The second constituent is Nick Stokes, whose wife Joy died earlier this year of cancer after a litany of missteps and misdiagnoses by his GP's surgery. Mr Stokes believes his wife would still be with us if she had simply been able to see a doctor in person, rather than be fobbed off with a series of phone calls and online consultations.

These constituents give me licence to be blunt. We all—I certainly do—revere the founding principles of the NHS and honour the staff who work in it, but the fact is that the systems that manage the NHS and, in particular, its internal communications, too often let patients down, and that is why profound reform is so needed. The watchword of that reform should be the simple word "humanity". We need more human systems.

I am entirely in support of all the digital revolution that is happening. Yes to more online telemedicine, and yes to artificial intelligence and machine learning—I yield to no one except possibly the Health Secretary in my enthusiasm for technology—but all of this tech should simply have one focus, which is to enable more face-to-face consultation and better internal communication.

I particularly welcome the steps that have been set out towards more integrated care services. That is absolutely the right principle. I particularly thank the Health Secretary for the announcement that happened this very day of a new integrated care centre finally being built in Devizes after many years of campaigning. I pay tribute to Ministers and also to my predecessor, Claire Perry, who campaigned long and hard for this treatment centre. It means we can finally end the long tradition of the MP for Devizes standing in an empty field with the Health Secretary on a photoshoot pointing to the empty plot of land where this building is going to rise, because as of next month, shovels will go in the ground. We will now

get our integrated care centre, which is absolutely in keeping with the principles that the Government are setting out.

I encourage the Government to be as bold as possible in the reforms that are coming. We are no longer in the 1940s, when a great state system was created. We are not in the 1990s, when market disciplines were introduced into the NHS. We are in a new era, and we need a new NHS that is not state-led, not market-led, but properly community-led. I think that is the direction of travel that the Government are on, and I welcome it wholeheartedly.

5.22 pm

Dr Lisa Cameron (East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow) (SNP) [V]: It is a privilege to speak in this debate today. I start by congratulating those who have made their maiden speeches today and by thanking all our NHS and care staff across my constituency of East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow, including allied health professionals. They have gone the extra mile to meet the demands of the past year in relation to treating both physical and mental health.

As a psychologist, I, along with the Royal College of Psychiatrists, hope that the proposed health and social care Bill will mark a very significant step towards parity of esteem for mental health services. In December 2020, there was an 11% increase in referrals, and the UK household longitudinal study found that during the peak of covid, average mental distress was 8.1% higher than normal levels, so we cannot underestimate the potential tsunami of mental health issues that will require to be treated as a consequence of this pandemic. We also cannot forget that staff have been exposed to significant trauma and will require psychological first aid provision to ensure their wellbeing.

I remain concerned by the lack of a statutory requirement in the Government's White Paper to have mental health representatives on integrated care systems boards. I fear that failure to do so could result in mental health services being sidelined once again.

Our children have coped in their young lifetimes with one of the biggest adjustments and crises we have ever seen. We must be cognisant of their resilience but also the impact, because they have been dealing with a killer disease that they know can take away their loved ones and have had their educational and social lives turned upside down. Ensuring that the mental health concerns of children are identified, referred and treated is of paramount importance. The Royal College of Psychiatrists found that 1.5 million children are predicted to need new or extra mental health support as a result of the pandemic.

Finally, little has been said about people with disabilities. I hope I do not have to remind Government that a comprehensive reform to health and social care that ignores disabled people would not be comprehensive at all. Levelling up for people with disabilities must be at the heart of the response, and as chair of the all-party parliamentary group for disability, I once again implore Government to have a disability-inclusive covid-19 recovery plan.

5.25 pm

Elliot Colburn (Carshalton and Wallington) (Con) [V]: As a former NHS worker, I warmly welcome this Queen's Speech, which will not only deliver on our manifesto commitments on health and social care but

help our fantastic NHS and social care partners come out of the pandemic even stronger. In the last Parliament, we introduced the NHS Funding Act 2020, enshrining our unprecedented £33.9 billion investment in the NHS in law. We also got started with our commitment to build 40 new hospitals, including in Carshalton and Wallington, where over £500 million has been allocated to improve Epsom and St Helier Hospitals and to build a brand-new third local hospital in Sutton, protecting A&E and maternity services right here in our borough.

While our health and social care sectors could certainly not have been described as quiet pre-pandemic, they have been on the frontline of our pandemic response, dealing with an even greater, extraordinary demand on their services. The challenges that our health and social care sectors face as a result are stark. The NHS long-term plan had already highlighted many of the issues that existed pre-pandemic, especially around workforce and integration, but the coronavirus has also presented challenges around backlogs, including for elective surgeries and cancer treatments, and a spike in demand for mental health services, among many others.

I want to raise in particular the incredible effort throughout this pandemic of our amazing community pharmacists, who are so often left out of the conversation. They have demonstrated just how important they are, and we must reward this effort by reviewing their funding model, expanding their roles and giving them a seat at a strategic ICS level to help shape the future of healthcare delivery in their local areas.

This Queen's Speech gives further impetus to deliver on the NHS long-term plan and to address not only the challenges faced pre-pandemic but the ones exacerbated and presented by it. Chief among the forthcoming legislation is the health and care Bill, which is designed to develop a more integrated care system, with the NHS, local government and other partners coming together, improving innovation and supporting patients to receive more tailored and preventive care closer to home, not to mention the additional measures to continue the life-saving vaccine roll-out, reform social care and truly embrace the preventive agenda.

This is not about looking backwards, to get the NHS and social care back to some kind of pre-pandemic level. It is about looking to the future and giving our health and social care sectors the ability to deliver a world-class service in a post-pandemic world. By driving integration, catching up on backlogs, tackling the challenges faced before the pandemic and those that came about because of it, reforming social care, helping patients with preventable illnesses and, of course, continuing to vaccinate the nation against coronavirus, this Queen's Speech gives the NHS and social care the tools necessary to not only recover from the pandemic but deliver positive change and outcomes for patients in the years to come.

5.28 pm

Rachael Maskell (York Central) (Lab/Co-op) [V]: A house without foundations will subside. The decennial reorganisation of the NHS has neither sure foundations nor structure. It will struggle to withstand the complex health challenges raining down on it. The one chance to meet the next decade's health and care needs still awaits the foundational pillars of public health, mental wellbeing and social care White Papers. The Secretary of State's proposal for yet another mass reorganisation is structurally unsound without those vital foundations.

[*Rachael Maskell*]

With 5 million people queuing for operations and appointments, old and disabled people stripped of their money and dignity in a broken care market, mental health challenges enduring and deepening, embedded inequality and complex comorbidities, it is only the love and care of the staff that is holding the whole NHS together, while they are robbed of pay and respect and battling their own mental exhaustion.

I have four points to make. First, for years, Professor Michael Marmot has called for a focus on tackling health inequalities to improve health and wellbeing. This reorganisation will not see such a shift in health outcomes. Secondly, absent of a funding framework and with the national prescription of NHS provision ripped out of the NHS in 2012 by the coalition, the postcode lottery will entrench. In places such as York, rationing denies people vital healthcare.

Thirdly, I know that this Government hate scrutiny, but without it, wrong decisions are made and people suffer. Better accountability, not less, nationally and locally is needed. There is too much blame shift under this teflon Tory Administration. Strong governance and accountability leads to transparency and better outcomes. Fourthly, tragically, this past year has seen the most vulnerable exposed to the greatest risks. Of the 128,000 who have died, a third were in care homes, many alone.

Since 2010, this Government's annual pronouncements of imminent social care White Papers have been worn like the emperor's new clothes, laying the Government bare with no resolve. Unless there is a fully integrated public health and care service free at the point of need, we will never build the caring and compassionate society that we need.

The Government's proposals drive the market through the centre of our NHS. While stripping out section 75 regulations is a must, their purchaser-provider approach conflicts with the planned collaboration necessary to fix the scale of challenge. These reforms provide neither remedy nor cure. There are no foundations, no strong structure. The Minister needs to go back to his architect—in my book, it should be the Labour architect of our NHS—and redraw his plans.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton): Order. There have been some withdrawals from colleagues wishing to speak, so I will put the time limit back up to four minutes.

5.31 pm

Suzanne Webb (Stourbridge) (Con): It is an absolute pleasure to be called to speak in support of the Queen's Speech today, especially as I have an extra minute in which to speak.

As the Prime Minister has launched his own agenda of levelling up and building back better and the Queen's Speech endorses that, I, too, am launching my own levelling-up agenda in my Stourbridge constituency, focusing on regeneration, growth and protection—the protection of my green belt, the regeneration of a town called Lye and growth in terms of jobs. I shall bridge that skills gap beautifully by working with Andy Street, the newly elected Mayor of the west midlands.

First, let me pay tribute to all those who work in the NHS in my Stourbridge constituency. They have gone above and beyond, and we owe them a debt of gratitude. Those on the Opposition Benches paint a picture of the NHS as a crumbling façade held together with sticky plasters, bandages and a bit of surgical glue. Instead, I see a picture of talent and dedication, an NHS that has stood the test of time since its inception and, indeed, through this pandemic. It is an NHS that is leading the way: one that has been truly transformational in adapting to a pandemic; one that is centre stage of the Government's levelling-up agenda, with the ambitious plan to protect the health of the nation by continuing the vaccination programme and bringing forward legislation to empower the NHS to innovate and embrace technology.

I am always troubled when I hear emotionally charged words such as “a rescue plan for the NHS”. I suggest that it is neither I nor the NHS that needs a rescue plan as a priority. I am not blind to the pressures on the NHS; it is under significant financial pressure. Equally, I am not blind to the fact that it is this Government who have delivered the biggest cash boost in history for the NHS, enshrining it in law and safeguarding it for future generations by investing an additional £33.9 billion in frontline service every year by 2024—that is right, every year. It is the largest and longest funding settlement in the history of the NHS.

I particularly welcome the introduction of the health and care Bill, focusing on delivering better health outcomes for my constituents, making healthier choices easier, focusing on the preventative, and taking action to tackle the growing concern of obesity. I welcome the ban on junk food adverts on television before the 9pm watershed. Our relationship with food must change, and I know that mine must, too.

I strongly believe that every child should have the best start in life, and that includes their physical and mental health. Physical education in schools should not be a painful endurance once a week, but understood to be something more fundamental—upholding our physical wellbeing, keeping our hearts strong and healthy. The worst we can do with mental health is to ignore it, and I particularly welcome the boost to mental health funding of at least £2.3 billion.

I have a tiny bit of extra time, so I shall briefly mention social care reform. I very much welcome the Government's confirmation that they will bring forward their plans for social care reform this year. My one ask is this: we must look for mechanisms to protect taxpayers' hard-earned money, and look to increase the threshold for paying for social care to above £100,000.

The Queen's Speech is more than a mirage and more than the emperor's new clothes, as described by others. It makes a commitment to the next generation, and a clear commitment to our NHS, to our social care system, to my constituents, to their values and to all they have entrusted in this Government.

5.35 pm

Richard Burgon (Leeds East) (Lab): As we have heard today, the Government's continued inaction on social care is failing families across the country. We need a social care system based on the principles of our national health service—free at the point of use and funded by everyone, based on their ability to pay. Sadly, that is not

the only damning omission in the Government's legislative agenda. The tax system in this country is rigged in the interests of the super-rich. The Government know that, the public know that, but there is nothing in the Queen's Speech to fix that. The Government should be introducing measures to make the super-rich and big corporations finally pay their fair share, but that would mean taking on the super-rich funders of the Conservative party, and we know that they will not do that.

This crisis has shone the spotlight on the deep and deadly inequalities in our society, but while 4.3 million children are in poverty, and while food bank usage soars, some have had a good crisis—a very good crisis indeed. The number of UK billionaires has not only soared; their collective wealth has increased by over £40 billion in the last year alone. That tells you everything you need to know about whose interests our economic system is set up to serve.

There is massive public support for increased taxes on the super-rich and on big business, but this Government just refuse to take on the wealthy and the powerful. So I tabled amendment (f), with cross-party support, calling for changes to our tax system to make the wealthy pay—first, to introduce a windfall tax on companies such as Amazon that have made super-profits during this pandemic. Secondly, to introduce a wealth tax on the super-rich, so that they are not grabbing a greater and greater share as millions fall further and further behind. Thirdly, to increase tax rates so that those on over £125,000 a year—the top 1%—pay a fairer share. It really is time to break with the failed trickle-down mantra, which has been used for decades to justify deepening and grotesque inequality. A fairer tax system is how we start to build a fairer society.

If the Conservatives actually wanted to help working-class communities level up—if they wanted to move from rhetoric to reality—they would actually be doing those things. The fact that they are not tells you everything you need to know about who this Government truly represent.

5.38 pm

James Wild (North West Norfolk) (Con): Thank you for calling me, Madam Deputy Speaker. I made my maiden speech in the previous Queen's Speech debate on health, when you were also in the Chair, so it is a pleasure to speak in this one.

I welcome the commitment to bring forward proposals on social care reform. Covid has emphasised the long-standing issues facing the sector, and in our recent report, the Public Accounts Committee highlighted that among the challenges to be addressed are funding, workforce and the future accommodation model. Importantly, the plan needs to focus on younger adults with learning and physical disabilities and mental health issues, as well, of course, as elderly people. It should also support the essential role that unpaid carers, such as those I have met in North West Norfolk, play in looking after their family and friends.

As well as tackling social care, the Queen's Speech pledges to increase investment in the NHS, and my constituents are particularly focused on the new hospital building programme. As one of the best buy hospitals, Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King's Lynn was built with a life expectancy of 30 years. Now in its 41st year, QEH is in need of urgent modernisation due to major structural

issues with concrete planks in the roof. The Standing Committee on Structural Safety first issued an alert regarding these rack planks two years ago. Currently there are 194 props across 43 areas of the hospital supporting the roof. The trust's risk register has a red rating for

“a direct risk to life and safety of patients, visitors and staff due to the potential of catastrophic failure of the roof structure due to structural deficiencies.”

Aside from the safety concerns that the trust is managing, the props create a poor experience for the patients and hard-working staff in the hospital.

I welcome the recognition of the seriousness of the situation by the Secretary of State and my hon. Friend the Minister, and the £20 million of new funding that QEH has received this year will help to deal with the most immediate issues. However, the need is greater, and this is literally money to prop up the roof. As the Secretary of State said last week,

“you get to a point with a piece of infrastructure where continuing to just keep propping it up gets to the end of its usefulness and you need something completely new.”

I agree, and we have reached that point with QEH. The trust estimates that it will cost £550 million over the next decade just to manage the risks, not to improve the situation. In contrast, it has developed a strong case for investment to transform the hospital to meet modern healthcare requirements, deliver healthier lives, and harness innovation and technology, and all at far better value for money.

Other best buy hospitals are on the list of new hospitals, and QEH has a compelling case to be one of the eight additional schemes that the Prime Minister has committed to. I will be grateful if my hon. Friend the Minister can update the House on when the selection criteria for those schemes will be issued. I reiterate the invitation to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to come to QEH to see the situation for himself. The need is obvious. Patients and 4,000 members of staff need a hospital that is fit for purpose. Thousands of people locally have signed a petition in support, local council leaders are supportive, and with significant housing growth planned in the area, demand for healthcare is only going to increase. I therefore urge the Government to back our bid to deliver the hospital that patients and staff deserve.

5.42 pm

Taiwo Owatemi (Coventry North West) (Lab) [V]: I start by thanking the NHS and all the staff at University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire for all the incredible hard work that they have done over the past year.

I would like to highlight one of my constituents' most pressing topics of concern, which is the need to rebuild our NHS and reform social care. Everyone in Britain has the right to be kept in good health and cared for from cradle to grave. It saddens me, therefore, that far too little is being done to fulfil that promise and that our NHS staff are paying the price for the failures of those in government. With children's mental health referrals increasing by a third last year alone, over 1 million patients waiting more than six months to start treatment, and 370,000 suspected cancer cases that have gone unseen by specialists, now is the time for an NHS rescue plan.

[*Taiwo Owatemi*]

The pandemic has exposed the issues that 10 years of austerity created for the NHS. Unable to paper over the cracks any longer, we can now see how badly the Government prepared our health system for this crisis. The NHS is not failing; it is just being failed. Even before the pandemic struck, we were short of 40,000 nurses and 7,000 doctors in all settings, and the number of community nurses, health visitors and mental healthcare specialists had all been cut between 2010 and 2020—a conscious choice made by this Government to run down the services that we all rely on. That is why we need bolder remedies than the weak response proposed by the Government. Embarrassed by the crisis that their cuts caused, they are short on ideas and even shorter on answers.

Nowhere is this clearer than in social care. Each and every year, we have been promised far-reaching reforms, and every year this Government have proved to be an abject disappointment. One and a half million people have unmet care needs in Britain today. We cannot fix the NHS without fixing social care too, yet the Government have so far been woefully unable to fill the over 110,000 vacancies open in the sector. The care system's problems run from top to bottom. Carers are paid low wages on zero-hours contracts that rarely provide them with the time or resources to offer the comprehensive, high-quality care that they themselves want to give.

Funding, too, is in a state of acute crisis. The Government's cowardly choice to pass the brunt of austerity on to local councils has stripped £8 billion from care budgets over the last decade. Millions of older people now fear that they will lose everything they own—everything they have worked for their entire lives—simply to afford the most basic care in their last years.

With 2,000 people with learning disabilities trapped in unsuitable care settings and a lack of beds accounted for by fully one third of patients stuck in hospitals waiting to be discharged, now is the time for wholesale reform. We have a duty to make the “new normal” better than what came before. The NHS needs its funding restored and its vacancies filled. The backlog of operations, referrals and appointments must be cleared. Our care system, left in the lurch for so long, must finally be reformed to meet the standards we expect, with better paid, better trained staff, who have the time to care for those in their charge.

In closing, I will say this. The Government are eager to claim the NHS's successes as their own, but we should thank instead the thousands of healthcare workers who have done more than ever before to keep the system going. They gave us their all. Who are we to do any less in return?

5.46 pm

Ben Bradley (Mansfield) (Con): I rise to welcome the measures in the Queen's Speech, particularly on skills—legislation to back up our White Paper on adult learning; retraining to help people move across sectors; funding for that learning; and better career paths for people into work. Those are particularly important in the wake of covid and vital to our levelling-up agenda. If we are going to make a long-term impact, capital investment is all well and good, but education is the key to long-term levelling up.

There is a strong expectation among my constituents that we will deliver on immigration, and I welcome that commitment in the Queen's Speech. There is a strong theme on levelling up and what it means throughout the Queen's Speech. The east midlands is consistently at the bottom of the charts when it comes to Government and private sector investment, so I would argue that it is most clearly in need of levelling up. I would welcome conversations with any and all Ministers about setting out a clear vision for that.

It is my belief that there is a handful of key decisions—about HS2, devolution, our freeport and our development corporation—that are fundamental to our long-term progress in the east midlands. We cannot afford to let our region down. Given his Leicestershire constituency, the Minister will appreciate the importance of support for the east midlands.

The theme today is health and social care. I have a number of points to make in a short time. First, I am pleased to see Government plans to make progress on social care reform in this Session. I welcome the elements of that in the Queen's Speech—we know that such reform is long overdue. Although ad hoc grants to support local authorities in the delivery of social care have been welcome, they are not a long-term solution. We need certainty on this issue. Will the Minister give us some time scales, if he has them, for ideas and proposals coming forward?

Secondly, I would welcome some clarity on prevention in the health and care Bill. Perhaps, in truth, we could look again at some of these priorities. I have raised concerns about the obesity strategy a number of times and there are proposals that, in my view, verge on meddling in people's freedom and choice. Over the past 18 months, we have seen that our public health functions have a huge amount to do to ensure their preparedness for major health issues. We should focus on that, rather than limiting people's choices in shops, pricing people out of items or banning adverts, which has dubious impacts, if any. Let us support people with information and facilities to encourage healthy lifestyles and exercise; banning two-for-one Mars bars will not have the impact that we would hope for.

The Bill is set to look at a more integrated system of care between the NHS and local authorities. I make a plea to the Minister—I have spoken to him about this already—to start on the right foot by confirming our county's integrated care boundaries and fixing those to the county boundary in Nottinghamshire. That will allow us to deliver more efficient and effective primary care, and I know that that is in line with Government priorities. Unblocking the gateway in primary care is absolutely vital to offering a better experience to residents. We can make a big impact with an early and good Government decision.

The Government can be proud of the record levels of support and investment in our health service. We need to use this opportunity now to ensure that funding is put to good use, with the most efficient and effective service delivery to residents. Let us not waste it on meddlesome interventions into eating habits; instead, let us look at direct support to improve healthy lifestyles for those who need it. Let us encourage activity, educate and improve access to community-based services, which are key to tackling our health inequalities and are therefore a big part of levelling up life chances.

There is a huge amount to welcome in the Queen's Speech, and I have not even touched the surface in just four minutes, but I very much welcome the proposals and look forward to supporting the Government in delivering them during this Session.

5.49 pm

Paul Bristow (Peterborough) (Con): It is a pleasure to speak in this debate, and I refer Members' attention to my entry in the Register of Members' Financial Interests. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who work in our NHS and social care system in Peterborough. Both of my parents were nurses in Peterborough's NHS, so I know first hand about how much the NHS means to the people of Peterborough.

Yesterday, the Health and Social Care Committee took evidence from Jonathan Freeman. Sadly, his mother Gillian died in January, after suffering for many years with dementia. His answers to my questions were powerful and worrying. The death of a parent is upsetting in any circumstances. Unfortunately, it was made far worse because of the difficulty in securing the right care for Gillian, or in fact any financial support. It took Mr Freeman two years to persuade her GP that there was a problem. When advanced dementia was properly diagnosed, he got his mother into a care home. That care home made mistakes and lacked the support for her dementia. He had to move her again. This new home was much better. It encouraged him to apply for funded nursing care to meet his mother's needs. Years of savings were being rapidly depleted. A month of rental income from her house was paying for less than a week of her care.

To get the assessment, Mr Freeman told me:

"You would not believe how much nagging"

was needed and the "delays we had", but he got there, and he was told his mother qualified. The assessor even told him that her funding would be backdated. The assessor left, six months passed and he pushed for answers. The assessor had registered the claim on the computer, but never filed the paperwork. He was assured it would be sorted out, but instead the clinical commissioning group secretly commissioned a peer-led review of the assessment. Someone who had never met his mother concluded she should get nothing.

"They would not tell me the reasons"

for that, he told me.

"They did not even tell me there was that panel".

He appealed. They refused. No reasons were given.

Mr Freeman told me that

"I was a senior civil servant. I understand bureaucracies, but this was Kafkaesque."

Gillian's illness progressed. He did not want to go through that ridiculous process again, at least until he was certain it would succeed. By that stage, she was immobile and unable to eat by herself or even communicate. So he applied, and after further delay, everyone agreed with all of the assessments, apart from one—mobility. The CCG's assessor argued that the wrong hoist had been used, but assured him that this would not be used as an excuse not to fund, but it was. He appealed. They refused, and again no reasons were given.

Mr Freeman had to sell his mother's house to pay for her care. She was denied access to a continuing healthcare package despite the clear view of three expert assessors, and she died without receiving a penny. It was very clear to him that the CCG seized

"any possible excuse not to provide mum with the financial support that was her right".

The CCG does not even monitor its performance for meeting the statutory criteria for appeals. It took an FOI request for the CCG to admit it.

The Queen's Speech committed the Government to bringing forward proposals to reform social care, and we have heard scepticism today about that, but this Government deserve credit for making that promise, and there is no question—no question at all—but that reform is long overdue.

5.53 pm

Jonathan Edwards (Carmarthen East and Dinefwr) (Ind): It is a pleasure to speak in this debate, and to be back here in the Chamber.

The conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age all impact on our health, which means that wealth inequalities and health inequalities are inextricably linked. Even before the pandemic, avoidable deaths were twice as likely in poorer parts of Wales compared with more affluent parts of the state. This growing link between poverty and poor health outcomes has been exacerbated by covid-19. Poverty reduction, therefore, must be at the heart of tackling health inequalities not just in Wales, but across the British state.

Yet for all the talk of levelling up, this Queen's Speech, sadly, is devoid of genuine solutions. Levelling up is clearly an easy slogan for Ministers to use, but what exactly does it mean? Does it mean tackling the long-standing regional wealth disparities within the British state? If so, where is the detail about how meaningful change will be delivered?

There was a damning report this week by the Resolution Foundation and the London School of Economics, which indicated that the UK was facing decades of prolonged stagnation by the end of this decade—by the end of the 2020s—because of the failure of the British Government to come up with a policy solution for the major challenges we face: covid recovery; the challenges posed by Brexit, the green transition and decarbonising the economy; automation and all the challenges that will bring, with the loss of jobs in the economy; and of course the demographic changes and challenges of an ageing population that we are all too aware of. The authors of the report said this week in the newspapers that the Queen's Speech failed to grapple with any of those major challenges. "Levelling up" is the new "rebalancing" of the Cameron-Osborne era—slogans without detail.

Glaringly missing also from the Gracious Speech was a new Act of Union to reconfigure the British state for the post-Brexit age. Even Unionists in the Welsh Government recognise the need for urgent change and are advocating home rule for Wales. Their problem, of course, is that nothing they advocate is deliverable because of the implosion of the Labour party in Scotland and England. This means that the structures they envisage can only be introduced by a Tory British Government here in Westminster who are hell-bent on a strategy of aggressive Unionism. I know that some on both sides of

[Jonathan Edwards]

the House dismiss talk of constitutional matters as a luxury in the context of the deep-rooted social inequalities we face, but they are essential. The truth is that the British state has fundamentally failed to ensure that a sizeable chunk of the population have sufficient income to be healthy. If this place cannot reform, as I suspect is the case, then it is inevitable that more will flock to the banners of YesCymru.

Before I bring my remarks to a close, I would like to touch briefly on another element missing from the Queen's Speech: support for those who have lost loved ones. The British Government have established a commission on covid commemoration. Having laid a heart on the memorial wall on the opposite side of the river earlier today to my great friend Les Thomas, I do not seek to undermine the value of creating spaces for remembering and coming together. However, if we truly want to build a society that deals with grief compassionately, the UK Government must introduce paid bereavement leave and paid miscarriage leave. Losing a loved one can be one of the most difficult and painful challenges that anyone will face in their lifetime. No employee should have to worry about keeping a roof over their head or food on the table when they are dealing with grief. Being pushed to return to work before they are ready can have a devastating impact on a person's mental and physical health. Currently, the British Government place the responsibility of supporting employees on to employers and hope they will all be sympathetic. The reality, however, is that not all are.

5.58 pm

Shaun Bailey (West Bromwich West) (Con): I start by congratulating the hon. Member for Airdrie and Shotts (Anum Qaisar-Javed) and by saying llongyfarchiadau mawr—massive congratulations—to my hon. Friend the Member for Aberconwy (Robin Millar). This has been an interesting debate. I have been here pretty much from the start, and it has been great to hear the breadth of the contributions we have heard today.

I rise in support of the Queen's Speech, but before I talk specifically about our health service and the NHS I want to talk about fundamental principles. What we saw in the communities I represent in Wednesbury, Oldbury and Tipton two weeks ago is that they back those principles. There are now nine Conservative councillors on Sandwell Council, the first elected in 10 years, which is proof that my communities in Wednesbury, Oldbury and Tipton are endorsing them. Indeed, in Tipton itself, my new adopted home, two out of the three seats are now held by Conservative councillors. I found it quite interesting that the Sandwell Labour group is now bringing in mentors for their councillors to teach them how to do things such as case work. To save a bit of time and money, I would just say that our group is happy to do that and give members of the Sandwell Labour group a bit of a hand if they need it.

This is a really important debate. I pay tribute to the fantastic NHS staff in my communities, to the people at Tipton Sports Academy who have been volunteering with mass vaccination for nearly three months now—I had the honour of volunteering there myself—and to the people at Portway Lifestyle Centre who have also been providing vaccinations.

When we talk about the breadth of the services we offer, social care is fundamental. In my communities, we estimate that roughly 16,000 people provide care in some form or other. It is vital that we get this right. I sit on the Public Accounts Committee alongside my hon. Friend the Member for North West Norfolk (James Wild); I will not go back over the challenges that he highlighted, because he has probably articulated them better than I could, but we have to solve them because they are ever present. I know from our conversations that my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Treasury Bench are aware of them, but now we must find solutions. I pay real tribute to the Sandwell Young Carers, who are truly inspirational in the work that they are doing—they are stepping up.

When we debate adult social care, we have to remember the role of the third sector, because it is quite often overlooked. I have had a lot of conversations with the third sector in Sandwell about adult social care, particularly in preparation for our Committee's inquiry, and it sees the challenges articulated by my hon. Friend—they are absolutely the same for the third sector, the private sector and the public sector.

I want to focus today on primary care because it has been so prevalent an issue in my communities. I welcome the £1.5 billion that the Government rightly intend to place in primary care, but the key thing for my communities is being able to see a GP. Don't get me wrong: the investment from the Government has been great—people are excited for the Midland Metropolitan Hospital to come online next year, and it is great to see it come through—but in my communities, particularly in areas such as Oakham in Tividale, people are struggling to see their GP. I have been inundated with correspondence on how we need to ensure that primary care investment works in the right way. I implore my hon. Friend the Minister to look into that. The investment is absolutely there, which is great to see; it is just about making sure that the delivery works.

Finally, may I pick up on a point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Devizes (Danny Kruger)? He was absolutely right that technology is great, but we will never eliminate the need for face-to-face appointments. There are people in my community who are digitally disconnected. They will not be able to have online appointments, so we have to ensure as we move forward that the balance is right.

6.2 pm

Mike Amesbury (Weaver Vale) (Lab): I would like to correct the record. I heard a number of Conservative Members repeating a statement that the Prime Minister has made on numerous occasions, being somewhat economical with the truth when it comes to the so-called record levels of investment in the NHS. I double-checked on Fact Check during the debate: actually, the largest increase to NHS spending was between 2004 and 2010, and hey—it was by a Labour Government. That was £24 billion. Those are the facts—check on Fact Check. That is not being economical with the truth; it is the truth, so please check that. I correct the record.

It is also a fact that today Jenny McGee, one of the nurses who looked after the Prime Minister when he was incredibly ill with covid—he praised her for her care—has resigned, stating that she was concerned, as were all her colleagues, about the lack of leadership and

direction in the covid crisis. She felt unappreciated, beyond the clapping—I take our minds back to the Thursdays—in terms of pay and working conditions. That is a fact; that is the truth.

I will turn now to things that were missing from the Queen's Speech. It is also a fact that yesterday, while Labour Front Benchers were preparing to highlight the ongoing nightmare of the building safety crisis, I got a call from a local councillor informing me that the roof of part of a building at Northwich station in my constituency of Weaver Vale had collapsed. It was a miracle that nobody was killed or seriously hurt. The emergency services quickly stepped into action. Northern and Network Rail started the hokey-cokey of taking responsibility for making the area safe and eventually reopening the line. An investigation will take place, and I can say with confidence that part of the answer lies in the lack of investment on that line and infrastructure over the last decade—investment that I and other parliamentarians have called for. There has been no leadership, no direction and no investment. Nothing in the Queen's Speech spoke to my constituents to reassure them that that decade of failure would be put right.

If someone who is disabled is on that line in my constituency, they cannot even travel in one direction. Just after Christmas, in the midst of the pandemic, Northwich again had a major flooding incident—the second one in as many years. Indeed, the good people of Acton Bridge, local schools, businesses and residents felt the brunt of it. Elderly residents were evacuated. In all fairness to the Environment Secretary, he came along and paid a personal visit, but when I pressed him for support and investment in our creaking infrastructure, my words fell on deaf ears.

I am going to set Ministers a challenge to respond to calls from my constituents who want first-rate, affordable transport and stations that do not fall down. They want investment in modern drainage systems, and, let us have a new hospital for Halton, Minister.

6.6 pm

Darren Henry (Broxtowe) (Con) [V]: I start my short remarks by thanking all NHS and care workers in my Broxtowe constituency for the work that they have done over the past year. There is much to welcome in the Queen's Speech that will begin to help all areas of the UK to recover from the devastating impact of the pandemic. I welcome the Government's plans to deliver the health and care Bill, which will put in place better integrated care between the NHS, local government and other partners. The Minister will be aware that any comprehensive health service must focus on mental health as well as physical, so I would like to focus my remarks on that issue.

Mental health affects all corners of our society and has, for far too long, been overlooked as a priority, which is why I am proud that the Government are ensuring that mental health is at the top of the agenda. The Office for National Statistics has shown that, during the pandemic, mental health has worsened across every age group in the UK, and the number of individuals showing symptoms of depression has doubled. The announcement to boost mental health funding by at least £2.3 billion over the course of this Parliament, as well as transforming mental health services and supporting more people in our communities, is very welcome.

Recently, I wrote to the Government to offer my thoughts on the Mental Health Act White Paper. The Government announced landmark reforms to the Mental Health Act to give people greater control over their treatment, ensuring that it is fit for the 21st century and delivering on a key manifesto commitment. The White Paper details an increase in community support. I would welcome a detailed outline of what this expansion of community support will look like at all levels, when it can be expected and how it will be implemented across the country to ensure that all areas of the UK have the same levels of support in place.

I welcome these much needed changes, and I am particularly pleased to see recommendations to ensure that mental illness is the reason for detention under the Act and that neither autism nor learning disability is grounds for detention. I met a number of Broxtowe residents to consider the issues surrounding autism and mental health, and there is a clear need for further support. While speaking to constituents, I have come to understand that a lack of community resources is often the largest barrier to those with autism and learning difficulties returning to their communities after being in in-patient facilities. I would appreciate a commitment to evaluate and improve services in place across the UK to ensure that that support is available. I welcome the Bills outlined in the Queen's Speech and I look forward to seeing the Government continue to prioritise our nation's mental health.

6.10 pm

Fleur Anderson (Putney) (Lab): Once again, despite big promises, we have a Queen's Speech that just tinkers around the edges. It falls short of what we need for the country and what is needed for my constituents in Putney.

You may be surprised to know, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the volunteers at Putney Scrub Hub are still working flat out to provide much-needed scrubs for hospitals across London and beyond. Covid exposed the urgent need for a national uniform to save millions of pounds and provide our healthcare workers with the uniform they need at the right place and the right time. Instead, there is a fragmented system—a fragmented bureaucracy—that could not scale up at the speed needed. We do not pay our healthcare and care workers enough—clapping is not enough—and the very least that we can give them is the right uniform. Ministers did not step up at any stage to recognise the problem, take it on and solve it. That has still not happened. I welcome the consultation on a national uniform, such as they have in Wales. I hope that the measure will go through in the next year.

One of the biggest issues for my constituents in Putney is social care. On his first day in Downing Street, the Prime Minister promised to fix social care “once and for all”. Twenty-two months later, we have seen nothing. It has not been kicked into the long grass—it never left the long grass. This morning, the Prime Minister again said that there was a plan, but where is it? This afternoon, the Secretary of State made a passing comment in his speech at the beginning of the debate, saying that it would be brought forward this year—but, again, no plan.

Since the Prime Minister's first day in office, dementia victims and their families have paid a staggering £14 billion for social care. The Prime Minister and the Government have let down every single one of those families, including

[*Fleur Anderson*]

many families in Putney. Even before the pandemic, there were 1,628 older people in Putney with unmet social care needs. That translates to 1.5 million people across the country. Adult social-care council budgets have been cut, and it is no surprise that 69% of the public believe that fixing adult social care should be a top priority as we recover from the pandemic.

We need a national social care system that is joined up with the NHS, and we need the much-promised dementia moonshot. Without life-changing treatments, the number of people with dementia is set to grow to 1 million in the next five years. No more empty promises; no more leaving families struggling and despairing. We need a clear, budgeted plan for social care reform, complete with milestones, with reform this year, 2021—not next year, not on the never-never. The reforms must improve access to care and quality of care, and provide better working conditions for care workers, with services joined up between the NHS, social care providers and community providers. I urge the Government to listen to the public and come good on their promises to fix adult social care at last so that we can all recover from the pandemic.

6.13 pm

Peter Gibson (Darlington) (Con) [V]: It is a privilege to be called to speak in today's debate and to support Her Majesty's Gracious Address, which sets out a bold, ambitious plan to truly unite and level up every region of our United Kingdom more than a year after the 2019 general election, in which the Conservative party recorded its highest vote share and returned Members of Parliament for parts of the country that had either never elected a Conservative or had not done so for a generation.

The Gracious Address sets out how we will recover from the pandemic, supporting our economy and addressing the legacy of covid-19 by improving the health of the nation.

Just two weeks ago, the people of Hartlepool added another blue brick in our blue wall. Another great northern town with a proud history has seen the merit of electing a Conservative MP. That was undeniably a vote of confidence in this Prime Minister and his mission to bring about opportunity across our country and turbocharge our recovery from the effects of the pandemic.

In Darlington, a Conservative MP, a Conservative-led council and a Conservative Mayor—the re-elected Ben Houchen—are working together. It is that collective resolve that has seen a phenomenal level of investment in the short time since I was elected to this House. I can report that this Government's investment is already seeing the unlocking of private sector investment in Darlington.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor, in choosing Darlington for his northern Treasury, has unlocked a steady stream of other Cabinet Ministers heading north from King's Cross, bringing more jobs to Darlington. Those include the Secretary of State for International Trade and, only yesterday, the announcement by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy of 100 more jobs. We have seen £105 million invested in Darlington station, £23.3 million from the towns fund and, through the pandemic, millions of pounds to help our council respond and to support our businesses. I look forward to the future opportunities that the levelling-up fund will bring.

That investment is being matched by a firm commitment to continue to improve the health of the nation, investing in our NHS, delivering more nurses and bringing about comprehensive reforms for our social care sector. I welcome the Government's commitment to introduce a health and care Bill that will deliver an integrated care system, ensure that NHS England remains accountable to taxpayers, tackle the growing problem of obesity and put the Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch on a statutory footing. The Government have committed to bringing forward proposals to reform adult social care, delivering an improved care system that provides the dignity and security that people deserve, as well as embarking on long overdue reform of the Mental Health Act 1983.

While the Opposition continue to focus on their internal strife, this Conservative Government continue to deliver on the people's priorities. This Queen's Speech delivers on those priorities, and I am pleased to support it.

6.17 pm

Claudia Webbe (Leicester East) (Ind) [V]: The legislative programme outlined in the Queen's Speech lacks the ambition, depth and understanding needed to address the many health, poverty and social inequalities facing the residents, communities and families of Leicester East.

There is nothing in this legislative programme to save Leicester General Hospital from being downgraded. Our NHS staff and care workers are exhausted and there are nearly 5 million people in the UK waiting for NHS treatment. Rather than investing in our NHS, the proposals actually cut services, including hard-working staff. NHS staff and social care workers deserve much more support than they are currently getting, including a 15% pay rise instead of the insulting 1% real-terms pay cut offered to nurses.

We should all be very worried about the new powers granted to the Health and Social Care Secretary to accelerate the privatisation of our NHS. The Government want more profit and less care. I urge them, rather than downgrading Leicester General Hospital, selling off its land and extending NHS privatisation, to reverse their strategy and properly fund all hospitals in Leicester and across the UK.

On planning, the Government want to give more powers to property speculators and developers while delivering less genuinely affordable housing. The Royal Institute of British Architects has already warned that the Government's plans could lead to

“the next generation of slum housing”.

On overcrowding, there are pockets of my constituency close to Leicester General Hospital where populations of 2,000 live in areas of 60,000 square meters. Hon. Members may not know what that equates to. It means that each person has an average of 32 square metres of space, which is equivalent to a box bedroom. The UK average is 3,676 square metres of space per person, more than 100 times the space afforded some people living in Leicester East. There is nothing in the Government's legislative programme to address that stark inequality or to provide the health services that such overcrowded populations need. Rather than making it harder to build homes fit for working families, the Government must properly fund local authorities such as Leicester

City Council and rapidly increase the construction of council housing and genuinely affordable family-sized homes.

On jobs and tackling poverty, I was proud to join the picket line in solidarity with workers at SPS Technologies in Barkby Road, in Leicester East, who bravely took strike action, with Unite the union, against their employer's appalling fire and rehire employment practices. Well, we won. This form of solidarity will now be needed across the country, because the Government have failed to outlaw these exploitative practices.

Endemic wage exploitation in Leicester's garment industry continues apace, with workers still being paid as little as £3 per hour, while the retail brands make super-profits, profiting with impunity from the exploitative sweatshop labour of workers in Leicester and worldwide. Factories compete to supply at the lowest price possible, and 60% of garments end up in landfill within a year. In addition to strengthening powers of the unions, collective bargaining power and workers' rights, we need a garment trading adjudicator, similar to the Groceries Code Adjudicator, to ensure that payment terms for suppliers are fair, that wages are paid at a legal rate and that employment is secure. We need a more sustainable and ethical fashion industry and an end to zero-hours contracts and throwaway fashion.

The wellbeing of our entire planet and our health relies on our using the post-pandemic recovery to mitigate the existential threat of climate change with a radical green new deal to rebuild the country in the interests of people and planet.

6.22 pm

Peter Grant (Glenrothes) (SNP) [V]: May I associate myself with the remarks of Members who have once again reminded us just how much we all owe, even in normal times, the health and social care workers across these islands, and how much more we are in their debt for their work over the past 14 months? May I also take this opportunity to congratulate my good friend and colleague Humza Yousaf on his appointment today as Scotland's Health Secretary, and indeed to congratulate all those who have been appointed to the re-elected Scottish National party Government? May I also congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Airdrie and Shotts (Anum Qaisar-Javed) on an outstanding maiden speech? Although I am now an adopted Fifer, I was brought up less than 200 yards from her constituency boundary and she now represents a significant number of my relatives, although not nearly enough to account entirely for her magnificent majority last Thursday.

There should be no argument over the fundamental principle that care services need to be much better integrated and co-ordinated. There may be arguments about how we achieve that—there have certainly been arguments in Scotland, where we are quite a bit further forward in the process—but if it is done properly, it can have a huge and positive impact on the lives of millions of people. I understand the concerns that have been raised in a number of quarters about the changes that the Government are proposing, and it has to be said that nearly all of those concerns boil down to one simple problem: people do not trust this Government. They do not think the NHS and the social care sector are safe in this Government's hands, and I do not blame them. A

Government who still refuse to legislate to prevent the back-door privatisation of services as the price of a trade deal with the USA, who refuse to pay health and social care workers anywhere near what they are worth, and who insist on treating immigrant workers as if they were a necessary evil, rather than a valued and welcome part of our society, are always going to struggle to make anyone believe that they really care about our care services.

If the Government think that is an unfair description and want to change that perception, may I suggest a few things they could do? They could outlaw extortionate parking charges at NHS hospitals. They could abolish prescription charges. They could commit to abolishing all charges for non-residential personal care. They could commit to abolishing charges for NHS dentistry. They could commit to a proper living wage of at least £9.30 per hour for all social care staff. They could commit to providing 76 GPs per 100,000 of population, rather than the 60 they currently provide. All of that and much more is already being delivered or has been committed to by the SNP Government in Scotland. All of it is deliverable and affordable in England right now. The only thing that Scotland has that England does not is a Government who care.

On 6 May, the SNP Scottish Government were re-elected for an unprecedented fourth consecutive term of office, receiving more votes than any party has ever received in a Scottish parliamentary election, and a higher share of the vote than the Conservative party has achieved in any UK general election during the 60-plus years that I have been alive. The people of Scotland have insisted at the ballot box that decisions about our NHS and care services are taken by a Parliament of our choosing. They have also made it abundantly clear that now is the time to give the people of Scotland the right to choose whether that Parliament of ours is once again given the full powers of a sovereign, independent nation.

6.25 pm

Mary Kelly Foy (City of Durham) (Lab) [V]: I must admit that I greatly enjoyed the Health Secretary appearing to argue that our health and care sectors need to recover after a decade of Tory government—I could not agree more. The covid-19 pandemic has served to expose the damage done by Tory austerity and privatisation to our NHS and social care sectors. They are understaffed and underfunded, while existing staff are overworked and underpaid. However, unlike the Health Secretary, I do not think that further privatisation is the answer, even if he and his pals are already drooling at the thought of selling off the NHS to every Tom, Dick and Tory donor.

It is clear that our health and social care sectors are in crisis. Before the pandemic, there were over 100,000 NHS vacancies, while a quarter of staff were more likely to leave than in the year before. The Government's plan to address that is to give NHS staff another real-terms pay cut. Added to that, there are an estimated 112,000 social care staff vacancies. Again, with zero-hours contracts and median pay of just £8.50 an hour, I do not think there is any great mystery behind that shortage. However, the social care crisis goes beyond staffing. Age UK estimates that there are 1.5 million older people not receiving the social care support they need. Councils have had their budgets slashed by nearly 50% on average since the Tories came to power, with around £8 billion taken out of social care budgets since 2010, so is it any surprise?

[Mary Kelly Foy]

We desperately need a plan for social care that relieves the pressure on unpaid carers and widens access to adult social care where it is needed, yet the Government appear clueless. This crisis requires a dynamic Government: a Government who are ready to accept the ideological failures of austerity and privatisation, who are willing to invest in publicly-run health and social care services, and who reward the workers who staff them. Instead, the promised plan for social care is still missing, private healthcare firms are being welcomed with open arms, and workers face pay cuts and poverty wages.

The Health Secretary speaks about the prevention agenda, but the main cause of ill health is not obesity alone; it is poverty. He can talk about levelling up, building back better and the rest of their buzzword bingo, but until the Government address insecure work, low wages and welfare reform, health inequalities will continue to grow. The Government need to wake up to the health and social care crisis, because the effects are already being felt by real people—the people this Government promised to help.

6.28 pm

Ian Byrne (Liverpool, West Derby) (Lab): I pay tribute to all my constituents in Liverpool, West Derby who work in the NHS and social care; I send my solidarity and thanks to them. My speech will focus on defending these workers and on defending our NHS against the Government's plan for major reorganisation—words that should terrify every citizen in this country who values this wonderful model of socialism. These worrying plans come at the same time as 5 million people are waiting for NHS treatment, and at the same time that NHS staff are exhausted and those same staff are facing a proposed real-terms pay cut.

Last month, I held a meeting with Royal College of Nursing members. They were visibly exhausted, and I came away genuinely worried for their wellbeing. How can this be? I urge the Minister to listen to the concerns of the Save Liverpool Women's Hospital campaign, Doctors in Unite, EveryDoctor, Keep Our NHS Public, We Own It and many others who are calling for the reorganisation to be halted and for a full public consultation.

The Government's proposals for the NHS, as set out in their White Paper, could, as my hon. Friend the Member for Wirral West (Margaret Greenwood) has said, open up privatisation, deregulation and cronyism. They could open up opportunities for private companies to be represented on ICS boards, have a say in what healthcare gets delivered in an area and then provide that service. They could allow for the deregulation of professionals, which would threaten patient safety and have serious implications for the pay, terms and conditions of NHS workers. It is unthinkable that the Government are pushing ahead with these plans after the events of the past year. A person more cynical than me would maybe think that the exhausted state of both the NHS and the nation have created an environment that the Government find ideal for pushing through these changes, which will imperil the public ownership of our NHS even more.

In closing, I ask that this Government find the same values that they discovered earlier in the month, when greedy billionaire capitalists tried to destroy our football

heritage, putting profit ahead of the interests of football fans, and the Government reacted. Well, now they are back, but this time it is our NHS that they wish to destroy. I ask the Government to act with equal urgency to protect the greatest jewel in our heritage—to halt these plans for the reorganisation of the NHS and a roll-out of integrated care systems and, instead of pushing ahead with privatisation and threatening the rights of our NHS workers, to give our health service the resources it needs and give our NHS workers a 15% pay rise. They deserve no less.

6.32 pm

Angela Rayner (Ashton-under-Lyne) (Lab): It is a pleasure to close today's debate and to hear from many hon. Members across the House, including two excellent maiden speeches. The hon. Member for Airdrie and Shotts (Anum Qaisar-Javed) was a teacher of politics, and I am sure that she will continue to give us all a schooling in the Chamber when she stands up for her constituents as she did today. Even as a granny, I cannot match the lifetime of commitment to politics shown by the hon. Member for Aberconwy (Robin Millar). We have been on opposite sides of the many campaigns that he has fought, but his love of Wales and the beautiful coastline of his constituency are sentiments that I am sure the whole House will share.

Let me add my voice to those of hon. Members on both sides of the House who have reflected on the role that key workers have played throughout this crisis. I want especially to mention those who work now—as I once did myself—in social care. They have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic. Too often, they became ill themselves, and some tragically paid with their lives for keeping our public services running.

When the Prime Minister took office, he told us that he had already prepared a plan for social care. Two years later, this Queen's Speech offered just nine words and the promise that proposals would be "brought forward". So much for that prepared plan. For the 11 years that the Conservative party has been in power, care workers have been given only the promise of jam tomorrow, and tomorrow never comes. In the meantime, the problems facing the sector have only been worsened by the crisis that our health and social care services face.

As a union rep in social care, I saw at first hand the success of the then Labour Government's delivering the workforce programme. By working together, we improved the quality of care, increased pay for staff, and reduced hospitalisation and ultimately, therefore, the cost to the taxpayer. It is a false economy not to ensure that people can live as independently as possible in their own homes, with the right support at the right time and in the right place.

Today, however, the workers who were praised by everyone in this Chamber are underpaid and overworked, and that has consequences for us all. If only this Queen's Speech had contained more than a vague promise of proposals and had a Bill to address that issue. My hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Wavertree (Paula Barker) even tabled such a Bill in the last Session. Like other private Members' Bills in the last Session, it fell not because the House rejected it, but because the Government removed parliamentary time.

If the Minister listens to just one thing I say tonight, I hope it will be my plea to make time in this Session for another such Bill, because the low-paid and insecure nature of employment in social care meant that many carers were not entitled to sick pay. That issue is at the heart of our response to the pandemic. There is simply no substitute for raising the level of sick pay and expanding coverage so that all carers can afford to self-isolate.

A healthier country rests on a healthier economy. That goes not just for workers in health and social care, but all workers. That is why we would have legislated for an immediate £10 an hour minimum wage, banned zero-hours contracts and granted full rights from day one, with entitlements to sick pay and annual leave.

We all remember the disgraceful scenes over the past year, when carers did not receive basic protection during the pandemic. Care workers had significantly higher rates of death, but there has not been a single prosecution of a single employer. The promised employment Bill was supposed to create a single enforcement body to protect health and safety and tackle exploitation at work. Perhaps the Minister can tell us why, in the face of a pandemic, tackling that has not been a priority.

The right hon. Members for South West Surrey (Jeremy Hunt) and for Ashford (Damian Green) both spoke of the challenges of integrating social care and health. Let me remind them and others on the Government Benches that they have no mandate to privatise our NHS. The Conservatives have administered an £8 billion cut to social care budgets since 2010, yet they have made millions of pounds available to enforce voter ID as part of this Gracious Speech. If politics is the language of priorities, that says a lot. There was one case of voter personation fraud in 2019, out of the 59 million votes cast that year. The odds of me winning the national lottery are better, so why would the Government think that this crime is more urgent for new legislation than, for example, violence against women? My hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow (Stella Creasy) touched on that issue with her usual passion. I urge Ministers and Government Members to accept her amendment. We will support her in the Lobby if not.

Voting is safe and secure in Britain. Ministers should be ensuring confidence, instead of spreading baseless scare stories. The fact is that this measure will price some voters out of democracy. Millions of people lack voter ID in this country—in particular, older voters, low-income voters and black, Asian and ethnic minority voters. The Conservatives are reversing decades of democratic progress and urgently need to rethink the policy, because it is yet another example of a Government too focused on gimmicks and slogans, rather than real action.

The so-called levelling-up agenda is another such case. When the Prime Minister set up a business council in January, he promised it would level up opportunity for people and businesses across the UK, but just one of its 30 council members was based in the north of England and two in the midlands, while 25 were in London or its commuter zone. In March, the Industrial Strategy Council warned that the levelling-up agenda was unlikely to succeed because there was too much control from the centre. So what did the Prime Minister do? He set up another unit in Whitehall. A senior

Cabinet Office official told the *Financial Times* that there was “widespread cluelessness” about what levelling up actually meant.

The Prime Minister promised that the Queen’s Speech would put “rocket fuel” into the levelling-up agenda, but no one seems to have told the Housing Minister or the Business Minister, who yesterday could not answer even the basic questions. They did not even know that a levelling-up taskforce existed—not so much a flagship as a ghost ship or, as one of the Prime Minister’s own advisers put it, a “slogan without a purpose”. If only the Government had looked over the Atlantic and drawn inspiration from this President and not the last. The Queen’s Speech could have included the £30 billion stimulus package proposed by the shadow Business Secretary, my right hon. Friend the Member for Doncaster North (Edward Miliband), creating 400,000 new jobs in the industries of the future. It could have built on the lessons of a vaccine roll-out driven by an active interventionist state. Instead, the Government’s investment plan is absolutely tiny in comparison with that of President Biden.

The Queen’s Speech has no employment Bill, and the country will instead face an unemployment bill. Yesterday, the Paymaster General, the right hon. Member for Portsmouth North (Penny Mordaunt), told the House that any criticism of Ministers’ many dodgy deals was anti-business, but I am afraid it is the Prime Minister who famously said exactly what he would like to do to business, and that is one promise that he has kept in the Gracious Address, because he has left business high and dry.

Across the country, small and medium-sized enterprises face a long road to recovery. For months, we have called for a comprehensive plan for British business with debt restructuring at its heart. Instead, we have a Bill that tinkers with state aid and that will leave us investing a fraction of the support that countries such as Germany or Denmark give to their industry.

Many Members across the House have mentioned mental health. We know that the pandemic has left our nation needing more support, and I hope that the Government will take inspiration from the Welsh Labour Government, who have put wellbeing at the heart of their nation.

We face a critical moment as a country. As life begins to return to normal, we are left asking if business as usual is really what we aim to return to. The pandemic has exposed the millions of insecure jobs, the key workers who are underpaid and undervalued even as we applaud them in the streets, the services that they provide collapsing under the strain and an economy that does not work for working people. Last October, the Prime Minister rightly summoned the spirit of our greatest post-war Government and promised to echo Attlee’s plan for a post-war new Jerusalem, but I am afraid he is no Clement Attlee.

This was the moment for our new economic and social settlement to tackle insecurity at work, to meet the climate crisis head-on, to rebuild our public services, to support our businesses and to share wealth and power fairly among our citizens and communities. The British people deserved a Queen’s Speech that met those challenges of the moment, but it has fallen short on every count. This granny knows that it is our grandchildren who will still be paying off the debt that has mounted up over this period. We owe it to them to offer them better-paid jobs, better real affordable homes and a better Government.

6.44 pm

The Minister for Health (Edward Argar): I start by welcoming the right hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Angela Rayner) to her new post, and I wish her well in it. I apologise to her that she is facing me giving the wind-up rather than the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster or the Paymaster General. However, given her encounter with the Paymaster General yesterday, she might be quite grateful for that.

Since the previous Queen's speech in January 2020 we have all collectively been engaged in responding to the biggest crisis since the war, fighting a highly infectious and highly dangerous virus that has caused so much disruption to our economy and our society. Everyone has made huge sacrifices to get this virus under control, and I would like, as I often do on these occasions, to once again put on record my thanks to everyone in the NHS and social care, and the entire British people, for the massive part that everyone has played in that effort.

We now have a way out, thanks to the vaccination programme that is making this country safer every day, and I pay tribute to the Minister for Covid Vaccine Deployment, my hon. Friend the Member for Stratford-on-Avon (Nadhim Zahawi), for his work on that; but we all recognise that alongside that successful vaccination programme we must all, as a society, learn to live with residual elements of covid for some time to come. My right hon. Friend the Health Secretary's vaccination programme has been the biggest and fastest in British history. Around seven in 10 adults have had a first dose, including my right hon. Friend and me—I resisted any temptation to do so without my top on—and around four in 10 have had a second. As we have rolled out the programme, we have been able carefully to remove some of the restrictions that have been so difficult for us all. Even this week we have been able to restore more of those precious moments, like meeting friends and family indoors or having a pint inside a pub once again. As we do that and take the road to recovery, we must take forward what we have learned about all parts of our health and care system, and draw on the spirit and endeavour that we have seen in our vaccination programme and so many other parts of our response, to make the lasting reforms that will allow us to build back better and make us a healthier nation. There is still a lot to do and there is no time to stand still.

This Queen's Speech sets out an ambitious, positive programme to seize that opportunity. As my right hon. Friend the Health Secretary set out, we need to tackle waiting lists through our catch-up and recovery plan to support the, I believe, 4.7 million people in England—around February—waiting for treatment. We need to continue to deliver our manifesto commitments of 40 new hospitals and 50,000 more nurses. And we need to level up on the health inequalities that the pandemic has laid bare. To meet that challenge, we have an agenda to transform our health and care system, and to give us those firm foundations that we need to thrive in the years ahead.

We have set out our plans for our health and care Bill to enable greater integration—I saw, in my years serving as a local councillor, as I suspect many colleagues in the House have, the benefits of the NHS, local authorities and social care working ever more closely—to reduce bureaucracy, and to strengthen accountability to this House, so that we can allow staff to get on with their

jobs and provide the best possible treatment and care for their patients, and give the NHS and local authorities the tools they need to level up health and care across the country.

We will also give the funding and support to help our NHS recover and deliver the care that people need, bringing the total package of additional covid-19 funding to our healthcare system to £92 billion—on top of the legislation that my right hon. Friend the Health Secretary and I passed last year, which will see funding in our NHS increase by £33.9 billion by 2024.

The virus has attacked many parts of our society and our healthcare system. Before returning to some of the key themes in the health space and the care space, I want to mention some of the contributions to the debate. My hon. Friend the Member for North West Norfolk (James Wild) highlighted the importance of knowing what the bidding criteria will be for the extra eight hospitals that we have committed to bring forward. I know, Madam Deputy Speaker, that you and my hon. Friend the Member for Don Valley (Nick Fletcher) came to see me earlier this week to talk about your proposals for Doncaster hospitals. We recognise the eagerness of colleagues to know what that procedure will be, and we will be bringing that forward in the coming weeks. I highlight, of course, that that is dependent on the spending review as well.

Let me turn now to the shadow Secretary of State and some of the points that he raised, which I will endeavour to address. He is a good man, and I know that he will still be basking in the joy of Leicester City's success on Saturday. He raised some important points. First, he asked where diagnostics were in all of this. I remind him that, in 2019, we brought forward £200 million of additional funding to provide around 300 new diagnostics machines, which have already been bought for our NHS, and we have set out plans for the future for 44 diagnostic hubs.

The right hon. Gentleman talked about capital spending. A total of £3.7 billion in the first tranche has been allocated for our 40 new hospital programmes. He will know, because his constituency neighbours mine, that he is one of the beneficiaries of that, with a new hospital in Leicester. I also point out to the shadow Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster that Tameside General Hospital has benefited from considerable capital investment—£16.3 million in 2019 thanks to this Conservative Government and, atop that, there is the £450 million of extra money that we brought forward for urgent and emergency care last year, of which around another £2 million is going to Tameside and Glossop Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust. This is a record of investment by this Government in communities up and down our country.

The shadow Secretary of State was pressed a couple of times by my hon. Friend the Member for South Suffolk (James Cartlidge) on whether he supported the use of private sector hospital facilities to help get those waiting lists down. He dodged answering that question. I know that he is a sensible and pragmatic chap, and I know that he will recognise the need, as we do, to use every resource at our disposal to get those waiting list down. I hope that he will not give in to the siren voices of some on the Opposition Benches who, in their comments, have highlighted what I think is a real issue for the Opposition. I am talking about this sort of Orwellian

“Animal Farm” type tendency: four legs good, two legs bad; public sector good, private sector bad. It is a binary approach. The reality that we have seen throughout this pandemic is that the key has been partnership working: public, private, and voluntary sectors working together, putting ideology aside to get the best outcomes for patients. All I say is that those who advocate a binary approach are actually letting down our public services. *[Interruption.]* The right hon. Member for Leicester South is getting a new hospital.

Let me move on now to other contributions. I turn to the hon. Member for Airdrie and Shotts (Anum Qaisar-Javed) and my hon. Friend the Member for Aberconwy (Robin Millar), both of whom gave eloquent, accomplished speeches. I wish that I had been as eloquent in my maiden speech. They are clearly strong advocates for their constituents. I sincerely hope—indeed, I am sure—that we will rightly hear a lot more from them in the future, and that is all to the good of our democracy.

I want to pick up on a couple of other contributions. The hon. Member for Rhondda (Chris Bryant), who is a strong champion of the cause of those with acquired brain injuries and brain injuries, and my hon. Friend the Member for North Dorset (Simon Hoare) came to see me relatively recently to talk about the importance of that group of people in our resetting of NHS services and our recovery of waiting lists. Not only do I pay tribute to the hon. Gentleman, but I am always happy to meet him to further discuss those issues if he feels that I can be of any assistance.

Turning to some of the key themes of the Queen’s Speech particularly in the health space, the virus, as many hon. and right hon. Members have highlighted, has attacked our population’s mental health just as much as our physical health. On top of the record funding we have already given to mental health—an extra £2.3 billion a year for mental health services by 2023-24, plus the £500 million of additional investment that my hon. Friend the Minister for Patient Safety, Suicide Prevention and Mental Health announced recently—we are determined to address the impact of the pandemic on mental health and wellbeing. I know that that objective and that desire, whatever the party politics that sometimes occurs in this Chamber, will be shared across both sides of this House. While we will rightly be held to account, I hope that we can all move forward in seeking to improve services in that space together. I also hope that we will be able to work together in reforming the Mental Health Act 1983, which, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said, has not been fully updated for nearly 40 years, and in so doing, give people greater control over their treatment and ensure dignity and respect.

As Members have highlighted, there is also more to do so that everyone receives high-quality, joined-up care in our social care system. The Prime Minister and my right hon. Friend have been absolutely clear in their determination that we will bring forward our proposals for reform of social care this year so that everyone receives the dignified care they deserve within a system that is sustainable. While I hope we can move forward together, I will take no lessons from Labour, which, in its time in power, had, in seeking to address this, one royal commission, two Green Papers, and a spending review in 2007 at which it said that it would be the main focus. That is 13 years of consultations and no achievement.

I hesitate to draw attention to it, but some of those years would of course be years when the right hon. Member for Leicester South was at the heart of government in the Treasury and in No. 10.

As we do this work, we will be drawing on the considerable strengths that have played a starring role in this pandemic—the technology, the research, and the life sciences so beloved of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State—to drive innovation in our NHS and social care to make life easier for patients and staff alike and to help us all live healthier and happier lives. In that vein, we will, for example, increase public spending on research and development to £22 billion.

It is an honour to make the final contribution to this Queen’s Speech debate on behalf of the Government. We have seen before us a stark choice between a Government with a clear, ambitious vision for our country and its health and an Opposition yet again devoid of ideas, tired and lacking in energy, whose only solution is yet another policy review. That has been the response to the damning verdict of the electorate when they said they were fed up with being taken for granted and let down by Labour. Over the past six days of debate, we have heard about this Government’s ambitious agenda to level up all parts of our country: an agenda to beat this virus and beat it together, and an agenda that will unleash the potential of the whole of the United Kingdom. I commend the Queen’s Speech to the House.

Question put, That the amendment be made.

The House divided: Ayes 264, Noes 367.

Division No. 2]

[6.58 pm

AYES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane	Byrne, rh Liam
Abrahams, Debbie	Cadbury, Ruth
Ali, Rushanara	Callaghan, Amy
Ali, Tahir	Cameron, Dr Lisa
Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena	Campbell, rh Sir Alan
Amesbury, Mike	Carden, Dan
Anderson, Fleur	Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
Antoniazzi, Tonia	Chamberlain, Wendy
Ashworth, rh Jonathan	Champion, Sarah
Bardell, Hannah	Chapman, Douglas
Barker, Paula	Charalambous, Bambos
Beckett, rh Margaret	Cherry, Joanna
Begum, Apsana	Clark, Feryal
Benn, rh Hilary	Cooper, Daisy
Betts, Mr Clive	Cooper, Rosie
Black, Mhairi	Cooper, rh Yvette
Blackford, rh Ian	Corbyn, rh Jeremy
Blackman, Kirsty	Cowan, Ronnie
Blake, Olivia	Coyle, Neil
Blomfield, Paul	Crawley, Angela
Bonnar, Steven	Creasy, Stella
Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben	Cruddas, Jon
Brennan, Kevin	Cryer, John
Brock, Deidre	Cummins, Judith
Brown, Alan	Cunningham, Alex
Brown, Ms Lyn	Daby, Janet
Brown, rh Mr Nicholas	Davey, rh Ed
Bryant, Chris	David, Wayne
Buck, Ms Karen	Davies, Geraint
Burgon, Richard	Davies-Jones, Alex
Butler, Dawn	Day, Martyn
Byrne, Ian	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
 Fletcher, Colleen
 Flynn, Stephen
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Foy, Mary Kelly
 Furniss, Gill
 Gardiner, Barry
 Gibson, Patricia
 Gill, Preet Kaur
 Glindon, Mary
 Grady, Patrick
 Grant, Peter
 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
 Hillier, Meg
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Hollern, Kate
 Hopkins, Rachel
 Hosie, rh Stewart
 Howarth, rh Sir George
 Huq, Dr Rupa
 Hussain, Imran
 Jardine, Christine
 Jarvis, Dan
 Johnson, rh 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
 McMahon, Jim
 McMorrin, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Miliband, rh Edward
 Mishra, Navendu
 Monaghan, Carol
 Moran, Layla
 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
 Qaisar-Javed, Anum

Qureshi, Yasmin
 Rayner, rh 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, rh Nick
 Thompson, Owen
 Thomson, Richard
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Stephen
 Trickett, Jon
 Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Vaz, rh Valerie
 Webbe, Claudia
 West, Catherine
 Western, Matt
 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 Ayes:
Jessica Morden and
Liz Twist

NOES

Adams, Nigel
 Afolami, Bim
 Afriyie, Adam
 Ahmad Khan, Imran
 Aiken, Nickie
 Aldous, Peter
 Allan, Lucy
 Amess, Sir David
 Anderson, Lee
 Anderson, Stuart
 Andrew, rh 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
 Bottomley, Sir Peter
 Bowie, Andrew
 Bradley, Ben
 Bradley, rh Karen
 Brady, Sir Graham
 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
 Cartledge, 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	Halfon, rh Robert	Loughton, Tim	Rosindell, Andrew
Crabb, rh Stephen	Hall, Luke	Mackinlay, Craig	Ross, Douglas
Crosbie, Virginia	Hammond, Stephen	Mackrory, Cherilyn	Rowley, Lee
Crouch, Tracey	Hancock, rh Matt	Maclean, Rachel	Russell, Dean
Daly, James	Hands, rh Greg	Mak, Alan	Sambrook, Gary
Davies, David T. C.	Harper, rh Mr Mark	Malthouse, Kit	Saxby, Selaine
Davies, Gareth	Harris, Rebecca	Mangnall, Anthony	Scully, Paul
Davies, Dr James	Harrison, Trudy	Mann, Scott	Seely, Bob
Davies, Mims	Hart, Sally-Ann	Marson, Julie	Selous, Andrew
Davies, Philip	Hart, rh Simon	May, rh Mrs Theresa	Shannon, Jim
Davis, rh Mr David	Hayes, rh Sir John	Mayhew, Jerome	Shapps, rh Grant
Davison, Dehenna	Heald, rh Sir Oliver	Maynard, Paul	Sharma, rh Alok
Dinenage, Caroline	Heapey, James	McCartney, Jason	Shelbrooke, rh Alec
Dines, Miss Sarah	Heaton-Harris, Chris	McCartney, Karl	Simmonds, David
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan	Henderson, Gordon	McPartland, Stephen	Skidmore, rh Chris
Docherty, Leo	Henry, Darren	McVey, rh Esther	Smith, Chloe
Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.	Higginbotham, Antony	Menzies, Mark	Smith, Greg
Donelan, Michelle	Hinds, rh Damian	Merriman, Huw	Smith, Henry
Dorries, Ms Nadine	Hoare, Simon	Metcalfe, Stephen	Smith, rh Julian
Double, Steve	Holden, Mr Richard	Millar, Robin	Smith, Royston
Dowden, rh Oliver	Hollinrake, Kevin	Miller, rh Mrs Maria	Solloway, Amanda
Doyle-Price, Jackie	Hollobone, Mr Philip	Milling, rh Amanda	Spencer, Dr Ben
Drax, Richard	Holloway, Adam	Mills, Nigel	Spencer, rh Mark
Drummond, Mrs Flick	Holmes, Paul	Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew	Stafford, Alexander
Duddridge, James	Howell, John	Mohindra, Mr Gagan	Stephenson, Andrew
Duguid, David	Howell, Paul	Moore, Damien	Stevenson, Jane
Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain	Huddleston, Nigel	Moore, Robbie	Stevenson, John
Dunne, rh Philip	Hudson, Dr Neil	Mordaunt, rh Penny	Stewart, rh Bob
Eastwood, Mark	Hughes, Eddie	Morris, Anne Marie	Stewart, Iain
Edwards, Ruth	Hunt, Jane	Morris, David	Streeter, Sir Gary
Ellis, rh Michael	Hunt, rh Jeremy	Morris, James	Stride, rh Mel
Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias	Hunt, Tom	Morrissey, Joy	Stuart, Graham
Elphicke, Mrs Natalie	Jack, rh Mr Alister	Mortimer, Jill	Sturdy, Julian
Eustice, rh George	Javid, rh Sajid	Morton, Wendy	Sunak, rh Rishi
Evans, Dr Luke	Jayawardena, Mr Ranil	Mullan, Dr Kieran	Sunderland, James
Evennett, rh Sir David	Jenkin, Sir Bernard	Mumby-Croft, Holly	Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
Everitt, Ben	Jenkinson, Mark	Mundell, rh David	Syms, Sir Robert
Fabricant, Michael	Jenkyns, Andrea	Murray, Mrs Sheryll	Thomas, Derek
Farris, Laura	Jenrick, rh Robert	Murrison, rh Dr Andrew	Throup, Maggie
Fell, Simon	Johnson, rh Boris	Neill, Sir Robert	Timpson, Edward
Fletcher, Katherine	Johnson, Dr Caroline	Nici, Lia	Tolhurst, Kelly
Fletcher, Mark	Johnson, Gareth	Nokes, rh Caroline	Tomlinson, Justin
Fletcher, Nick	Johnston, David	Norman, rh Jesse	Tomlinson, Michael
Ford, Vicky	Jones, Andrew	O'Brien, Neil	Tracey, Craig
Foster, Kevin	Jones, rh Mr David	Offord, Dr Matthew	Trevelyan, rh Anne-Marie
Fox, rh Dr Liam	Jones, Fay	Opperman, Guy	Trott, Laura
Francois, rh Mr Mark	Jones, Mr Marcus	Paisley, Ian	Truss, rh Elizabeth
Frazer, rh Lucy	Jupp, Simon	Parish, Neil	Tugendhat, Tom
Freeman, George	Kawczynski, Daniel	Patel, rh Priti	Vara, Shailesh
Freer, Mike	Kearns, Alicia	Paterson, rh Mr Owen	Vickers, Martin
Fuller, Richard	Keegan, Gillian	Pawsey, Mark	Vickers, Matt
Fysh, Mr Marcus	Knight, rh Sir Greg	Penning, rh Sir Mike	Villiers, rh Theresa
Gale, rh Sir Roger	Knight, Julian	Penrose, John	Wakeford, Christian
Garnier, Mark	Kruger, Danny	Percy, Andrew	Walker, Sir Charles
Ghani, Ms Nusrat	Kwarteng, rh Kwasi	Philp, Chris	Walker, Mr Robin
Gibb, rh Nick	Lamont, John	Pincher, rh Christopher	Wallace, rh Mr Ben
Gibson, Peter	Largan, Robert	Poulter, Dr Dan	Wallis, Dr Jamie
Gideon, Jo	Latham, Mrs Pauline	Pow, Rebecca	Warburton, David
Girvan, Paul	Leadsom, rh Andrea	Prentis, Victoria	Warman, Matt
Glen, John	Leigh, rh Sir Edward	Pritchard, rh Mark	Watling, Giles
Goodwill, rh Mr Robert	Levy, Ian	Quin, Jeremy	Webb, Suzanne
Gove, rh Michael	Lewer, Andrew	Quince, Will	Whately, Helen
Graham, Richard	Lewis, rh Brandon	Raab, rh Dominic	Wheeler, Mrs Heather
Grant, Mrs Helen	Lewis, rh Dr Julian	Randall, Tom	Whittaker, Craig
Gray, James	Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian	Redwood, rh John	Whittingdale, rh Mr John
Grayling, rh Chris	Lockhart, Carla	Rees-Mogg, rh Mr Jacob	Wiggin, Bill
Green, Chris	Loder, Chris	Richards, Nicola	Wild, James
Green, rh Damian	Logan, Mark	Richardson, Angela	Williams, Craig
Griffith, Andrew	Longhi, Marco	Roberts, Rob	Williamson, rh Gavin
Griffiths, Kate	Lopez, Julia	Robertson, Mr Laurence	Wilson, rh Sammy
Grundy, James	Lopresti, Jack	Robinson, Gavin	Wood, Mike
Gullis, Jonathan	Lord, Mr Jonathan	Robinson, Mary	Wragg, Mr William

Wright, rh Jeremy
Young, Jacob
Zahawi, Nadhim

Tellers for the Noes:
Tom Pursglove and
David Rutley

Question accordingly negated.

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.

Amendment proposed: (i) at end add:

“but respectfully regret that the Gracious Speech fails to include bills that protect workers’ rights, reform social care in England, or deliver a fair pay rise for NHS staff; further believe that the Procurement Bill proposals will undermine devolution; regret that the Gracious Speech does not contain provision to make the £20 Universal Credit uplift permanent, end the freeze of social security benefits or scrap the two-child limit and so-called rape clause attached to child credits; and reject the Government’s proposals for immigration reform, voter ID and policing which will place disproportionate restrictions on people’s human rights.”—
(*Owen Thompson.*)

Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 33), That the amendment be made.

The House divided: Ayes 265, Noes 367.

Division No. 3]

[7.8 pm

AYES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane
Abrahams, Debbie
Ali, Rushanara
Ali, Tahir
Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
Amesbury, Mike
Anderson, Fleur
Antoniazzi, Tonia
Ashworth, rh 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
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
Cummins, Judith
Cunningham, Alex
Daby, Janet
Davey, rh Ed
David, Wayne
Davies, Geraint
Davies-Jones, Alex
Day, Martyn
De Cordova, Marsha
Debbonaire, 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
Ferrier, Margaret
Fletcher, Colleen
Flynn, Stephen
Fovargue, Yvonne
Foxcroft, Vicky
Foy, Mary Kelly
Furniss, Gill
Gardiner, Barry
Gibson, Patricia
Gill, Preet Kaur
Glendon, Mary
Grady, Patrick
Grant, Peter
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
Hillier, Meg
Hobhouse, Wera
Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
Hollern, Kate
Hopkins, Rachel
Hosie, rh Stewart
Howarth, rh Sir George
Huq, Dr Rupa
Hussain, Imran
Jardine, Christine
Jarvis, Dan
Johnson, rh 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
McMahon, 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
Qaisar-Javed, Anum
Qureshi, Yasmin
Rayner, rh 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, rh Nick
 Thompson, Owen
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Stephen
 Trickett, Jon

Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Twist, Liz
 Vaz, rh Valerie
 Webbe, Claudia
 West, Catherine
 Western, Matt
 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 Ayes:
Marion Fellows and
Richard Thomson

NOES

Adams, Nigel
 Afolami, Bim
 Afriyie, Adam
 Ahmad Khan, Imran
 Aiken, Nickie
 Aldous, Peter
 Allan, Lucy
 Amess, Sir David
 Anderson, Lee
 Anderson, Stuart
 Andrew, rh 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
 Bottomley, Sir Peter
 Bowie, Andrew
 Bradley, Ben
 Bradley, rh Karen
 Brady, Sir Graham
 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
 Crouch, Tracey
 Daly, James
 Davies, David T. C.
 Davies, Gareth
 Davies, Dr James
 Davies, Mims
 Davies, Philip
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Davison, Dehenna
 Dinenage, Caroline
 Dines, Miss Sarah
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Docherty, Leo
 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, rh Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 Fuller, Richard
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Gale, rh Sir Roger
 Garnier, Mark
 Ghani, Ms Nusrat
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gibson, Peter
 Gideon, Jo
 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
 Hudson, Dr Neil
 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, Jason
 McCartney, Karl
 McPartland, Stephen
 McVey, rh Esther
 Menzies, Mark
 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
 Mortimer, Jill
 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, rh 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
 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, rh 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, 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 Noes:
Tom Pursglove and
David Rutley

Question accordingly negated.

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.

Amendment proposed: (g) at end add:

“but respectfully regret that measures to create a requirement for the Government to act when the Courts find that Government policy creates an incompatibility with the human rights of a UK citizen were not included in the Gracious Speech; recognise as a result of not addressing rulings made by the courts on these issues children who have lost a mother or father but whose parents were not married, and vulnerable victims of domestic violence who have been required to pay the bedroom tax because they have a sanctuary room, have been discriminated against; note that these rulings were made in 2018, 2019 and 2020 so that there has been ample time for the Government to address those rulings; further note that if the Government ignores the decisions made by Courts on the rights of UK citizens this undermines the integrity of the judicial and democratic process; and call on the Government to bring forward measures to fully remedy those incompatibilities within three months.”—(*Stella Creasy*.)

Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 33), That the amendment be made.

The House divided: Ayes 265, Noes 366.

Division No. 4]

[7.17 pm

AYES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane	Cooper, Rosie
Abrahams, Debbie	Cooper, rh Yvette
Ali, Rushanara	Corbyn, rh Jeremy
Ali, Tahir	Cowan, Ronnie
Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena	Coyle, Neil
Amesbury, Mike	Crawley, Angela
Anderson, Fleur	Creasy, Stella
Antoniazzi, Tonia	Cruddas, Jon
Ashworth, rh Jonathan	Cryer, John
Bardell, Hannah	Cummins, Judith
Barker, Paula	Cunningham, Alex
Beckett, rh Margaret	Daby, Janet
Begum, Apsana	Davey, rh Ed
Benn, rh Hilary	David, Wayne
Betts, Mr Clive	Davies, Geraint
Black, Mhairi	Davies-Jones, Alex
Blackford, rh Ian	Day, Martyn
Blackman, Kirsty	De Cordova, Marsha
Blake, Olivia	Debbonaire, Thangam
Blomfield, Paul	Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
Bonnar, Steven	Docherty-Hughes, Martin
Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben	Dodds, Anneliese
Brennan, Kevin	Doogan, Dave
Brock, Deidre	Dorans, Allan
Brown, Alan	Doughty, Stephen
Brown, Ms Lyn	Dowd, Peter
Brown, rh Mr Nicholas	Dromey, Jack
Bryant, Chris	Duffield, Rosie
Buck, Ms Karen	Eagle, Dame Angela
Burgon, Richard	Eagle, Maria
Butler, Dawn	Eastwood, Colum
Byrne, Ian	Edwards, Jonathan
Byrne, rh Liam	Efford, Clive
Cadbury, Ruth	Elliott, Julie
Callaghan, Amy	Elmore, Chris
Cameron, Dr Lisa	Eshalomi, Florence
Campbell, rh Sir Alan	Esterson, Bill
Carden, Dan	Evans, Chris
Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair	Farron, Tim
Chamberlain, Wendy	Farry, Stephen
Champion, Sarah	Fellows, Marion
Chapman, Douglas	Ferrier, Margaret
Charalambous, Bambos	Fletcher, Colleen
Cherry, Joanna	Flynn, Stephen
Clark, Feryal	Fovargue, Yvonne
Cooper, Daisy	Foxcroft, Vicky
	Foy, Mary Kelly
	Furniss, Gill

Gardiner, Barry
 Gibson, Patricia
 Gill, Preet Kaur
 Glindon, Mary
 Grady, Patrick
 Grant, Peter
 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
 Hillier, Meg
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Hollern, Kate
 Hopkins, Rachel
 Hosie, rh Stewart
 Howarth, rh Sir George
 Huq, Dr Rupa
 Hussain, Imran
 Jardine, Christine
 Jarvis, Dan
 Johnson, rh 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
 McMorris, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Miliband, rh Edward
 Mishra, Navendu
 Monaghan, Carol
 Moran, Layla
 Morgan, Stephen
 Morris, Grahame
 Murray, Ian
 Murray, James
 Nandy, Lisa
 Newlands, Gavin
 Nichols, Charlotte
 Nicolson, John
 Norris, Alex
 O'Hara, Brendan
 Oiney, 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
 Qaisar-Javed, Anum
 Qureshi, Yasmin
 Rayner, rh 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
 Shannon, Jim
 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, rh Nick
 Thompson, Owen
 Thomson, Richard
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Stephen
 Trickett, Jon
 Turner, Karl

Twigg, Derek
 Vaz, rh Valerie
 Webbe, Claudia
 West, Catherine
 Western, Matt
 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 Ayes:

**Liz Twist and
 Jessica Morden**

NOES

Adams, Nigel
 Afolami, Bim
 Afriyie, Adam
 Ahmad Khan, Imran
 Aiken, Nickie
 Aldous, Peter
 Allan, Lucy
 Amess, Sir David
 Anderson, Lee
 Anderson, Stuart
 Andrew, rh 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
 Bottomley, Sir Peter
 Bowie, Andrew
 Bradley, Ben
 Bradley, rh Karen
 Brady, Sir Graham
 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
 Cartledge, 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
 Clarke, 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
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Davison, Dehenna
 Dinanage, Caroline
 Dines, Miss Sarah
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Docherty, Leo
 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, rh Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 Fuller, Richard
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Gale, rh Sir Roger
 Garnier, Mark
 Ghani, Ms Nusrat
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gibson, Peter
 Gideon, Jo
 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
 Hudson, Dr Neil
 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
 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
 Mortimer, Jill
 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, rh 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
 Sambrook, Gary
 Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Bob
 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, rh 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, 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 Noes:
Tom Pursglove and
David Rutley

Question accordingly negated.

The list of Members currently certified as eligible for a proxy vote, and of the Members nominated as their proxy, is published at the end of today's debates.

Main Question put.

The House divided: Ayes 367, Noes 264.

Division No. 5]

[7.25 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, rh 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
Bottomley, Sir Peter
Bowie, Andrew
Bradley, Ben
Bradley, rh Karen
Brady, Sir Graham
Braverman, rh Suella
Brereton, Jack
Bridden, 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
Crouch, Tracey
Daly, James
Davies, David T. C.
Davies, Gareth
Davies, Dr James
Davies, Mims
Davies, Philip
Davis, rh Mr David
Davison, Dehenna
Dinenage, Caroline
Dines, Miss Sarah
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
Docherty, Leo
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, rh Lucy
Freeman, George
Freer, Mike
Fuller, Richard
Fysh, Mr Marcus

Gale, rh Sir Roger
Garnier, Mark
Ghani, Ms Nusrat
Gibb, rh Nick
Gibson, Peter
Gideon, Jo
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
Hudson, Dr Neil
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, Cherylyn
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
Merriman, Huw
Metcalf, 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
Mortimer, Jill
Morton, Wendy
Mullan, Dr Kieran
Mumby-Croft, Holly
Mundell, rh David
Murray, Mrs Sheryl
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, rh 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
 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, rh 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, 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:

**Tom Pursglove and
 David Rutley**

NOES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane
 Abrahams, Debbie
 Ali, Rushanara
 Ali, Tahir
 Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
 Amesbury, Mike
 Anderson, Fleur
 Antoniazzi, Tonia
 Ashworth, rh 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
 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
 Cummins, Judith
 Cunningham, Alex
 Daby, Janet
 Davey, rh Ed
 David, Wayne
 Davies, Geraint
 Davies-Jones, Alex
 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
 Fletcher, Colleen
 Flynn, Stephen
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Foy, Mary Kelly
 Furniss, Gill
 Gardiner, Barry
 Gibson, Patricia
 Gill, Preet Kaur
 Glindon, Mary
 Grady, Patrick
 Grant, Peter

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
 Hillier, Meg
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Hollern, Kate
 Hopkins, Rachel
 Hosie, rh Stewart
 Howarth, rh Sir George
 Huq, Dr Rupa
 Hussain, Imran
 Jardine, Christine
 Jarvis, Dan
 Johnson, rh 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
 McMahon, Jim
 McMorrin, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Miliband, rh Edward
 Mishra, Navendu
 Monaghan, Carol
 Moran, Layla
 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
 Qaisar-Javed, Anum
 Qureshi, Yasmin
 Rayner, rh 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, rh Nick
 Thompson, Owen
 Thomson, Richard
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Stephen
 Trickett, Jon
 Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Vaz, rh Valerie
 Webbe, Claudia
 West, Catherine
 Western, Matt
 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:
Jessica Morden and
Liz Twist

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, as follows:
 Most Gracious Sovereign,

We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Majesty for the Gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament.

Address to be presented to Her Majesty by Members of the House who are Privy Counsellors or Members of Her Majesty's Household.

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.

Business without Debate

DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): With the leave of the House, we shall take motions 2 to 4 together.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

That the draft Caribbean Development Bank (Tenth Replenishment of the Special Development Fund (Unified)) Order 2021, which was laid before this House on 22 March, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.

That the draft Asian Development Bank (Twelfth Replenishment of the Asian Development Fund) Order 2021, which was laid before this House on 22 March, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.

ENERGY

That the draft Electricity Trading (Development of Technical Procedures) (Day-Ahead Market Timeframe) Regulations 2021, which were laid before this House on 22 March, in the last Session of Parliament, be approved.—(*Maggie Throup.*)

Question agreed to.

PETITION

Occupation of East Jerusalem

7.33 pm

David Linden (Glasgow East) (SNP): I am grateful for the opportunity to present this petition on behalf of residents of Glasgow East. I have had many constituents get in contact with me regarding the Sheikh Jarrah evictions and the recent violence across Jerusalem. I therefore rise to present this petition on behalf of my east end constituents who wish to see the illegal occupation investigated and a peaceful resolution to the ongoing violence.

The petition states:

The petition of residents of the United Kingdom,

Declares that the residents of Sheikh Jarrah in occupied East Jerusalem are facing dispossession and forced evictions from their homes; further that Israel's illegal occupation of East Jerusalem has facilitated discriminatory laws against Palestinians who now have little recourse to the law and face the constant threat of dispossession and displacement; further that the SNP strongly condemns all breaches of international law and violence and supports the European Union position of a two-state solution based on the 1967 borders; further that the International Criminal Court must be able to do its duty and urgently conduct a full investigation; further that the Israeli Government must reconsider its position of non-cooperation with the ICC's impartial probe; and further that this illegal occupation cannot continue with no investigation and repercussions.

The petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urge the Government to support the International Criminal Courts' investigation into the illegal occupation of East Jerusalem and to take the necessary steps to reach a peaceful resolution to the current violence.

And the petitioners remain, etc.

Walley's Quarry: Response of the Environment Agency

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—(Maggie Throup.)

7.34 pm

Aaron Bell (Newcastle-under-Lyme) (Con): I am grateful to have secured this Adjournment debate. Through you, Madam Deputy Speaker, may I pass my thanks to Mr Speaker not only for granting this debate, but for his advice on the matter of landfills? I know that he has suffered from an issue in his constituency of Chorley as well.

I have raised the issue of Walley's Quarry many times in this place since I was elected in 2019, including in a debate in Westminster Hall in February 2020, which the Minister will remember, as she responded to me then, and I am grateful for her continued engagement since then—in the Christmas Adjournment debate at the end of last year, and again in the ten-minute rule Bill that I introduced on 9 March, the Landfill Sites (Odorous Emissions) Bill. But I am here yet again because I will not stop representing my constituents on this issue, and I am sorry to report to the House that the situation has worsened even further since those prior mentions of Walley's Quarry in this place.

In Newcastle-under-Lyme, we are now experiencing not only an environmental catastrophe but a public health emergency. My constituents are genuinely frightened about what is in the air they breathe and the impact it is having on their health and the health of their families. They are also pretty angry that it has come to this, as am I on their behalf. In the interests of time, I will not rehearse the whole storied history today, as a lot of it is on the record in the other debates I mentioned. Instead, I will focus on the newest developments and what has happened in recent months.

I would like to stress that this is not really a local issue. Not only is it so big that it is affecting neighbouring constituencies—I am grateful to see my hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent Central (Jo Gideon) here—but it has now become a national issue, in that Walley's Quarry generated 85% of all odour complaints in England to the Environment Agency in March. It has also generated national coverage in the newspapers and across the BBC and ITV, and that is because things have moved on considerably this year. There have been five breaches by the operator of its permit, and the Environment Agency has had to issue an enforcement notice, which I will come back to later.

I would like to start by focusing on the impact that this is having on people's health, and I will quote the letter that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care wrote to the chief executive of the Environment Agency, expressing his "grave concerns" about the current situation, recognising the distress and disruption it is causing to the local community and highlighting how imperative it is that the Environment Agency exercises

"the full range of their regulatory and enforcement powers"

to resolve the problems at the site—a sentiment with which my constituents and I wholeheartedly agree.

I recently conducted a health and impact survey, which I published earlier today on my Facebook page and via my newsletter and Twitter. I had over 1,000

responses in the first 24 hours. The survey is based on over 1,400 responses, and the findings make pretty shocking reading. I shared it with the Minister earlier today, and I have sent it to the various bodies involved. Some 64% of respondents reported a significant or severe impact on their mental health, and that rose to 73% among those living in the areas immediately adjacent to the site: Silverdale, Knutton, Poolfields and Thistleberry. Similarly, 60% of respondents reported a significant or severe impact on their sleep, and 52% said the same about their physical health. Again, the figures are higher for those living closest to the site.

I will quote some of the testimony from residents that I put into the report. Claire from Silverdale says:

"My son is having weekly nose bleeds, my whole family is suffering with dry skin, throat and eyes. We are staying in the house much more than we usually would with the doors and windows shut as the smell outside is horrendous. My heating bill has increased. We only moved into the area in December 2019 and we are greatly regretting this move. We had been saving for 16 years to move into a house like this. It was our dream home and now that has all been ruined."

Ian from Newcastle says:

"Some days we feel like prisoners in our own home."

Sandra from Porthill says:

"I have lived in Newcastle for over 30 years and it is frustrating to see this blight causing so many issues and not being able to hold someone responsible for controlling the odour. I've shopped in Newcastle town centre for decades and even I don't want to go there when it stinks."

Members will understand how difficult this is for me, as a Member of Parliament for Newcastle. We have so much good going on in Newcastle, but a cloud is being cast over us by what is happening at Walley's Quarry. I have sent the report to the Environment Agency, Public Health England, the borough and county councils, the Secretaries of State concerned and the operator.

Lucy Allan (Telford) (Con): I congratulate my hon. Friend on the amazing work that he is doing in connection with this landfill site in his constituency and on representing his constituents so fantastically on this issue; I wish him luck with everything he does on it. I, too, have a waste site in my constituency; there has been a fire there for the last three weeks due to illegal dumping on a site that had actually been abandoned. Does my hon. Friend agree that there must be stronger powers for local authorities to intervene when illegal activities are occurring on sites, so that we can better protect our communities in the way he seeks?

Aaron Bell: I thank my hon. Friend; what is going on in her constituency is also completely unacceptable. I should stress that there are other sites in my constituency—illegal waste dumps—that are causing huge problems: one at Duddlespool and one at Bonnie Braes. Again, the Environment Agency appears to be hidebound and unwilling to act in the face of blatant law breaking by people—in one case, someone who has already been convicted. The problems are not unique to what is going on in Silverdale at this legal quarry.

The health concerns that I was raising a moment ago are not just anecdotal but backed up by evidence from local GPs. Only this morning, a hospital consultant was quoted in the press talking about a particularly heart-rending case of a five-year-old child, Matthew Currie.

Jo Gideon (Stoke-on-Trent Central) (Con): I thank my hon. Friend very much for bringing this really important matter to the House. Although the quarry lies within his constituency, the effects are very much felt in Stoke-on-Trent Central, particularly where we border with Newcastle-under-Lyme, in Basford, Hartshill, Penkhull and Trent Vale.

In addition to supporting all my hon. Friend's comments, I would like to make the Minister aware of a concern raised by the Royal Stoke University Hospital, based in my constituency and only two and a half miles from the quarry, about hydrogen sulphide emanating from the quarry. It has caused a poisonous toxic gas with an eggy smell. I know that my hon. Friend agrees that that is deeply concerning. My constituents and I join him in calling on the Minister to take immediate action, both to mitigate the worrying environmental and public health impacts and to find a lasting solution to the issue.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): Order. I did not interrupt the hon. Lady because we are trying to get back to some kind of normality, but I have to make the point that that was a very long intervention—a very interesting one, of course.

Aaron Bell: I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent Central (Jo Gideon) for that intervention; I also thank my hon. Friends the Members for Stoke-on-Trent North (Jonathan Gullis) and for Stoke-on-Trent South (Jack Brereton), neither of whom can be here today. The support I have had from all Stoke MPs on this matter has been greatly appreciated.

I stress the fact that the odour is now reaching into Stoke—up to Talke in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent North. My hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent South can smell it in his own house, over six miles away. The problem, if anything, is getting worse. I also have testimony from people who work at the hospital explaining how damaging it is for both patients and staff.

On 27 April, the hon. Member for Twickenham (Munira Wilson) held a Westminster Hall debate. It was about air quality in London, but nevertheless 126 of my constituents submitted some really moving testimony; I thank the House of Commons engagement team for providing it to me. Mary wrote:

“The effect on mental health is worrying. Many people feel trapped in their homes, which often are filled with the dreadful stench. Can't open windows or enjoy going out into gardens. Depression and isolation are quite profound—people are feeling at their wits end and some are expressing suicidal thoughts. We are desperate for it to be resolved.”

Thomas said:

“It's made me and my whole family physically sick, it's made my eyes sore to the touch, I cough constantly and live with a headache most of the time. I live with landfill gases that are ruining my life.”

We can agree that no one should have to live like that. They are not exaggerating—I have been out to smell it for myself on many occasions. At 3 am after the election count, I went out on to the Galingale estate, which has the worst of it—it was absolutely appalling. I do not know how anyone woken up by that landfill at that time would get back to sleep again.

The operator and the Environment Agency have been given years of warning about this issue, which has been repeatedly flagged—before I was elected, by campaigners

such as Councillor Derrick Huckfield, by me in this place, and by residents. The concerns were growing. All that has sometimes been dismissed by the operator as a social media campaign; I am sorry to have heard the same at times from the Environment Agency. The problem is real, and I will keep pushing about it until we see stronger and tougher action.

On the Environment Agency, first there was a report before I was elected—a previous monitoring exercise. It was a very weak report that did not even identify the source of the odour, which understandably damaged my constituents' trust—they know perfectly well where it is coming from. In September last year, I wrote to Sir James Bevan calling for fresh monitoring on the back of the complaints that I was receiving in my inbox. But that was not forthcoming—it was not felt that that would be useful at the time. We can draw a conclusion about where we have got to now; I will explain that in a moment. Had the Environment Agency taken my warnings more seriously back then, perhaps the current crisis could have been forestalled or minimised.

When it comes to the current crisis, I feel that the Environment Agency has been more concerned with its own reputation than with my town of Newcastle-under-Lyme. It does not do Silverdale any good to be called the UK's smelliest village, as it was on 30 April by *The Sun*. We take no pride in the news coverage that we have generated, but there is a lot of it. We have been covered in *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *The Sun*, the *Sunday Mirror*, the *Mail on Sunday*, Radio 4's “Today” and the “Jeremy Vine” show, to name just a few.

There are many more positive stories that I would rather be talking about instead—all the investment coming into Newcastle-under-Lyme as we build back better; the future high streets fund; the towns fund; and Newcastle College getting through to the final round of becoming an institute of technology. Those are the stories I want to be talking about in this place. I do not want to be talking about stinking landfill, but I will keep talking about it until we get it sorted.

There have been failings of the Environment Agency over the past year. It eventually did install the monitoring equipment, in February. The installation preceded the worst weekend that we have yet experienced—the weekend of 26 to 28 February. There were over 2,000 complaints to the council that weekend and over 1,400 to the Environment Agency directly. There would have been more, but people could not get through on the lines. However, after that weekend it turned out that the monitoring equipment had not actually been switched on, so there was no record of it, and because the Environment Agency thought it was switched on, it did not send anybody out to substantiate it, so we have no empirical evidence at all to substantiate what I believe was the single worst weekend we have experienced, other than the number of complaints. That is an astonishing dereliction of duty by the Environment Agency. I would laugh if it were not so serious.

The Environment Agency has berated my constituents for all the calls they have made to its call centre. It encouraged people to email instead, but the email address fell over and broke a couple of weekends ago, so people had to go back to calling in again. I am sorry if my constituents' complaints are inconvenient, but it is imperative that the Environment Agency understands the scale of the problem.

[Aaron Bell]

We come to what has happened this year. The Environment Agency did issue an enforcement notice against the operator. It also found five breaches of the permit, one of which was significant, and set a deadline of 30 April for the capping of cell 1 and the temporary capping of cell 2—there are four cells. It was expected—and I was told on a call with the Environment Agency—that those mandated works should bring about a significant improvement in odour levels fairly quickly after 30 April. The operator got the capping done with minutes to spare, but, if anything, since 30 April the opposite has occurred. Indeed, we are getting reports from further away than ever, including places such as Madeley in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Stone (Sir William Cash).

Not unreasonably, the EA's priority is to address the odour before taking punitive action against the operator. However, 20 days on from that deadline, we have no idea of the action that it intends to take to punish the operator for its many failings. I think that, in advance of that enforcement notice, the operator jumped before it was pushed by voluntarily suspending tipping, but it has now gone back to tipping without any explanation as to why we have so much odour. Why will the Environment Agency not suspend operations until it has figured out what is going on?

The Environment Agency now proudly says that it is auditing the loads before they go into the tip—seemingly for the first time. Six loads have been turned away in the past week. How many similar loads have not been turned away in the past? What exactly is in this landfill? It is hard to believe that it is only now that Red's customers are sending inappropriate waste to the tip and that this has never happened before.

I will be careful here, Madam Deputy Speaker, but multiple contractors and employees of the company have made allegations to me that I believe are criminal in nature. Investigations are ongoing, so I am not going to repeat those allegations verbatim, but if they are true, Red has serious questions to answer about what has happened in the past at this site. I have passed the allegations on to the Environment Agency's crime team. I encourage anyone listening to this debate who has evidence that may be important to come forward and discuss it with that environmental crime team, which is separate from the operations team and staffed by former policemen and policewomen. I have had personal assurance from them that they will carefully consider any evidence brought to them, that all allegations will be taken seriously and that they will pursue all credible leads.

As for the operator, it has stopped answering my letters. It did not answer my letter of 22 February or an open letter of 19 March. It will not answer questions that need answers or say what is causing the problem. Either it does not know or it will not say, and I honestly do not know which is worse. It has offered no plan for making things right and compensating those affected. Its communications are a travesty. In fact, the chief method of communication with some of my residents appears to be via lawyers' letters or a discredited residents association that does not speak for any of the residents in the area. It has refused to publicly stream its liaison committee; understandably, councillors from both parties have felt unable to participate on those terms, given the present crisis.

Instead, the operator has been on its social media celebrating its fast-growing profits and its appearance on *The Sunday Times* profit track list. In the year to December 2019, it claimed profits of £6 million. I believe that those profits were made at the expense of my constituents' health and wellbeing, and I hope that the company is setting them aside for remedying the issues with the site and putting things right with the community. It alleges that it has found an alternative explanation for the hydrogen sulphide—disused mineworking—but it cannot or will not corroborate this. It will not even share the basis for these claims with the EA, and the Coal Authority has now said publicly that it has found no evidence at all for this claim.

I can only conclude that the operator is trying to muddy the waters and evade its responsibilities. It misrepresented the Environment Agency by saying that it had consulted it about the resumption of tipping. The Environment Agency had to clarify that it was only notified. To quote the excellent letter that my friend Councillor Alan White, the leader of Staffordshire County Council, sent to the operator on 14 May, "The operator must accept that it has moral responsibilities as well as legal ones." Finally, in the past month, it has changed its name, from Red Industries RM to Walley's Quarry Ltd. I am sure that that is because of the damage this is doing to its brand, but I say to it here: it can change its name, but it cannot change the facts of this case, cannot change its culpability and cannot change its liability.

Let me come to the data we have seen from the monitoring that has been put in—I am grateful for the monitoring. The 30-minute data—it shows 30 minutes at a time—from the Galingale View monitoring site, which has had the worst of it, showed that in March odour levels were above the World Health Organisation annoyance threshold for 38% of the monitoring period. This was frequently the case at night and in the early evenings, so it was stopping people getting people to sleep or waking them up early. There was a peak of 1,200 micrograms per cubic metre, which is over 160 times the annoyance threshold, which is 7. On that "worst weekend" we had at the end of February the level was probably even higher, but we will never know. As for the 24-hour data, on which the public health test is assessed, there is a much higher limit of 150 over 24 hours, and that was breached twice in March. I do not believe that has ever happened in a landfill in the UK before. Yet the Public Health England commentary on this March data said:

"Based on the current data up to the end of March we would stress that any risk to long-term physical health is likely to be small, however we cannot completely exclude a risk to health from pollutants in the area. Short-term health effects may be experienced such as irritation to the eyes, nose and throat. Individuals with pre-existing respiratory conditions may be more susceptible to these effects."

I am struggling to get my head around PHE thinking that it is okay for people to experience headaches, nausea or dizziness for hours at a time—that is not normal. We have gone from a position that I saw in ministerial written answers last year—that

"the level and type of odour arising from such operations should not be causing annoyance"—

to one now that tacitly accepts not only annoyance, but minor, repeated health issues. That is completely unacceptable; it feels as though we are a lobster being slowly boiled. Residents are supposed to accept the premise that if there are no long-term health consequences,

it is somehow acceptable that we have these short-term ones. That is a creeping normalising of a completely unacceptable situation—I believe the modern term is “gaslighting”. We are being gaslit and gassed at the same time.

So what about what the council is doing? Not unreasonably, many constituents have inquired about the possibility of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, ably led by my friend Simon Tagg, acquiring a statutory nuisance or abatement notice. However, as the Minister will know, that is a challenging process. First, it would require a lot of work on the part of council officers to make the case. The council has been hamstrung by the EA's own failings and it has raised those directly with the Minister in a letter sent yesterday by its chief executive, Martin Hamilton. Nevertheless, the scale of the problems means this is not something the council can ignore and it is moving towards a position of serving an abatement notice, in the light of the suffering of borough residents.

I hope the Secretary of State would give the necessary permission for a prosecution of that abatement notice, should it prove necessary. If the council needs to take that action, it will be because the EA has failed. It should not fall to a borough council to spend £70,000 of local taxpayers' money on legal advice and landfill experts, or to ask its staff to work around the clock because the performance of a national agency has been so inadequate. Yesterday's letter, which the Minister will have, requests an independent inquiry into the performance of the EA over the long term, and I completely back the council on that. Why has the EA ignored every warning sign until it was too late? That is not how a responsible regulator should behave.

In conclusion, the message from me and my constituents is clear: enough is enough. Minister, put some extra funding into this emergency situation if necessary and step in if the EA continues to mismanage the situation. It has been repeatedly too slow to react and behind the curve. She should install fresh leadership if that is what is necessary, but we must have an urgent resolution—we cannot carry on like this. As no one, least of all the operator or the regulator, seems to understand the root cause of the problem, there is no reasonable conclusion to the saga of Walley's Quarry that does not involve it being shut down. Ultimately, the site needs to be capped off.

7.53 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Rebecca Pow): As ever, it is a pleasure to see you in the Chair, Madam Deputy Speaker. I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Aaron Bell) on securing this debate and thank him for his ongoing work on this issue, which he has been assiduous about in every respect, be it on his website, with his surveys, which we have heard all about, on social media, and in liaising with all those involved and the press. Indeed, he has kept me well informed throughout. I have listened to what he has been saying and had a good look at that survey. I fully sympathise with local residents who have been suffering in the way that he outlines. He painted a very clear picture of what many people have been going through, as have other hon. Friends here tonight.

No landfill will ever be completely odour-free, but odour arising from such operations should not cause serious offence. The environmental permitting system

operated by the Environment Agency is there to regulate the waste sector in England. It issues permits, which include requirements for odour management plans, as my hon. Friend knows. The EA sets out guidance on how odour monitoring should be carried out and the required competency of staff and equipment to be used when determining a permit application. The EA considers the proximity of the proposed activity to local residents and sets permit conditions accordingly. Local authorities draw up local plans to identify potential sites for waste facilities and then deal with relevant planning applications. Determination of applications takes account of likely impact of activities, including cumulative impacts on the local environment, communities and the economy.

This landfill site, operated by Walley's Quarry Ltd, previously known as Red Industries, as has been pointed out, which bought the site from Lafarge in 2016, was given planning permission in 1997 through the call-in process, admittedly in the face of local opposition. At some point, material, possibly unpermitted plasterboard waste, was deposited which is now causing significant odour problems by emitting hydrogen sulphide gas. I think we all remember what that smells like from our chemistry lessons at school. It is the rotting egg smell.

On the EA's enforcement powers, where an operator is not complying with their permit and there are issues of poor performance, the EA has a series of options at its disposal, from offering advice, guidance, civil sanctions, stop notices, suspension and revocation of the permit. Monitoring odour levels from a landfill is challenging. There are no numerical limits for odour of particular gases in landfill permits. That is due—I asked about this in particular—to the variability of gas composition and how it disperses. The EA, therefore, uses a condition in environmental permits that is based on offence to the senses. The odour is assessed by the level of offence it causes to the EA officer. To demonstrate non-compliance, an EA officer receiving a report of odour will attend the location, confirm the odour is actually coming from the site, and assess whether the site is complying with its odour management plan or doing something that is contrary to best available techniques—that is, the equipment used. This approach has evolved over a number of years following prosecutions and case law derived from those cases. If non-compliance is confirmed, EA officers can take action in line with its enforcement and statutory policy.

In terms of this quarry, as I said, I have huge sympathy for the thousands of residents who have raised complaints. The EA has an absolute priority to reduce odour from the site and it has been working with local partners, including my hon. Friend—I think he will admit that—and the whole community, to sort out the situation. Undoubtedly, the problem has got a lot worse in recent months. From air quality monitoring data from 2017, 2018 and 2019, no World Health Organisation guidelines were exceeded and annoyance levels were only exceeded for about 1% of the time. While EA site visits and monitoring increased in that time, no significant compliance issues were found. However, when complaints escalated significantly in December 2020—my hon. Friend was assiduous in pointing this out—the EA's activity monitoring at the site did increase. It made 17 visits and nearly 50 odour assessments, so I do not think it is right to suggest that it has not done what it should have done. It has put in a great deal of work. Significant non-compliance

[Rebecca Pow]

issues have been identified and the enforcement notice was issued in March. The EA is using its regulatory powers to the full and complies with the regulators' code. Four air quality monitoring units have now been installed close to the site and are taking measurements; they will be there at least until the end of August.

The EA is working very closely with Public Health England to understand the health impacts. Data monitoring will obviously be crucial. Public Health England is assessing the situation against World Health Organisation guidelines, looking at the potential health risks. My hon. Friend mentioned the 24-hour period from 7 to 8 March when the concentrations of hydrogen sulphide exceeded the WHO's 24-hour health-based guidelines. However, Public Health England stated that the analysis

"does not indicate any serious impacts to long-term physical health", but fully accepted that

"some people may experience...nausea, headaches or dizziness."

It recognised that

"persistent, unpleasant odour can affect people's mental wellbeing", which my hon. Friend referred to, and that it can cause stress and anxiety, which is completely understandable—a lot of these points are highlighted in my hon. Friend's survey. At the moment, air quality monitoring shows that, although the levels of odorous gas around the site are not exceeding the WHO health-based limits, they do regularly exceed the WHO annoyance guidance limits.

I take my hon. Friend's survey seriously. I also want to flag up that the local authority and Public Health England are now conducting a formal health survey, which I think will be very useful for building that evidence: they can look at my hon. Friend's survey and add their own data. Details are on the website, and any local resident is encouraged to take part. I think that that will be helpful.

The EA's enforcement notice, which was issued to the company in March, required it to cap the site with a harmless material to reduce the gas escaping. That was completed within the timescale required. The EA has also required the operator to install further gas management equipment, such as a flare to burn off gas, which is actually being tested this very week. It is assessing a new odour reduction plan and a surface emissions report, which the company is being required to produce. New gas extraction wells have also been installed, so my hon. Friend will agree that a great deal of work is ongoing and it should start to reduce the odours over the next few weeks. It does take a bit of time—it is not instant—so I urge him to give it a bit more time.

In addition, although the operator is now accepting waste, following its voluntary suspension in March, the EA is now actively auditing the waste supply chain to

the site to check what is going in. Only waste that is in accordance with the permit is being deposited. The operator has agreed to check every load; indeed, six loads have been stopped and rejected. That is a welcome measure to try to stop any further gas-producing materials such as gypsum getting into the site.

It is quite clear that the levels of H₂S, which is usually a minor gas coming out of landfill sites that disappears after a while, are exceptional on this site—that is without doubt. The EA is assessing the evidence from the site to consider what else it could do. It also has a national project under way to better understand the effects that hydrogen sulphide materials such as plasterboard are creating when inappropriately deposited in sites.

I hear my hon. Friend's vociferous calls for operations to be suspended at the site, but, actually, that would not secure the reduction in the odour of the gas. The changes to the gas management being made at the moment by the operator, overseen by the EA, are the things that ought to help to reduce the gas. The EA's priority is to reduce the gas, hold the operator to account and bring the site back into compliance.

The EA wants to continue to update its dedicated website on the site. I have looked at all the material that the EA shares with locals. I think my hon. Friend would admit that it has worked very hard on that messaging, and it will continue to do that. That is really important to engage the local community. I am aware that, unfortunately, there has also been some intimidating behaviour towards EA staff and I urge respect where everyone is working together.

I am going to get to my closing remarks—

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): I have to stop the Minister. It would be useful if she has a final sentence. We are past the time allowed, but it will be somewhat inconclusive if she cannot give her final sentence.

Rebecca Pow: Apologies, Madam Deputy Speaker. I thought I had until 8.6 pm—I was carefully watching the clock.

I will just summarise. I thank my hon. Friend for his assiduous work. I am keeping my eye on it. We are holding their feet to the fire; we have to reduce the odours from this site. Thank you for your time, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I will continue to have a really close look at what is going on at this site.

Question put and agreed to.

8.5 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)	Chris Elmore
Nigel Adams (Selby and Ainsty) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Bim Afolami (Hitchin and Harpenden) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Adam Afriyie (Windsor) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Imran Ahmad Khan (Wakefield) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Nickie Aiken (Cities of London and Westminster) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Rushanara Ali (Bethnal Green and Bow) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Tahir Ali (Birmingham, Hall Green) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Lucy Allan (Telford) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Dr Rosena Allin-Khan (Tooting) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Mike Amesbury (Weaver Vale) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Sir David Amess (Southend West) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Fleur Anderson (Putney) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Lee Anderson (Ashfield) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Stuart Anderson (Wolverhampton South West) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Caroline Ansell (Eastbourne) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Tonia Antoniazzi (Gower) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Edward Argar (Charnwood) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Jonathan Ashworth (Leicester South) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
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
Siobhan Baillie (Stroud) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Duncan Baker (North Norfolk) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Harriett Baldwin (West Worcestershire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Steve Barclay (North East Cambridgeshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Hannah Bardell (Livingston) (SNP)	Owen Thompson
Paula Barker (Liverpool, Wavertree) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Mr John Baron (Basildon and Billericay) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Simon Baynes (Clwyd South) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Margaret Beckett (Derby South) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Apsana Begum (Poplar and Limehouse) (Lab)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy
Aaron Bell (Newcastle-under-Lyme) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Hilary Benn (Leeds Central) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Scott Benton (Blackpool South) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Sir Paul Beresford (Mole Valley) (Con)	Stuart Andrew

Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy
Jake Berry (Rossendale and Darwen) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Clive Betts (Sheffield South East) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Saqib Bhatti (Meriden) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mhairi Black (Paisley and Renfrewshire South) (SNP)	Owen Thompson
Ian Blackford (Ross, Skye and Lochaber) (SNP)	Owen Thompson
Bob Blackman (Harrow East) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Kirsty Blackman (Aberdeen North) (SNP)	Owen Thompson
Olivia Blake (Sheffield, Hallam) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Paul Blomfield (Sheffield Central) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Crispin Blunt (Reigate) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Peter Bone (Wellingborough) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Steven Bonnar (Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill) (SNP)	Owen Thompson
Andrew Bowie (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Tracy Brabin (Batley and Spen) (Lab/Co-op)	Chris Elmore
Ben Bradley (Mansfield) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Karen Bradley (Staffordshire Moorlands) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Ben Bradshaw (Exeter) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Suella Braverman (Fareham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Kevin Brennan (Cardiff West) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
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)	Owen Thompson
James Brokenshire (Old Bexley and Sidcup) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Alan Brown (Kilmarnock and Loudon) (SNP)	Owen Thompson
Ms Lyn Brown (West Ham) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Mr Nicholas Brown (Newcastle upon Tyne East) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Anthony Browne (South Cambridgeshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Fiona Bruce (Congleton) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Chris Bryant (Rhondda) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Felicity Buchan (Kensington) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Ms Karen Buck (Westminster North) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
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)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy

Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy	Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy
Liam Byrne (Birmingham, Hodge Hill) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Neil Coyle (Bermondsey and Old Southwark) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Ruth Cadbury (Brentford and Isleworth) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Stephen Crabb (Preseli Pembrokeshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Alun Cairns (Vale of Glamorgan) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Angela Crawley (Lanark and Hamilton East) (SNP)	Owen Thompson
Amy Callaghan (East Dunbartonshire) (SNP)	Owen Thompson	Stella Creasy (Walthamstow) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Dr Lisa Cameron (East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow) (SNP)	Owen Thompson	Virginia Crosbie (Ynys Môn) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Sir Alan Campbell (Tynemouth) (Con)	Chris Elmore	Tracey Crouch (Chatham and Aylesford) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mr Gregory Campbell (East Londonderry) (DUP)	Sammy Wilson	Jon Cruddas (Dagenham and Rainham) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Dan Carden (Liverpool, Walton) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	John Cryer (Leyton and Wanstead) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Mr Alistair Carmichael (rt. hon.) (Orkney and Shetland) (LD)	Wendy Chamberlain	Judith Cummins (Bradford South) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Andy Carter (Warrington South) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Alex Cunningham (Stockton North) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
James Cartlidge (South Suffolk) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Janet Daby (Lewisham East) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Sir William Cash (Stone) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	James Daly (Bury North) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Miriam Cates (Penistone and Stocksbridge) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Ed Davey (Kingston and Surbiton) (LD)	Wendy Chamberlain
Maria Caulfield (Lewes) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Wayne David (Caerphilly) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Alex Chalk (Cheltenham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	David T. C. Davies (Monmouth) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Sarah Champion (Rotherham) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Gareth Davies (Grantham and Stamford) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Douglas Chapman (Dunfermline and West Fife) (SNP)	Owen Thompson	Geraint Davies (Swansea West) (Lab/Co-op)	Chris Elmore
Bambos Charalambous (Enfield, Southgate) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Dr James Davies (Vale of Clwyd) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Joanna Cherry (Edinburgh South West) (SNP)	Owen Thompson	Mims Davies (Mid Sussex) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Rehman Chishti (Gillingham and Rainham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Alex Davies-Jones (Pontypridd) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Sir Christopher Chope (Christchurch) (Con)	Mr William Wragg	Philip Davies (Shipley) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Jo Churchill (Bury St Edmunds) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mr David Davis (Haltemprice and Howden) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Feryal Clark (Enfield North) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Dehenna Davison (Bishop Auckland) (Con)	Ben Everitt
Greg Clark (Tunbridge Wells) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Martyn Day (Linlithgow and East Falkirk) (SNP)	Owen Thompson
Mr Simon Clarke (Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Thangam Debbonaire (Bristol West) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Theo Clarke (Stafford) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Marsha De Cordova (Battersea)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy
Brendan Clarke-Smith (Bassetlaw) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Slough) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Chris Clarkson (Heywood and Middleton) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Caroline Dinenage (Gosport) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
James Cleverly (Braintree) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Miss Sarah Dines (Derbyshire Dales) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Dr Thérèse Coffey (Suffolk Coastal) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mr Jonathan Djanogly (Huntingdon) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Elliot Colburn (Carshalton and Wallington) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Leo Docherty (Aldershot) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Damian Collins (Folkestone and Hythe) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Martin Docherty-Hughes (West Dunbartonshire) (SNP)	Owen Thompson
Daisy Cooper (St Albans) (LD)	Wendy Chamberlain	Anneliese Dodds (Oxford East) (Lab/Co-op)	Chris Elmore
Rosie Cooper (West Lancashire) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Michelle Donelan (Chippenham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Yvette Cooper (Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Dave Doogan (Angus) (SNP)	Owen Thompson
Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Ind)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy	Allan Dorans (Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock) (SNP)	Owen Thompson
Alberto Costa (South Leicestershire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Ms Nadine Dorries (Mid Bedfordshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Robert Courts (Witney) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Steve Double (St Austell and Newquay) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Claire Coutinho (East Surrey) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Stephen Doughty (Cardiff South and Penarth) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Ronnie Cowan (Inverclyde) (SNP)	Owen Thompson	Peter Dowd (Bootle) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Sir Geoffrey Cox (Torrington and West Devon) (Con)	Stuart Andrew		

Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy	Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy
Oliver Dowden (Hertsmere) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Lucy Frazer (South East Cambridgeshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Richard Drax (South Dorset) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	George Freeman (Mid Norfolk) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Jack Dromey (Birmingham, Erdington) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Mike Freer (Finchley and Golders Green) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mrs Flick Drummond (Meon Valley) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Richard Fuller (North East Bedfordshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
James Duddridge (Rochford and Southend East) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Marcus Fysh (Yeovil) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Rosie Duffield (Canterbury) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Sir Roger Gale (North Thanet) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Sir Iain Duncan Smith (Chingford and Woodford Green) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Barry Gardiner (Brent North) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Philip Dunne (Ludlow) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mark Garnier (Wyre Forest) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Ms Angela Eagle (Wallasey) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Ms Nusrat Ghani (Wealden) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Maria Eagle (Garston and Halewood) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Nick Gibb (Bognor Regis and Littlehampton) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Colum Eastwood (Foyle) (SDLP)	Hywel Williams	Patricia Gibson (North Ayrshire and Arran) (SNP)	Owen Thompson
Mark Eastwood (Dewsbury) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Peter Gibson (Darlington) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Jonathan Edwards (Carmarthen East and Dinefwr) (Ind)	Stuart Andrew	Jo Gideon (Stoke-on-Trent Central) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Ruth Edwards (Rushcliffe) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Preet Kaur Gill (Birmingham, Edgbaston) (Lab/Co-op)	Chris Elmore
Clive Efford (Eltham) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Paul Girvan (South Antrim) (DUP)	Sammy Wilson
Julie Elliott (Sunderland Central) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	John Glen (Salisbury) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Michael Ellis (Northampton North) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mary Glendon (North Tyneside) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Mr Tobias Ellwood (Bournemouth East) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mr Robert Goodwill (Scarborough and Whitby) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mrs Natalie Elphicke (Dover) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Michael Gove (Surrey Heath) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Florence Eshalomi (Vauxhall) (Lab/Co-op)	Chris Elmore	Patrick Grady (Glasgow North) (SNP)	Owen Thompson
Bill Esterson (Sefton Central) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Richard Graham (Gloucester) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
George Eustice (Camborne and Redruth) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mrs Helen Grant (Maidstone and The Weald) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Chris Evans (Islwyn) (Lab/Co-op)	Chris Elmore	Peter Grant (Glenrothes) (SNP)	Owen Thompson
Dr Luke Evans (Bosworth) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	James Gray (North Wiltshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Sir David Evennett (Bexleyheath and Crayford) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Chris Grayling (Epsom and Ewell) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Michael Fabricant (Lichfield) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Damian Green (Ashford) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Laura Farris (Newbury) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Kate Green (Stretford and Urmston) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Tim Farron (Westmorland and Lonsdale) (LD)	Wendy Chamberlain	Lilian Greenwood (Nottingham South) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Stephen Farry (North Down) (Alliance)	Wendy Chamberlain	Margaret Greenwood (Wirral West) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Simon Fell (Barrow and Furness) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Andrew Griffith (Arundel and South Downs) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Margaret Ferrier (Rutherglen and Hamilton West) (Ind)	Stuart Andrew	Nia Griffith (Llanelli) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Colleen Fletcher (Coventry North East) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Kate Griffiths (Burton) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Katherine Fletcher (South Ribble) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	James Grundy (Leigh) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mark Fletcher (Bolsover) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Jonathan Gullis (Stoke-on-Trent North) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Nick Fletcher (Don Valley) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Andrew Gwynne (Denton and Reddish) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Stephen Flynn (Aberdeen South) (SNP)	Owen Thompson	Louise Haigh (Sheffield, Heeley) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Vicky Ford (Chelmsford) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Robert Halfon (Harlow) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Kevin Foster (Torbay) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Luke Hall (Thornbury and Yate) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Yvonne Fovargue (Makerfield) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Fabian Hamilton (Leeds North East) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Dr Liam Fox (North Somerset) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Stephen Hammond (Wimbledon) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Vicky Foxcroft (Lewisham, Deptford) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Matt Hancock (West Suffolk) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mary Kelly Foy (City of Durham) (Lab)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy	Greg Hands (Chelsea and Fulham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mr Mark Francois (Rayleigh and Wickford) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Claire Hanna (Belfast South) (SDLP)	Hywel Williams

Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy	Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy
Emma Hardy (Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Dan Jarvis (Barnsley Central) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Ms Harriet Harman (Camberwell and Peckham) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Sajid Javid (Bromsgrove) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mark Harper (Forest of Dean) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mr Ranil Jayawardena (North East Hampshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Carolyn Harris (Swansea East) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Sir Bernard Jenkin (Harwich and North Essex) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Trudy Harrison (Copeland) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mark Jenkinson (Workington) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Sally-Ann Hart (Hastings and Rye) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Andrea Jenkyns (Morley and Outwood) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Simon Hart (Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Robert Jenrick (Newark) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Helen Hayes (Dulwich and West Norwood) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Boris Johnson (Uxbridge and South Ruislip) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Sir John Hayes (South Holland and The Deepings) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Dr Caroline Johnson (Sleaford and North Hykeham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Sir Oliver Heald (North East Hertfordshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Dame Diana Johnson (Kingston upon Hull North) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
John Healey (Wentworth and Dearne) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Gareth Johnson (Dartford) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
James Heappey (Wells) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Kim Johnson (Liverpool, Riverside) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Chris Heaton-Harris (Daventry) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	David Johnston (Wantage) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Gordon Henderson (Sittingbourne and Sheppey) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Darren Jones (Bristol North West) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Sir Mark Hendrick (Preston) (Lab/Co-op)	Chris Elmore	Mr David Jones (Clwyd West) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Drew Hendry (Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey) (SNP)	Owen Thompson	Fay Jones (Brecon and Radnorshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Darren Henry (Broxton) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Gerald Jones (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Antony Higginbotham (Burnley) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mr Kevan Jones (North Durham) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Damian Hinds (East Hampshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mr Marcus Jones (Nuneaton) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Simon Hoare (North Dorset) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Ruth Jones (Newport West) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Wera Hobhouse (Bath) (LD)	Wendy Chamberlain	Sarah Jones (Croydon Central) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Dame Margaret Hodge (Barking) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Simon Jupp (East Devon) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mrs Sharon Hodgson (Washington and Sunderland West) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Mike Kane (Wythenshawe and Sale East) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Mr Richard Holden (North West Durham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Daniel Kawczynski (Shrewsbury and Atcham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Kate Hollern (Blackburn) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Alicia Kearns (Rutland and Melton) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Kevin Hollinrake (Thirsk and Malton) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Gillian Keegan (Chichester) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Adam Holloway (Gravesham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Barbara Keeley (Worsley and Eccles South) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Paul Holmes (Eastleigh) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Liz Kendall (Leicester West) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Rachel Hopkins (Luton South) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Afzal Khan (Manchester, Gorton) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Stewart Hosie (Dundee East) (SNP)	Owen Thompson	Stephen Kinnock (Aberavon) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Sir George Howarth (Knowsley) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Sir Greg Knight (East Yorkshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
John Howell (Henley) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Julian Knight (Solihull) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Paul Howell (Sedgefield) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Danny Kruger (Devizes) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Nigel Huddleston (Mid Worcestershire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Kwasi Kwarteng (Spelthorne) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Dr Neil Hudson (Penrith and The Border) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Peter Kyle (Hove) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Eddie Hughes (Walsall North) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Ben Lake (Ceredigion) (PC)	Hywel Williams
Jane Hunt (Loughborough) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mr David Lammy (Tottenham) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Jeremy Hunt (South West Surrey) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	John Lamont (Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Tom Hunt (Ipswich) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Robert Langan (High Peak) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Rupa Huq (Ealing Central and Acton) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Mrs Pauline Latham (Mid Derbyshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Imran Hussain (Bradford East) (Lab)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy	Ian Lavery (Wansbeck) (Lab)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy
Mr Alister Jack (Dumfries and Galloway) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Chris Law (Dundee West) (SNP)	Owen Thompson
Christine Jardine (Edinburgh West) (LD)	Wendy Chamberlain	Andrea Leadsom (South Northamptonshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew

Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy	Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy
Sir Edward Leigh (Gainsborough) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Angus Brendan MacNeil (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)	Owen Thompson
Ian Levy (Blyth Valley) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Stephen McPartland (Stevenage) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck (South Shields) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Esther McVey (Tatton) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Andrew Lewer (Northampton South) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Justin Madders (Ellesmere Port and Neston) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Brandon Lewis (Great Yarmouth) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Khalid Mahmood (Birmingham, Perry Barr) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Clive Lewis (Norwich South) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Shabana Mahmood (Birmingham, Ladywood) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Dr Julian Lewis (New Forest East) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Alan Mak (Havant) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger (Bridgwater and West Somerset) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Seema Malhotra (Feltham and Heston) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
David Linden (Glasgow East) (SNP)	Owen Thompson	Kit Malthouse (North West Hampshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Tony Lloyd (Rochdale) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Julie Marson (Hertford and Stortford) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Carla Lockhart (Upper Bann) (DUP)	Sammy Wilson	Rachael Maskell (York Central) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Mark Logan (Bolton North East) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Christian Matheson (City of Chester) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Rebecca Long Bailey (Salford and Eccles) (Lab)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy	Mrs Theresa May (Maidenhead) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Marco Longhi (Dudley North) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Jerome Mayhew (Broadland) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Julia Lopez (Hornchurch and Upminster) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Paul Maynard (Blackpool North and Cleveleys) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Jack Lopresti (Filton and Bradley Stoke) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Ian Mearns (Gateshead) (Lab)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy
Mr Jonathan Lord (Woking) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mark Menzies (Fylde) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Tim Loughton (East Worthing and Shoreham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Huw Merriman (Bexhill and Battle) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Caroline Lucas (Brighton, Pavilion) (Green)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy	Stephen Metcalfe (South Basildon and East Thurrock) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Holly Lynch (Halifax) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Edward Miliband (Doncaster North) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Steve McCabe (Birmingham, Selly Oak) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Robin Millar (Aberconwy) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Kerry McCarthy (Bristol East) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Mrs Maria Miller (Basingstoke) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Karl McCartney (Lincoln) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Amanda Milling (Cannock Chase) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Siobhain McDonagh (Mitcham and Morden) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Nigel Mills (Amber Valley) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Andy McDonald (Middlesbrough) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Navendu Mishra (Stockport) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Stewart Malcolm McDonald (Glasgow South) (SNP)	Owen Thompson	Mr Andrew Mitchell (Sutton Coldfield) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Stuart C. McDonald (Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East) (SNP)	Owen Thompson	Gagan Mohindra (South West Hertfordshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
John McDonnell (Hayes and Harlington) (Lab)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy	Carol Monaghan (Glasgow North West)	Owen Thompson
Mr Pat McFadden (Wolverhampton South East) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Damien Moore (Southport) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Conor McGinn (St Helens North) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Robbie Moore (Keighley) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Alison McGovern (Wirral South) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Layla Moran (Oxford West and Abingdon) (LD)	Wendy Chamberlain
Craig Mackinlay (South Thanet) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Penny Mordaunt (Portsmouth North) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Catherine McKinnell (Newcastle upon Tyne North) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Stephen Morgan (Portsmouth South) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Cherilyn Mackrory (Truro and Falmouth) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Anne Marie Morris (Newton Abbot) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Anne McLaughlin (Glasgow North East) (SNP)	Owen Thompson	David Morris (Morecambe and Lunesdale) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Rachel Maclean (Redditch) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Grahame Morris (Easington) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Jim McMahan (Oldham West and Royton) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Joy Morrissey (Beaconsfield) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Anna McMorrin (Cardiff North) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Jill Mortimer (Hartlepool) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
John Mc Nally (Falkirk) (SNP)	Owen Thompson	Wendy Morton (Aldridge-Brownhills) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
		Dr Kieran Mullan (Crewe and Nantwich) (Con)	Stuart Andrew

Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy	Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy
Holly Mumby-Croft (Scunthorpe) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Bridget Phillipson (Houghton and Sunderland South) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
David Mundell (Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Chris Philp (Croydon South) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Ian Murray (Edinburgh South) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Christopher Pincher (Tamworth) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
James Murray (Ealing North) (Lab/Co-op)	Chris Elmore	Luke Pollard (Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport) (Lab/Co-op)	Chris Elmore
Mrs Sheryll Murray (South East Cornwall) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Dr Dan Poulter (Central Suffolk and North Ipswich) (Con)	Peter Aldous
Andrew Murrison (South West Wiltshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Rebecca Pow (Taunton Deane) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Lisa Nandy (Wigan) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Lucy Powell (Manchester Central) (Lab/Co-op)	Chris Elmore
Sir Robert Neill (Bromley and Chislehurst) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Victoria Prentis (Banbury) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Gavin Newlands (Paisley and Renfrewshire North) (SNP)	Owen Thompson	Mark Pritchard (The Wrekin) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Charlotte Nichols (Warrington North) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Jeremy Quin (Horsham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Lia Nici (Great Grimsby) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Will Quince (Colchester) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
John Nicolson (Ochil and South Perthshire) (SNP)	Owen Thompson	Yasmin Qureshi (Bolton South East) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Caroline Nokes (Romsey and Southampton North) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Dominic Raab (Esher and Walton) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Jesse Norman (Hereford and South Herefordshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Tom Randall (Gedling) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Alex Norris (Nottingham North) (Lab/Co-op)	Chris Elmore	Angela Rayner (Ashton-under-Lyne) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Neil O'Brien (Harborough) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Brendan O'Hara (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)	Owen Thompson	Steve Reed (Croydon North) (Lab/Co-op)	Chris Elmore
Dr Matthew Offord (Hendon) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Christina Rees (Neath) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Sarah Olney (Richmond Park) (LD)	Wendy Chamberlain	Ellie Reeves (Lewisham West and Penge) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Chi Onwurah (Newcastle upon Tyne Central) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Rachel Reeves (Leeds West) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Guy Opperman (Hexham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Jonathan Reynolds (Stalybridge and Hyde) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Abena Opong-Asare (Erith and Thamesmead) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Nicola Richards (West Bromwich East) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Kate Osamor (Edmonton) (Lab/Co-op)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy	Angela Richardson (Guildford) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Kate Osborne (Jarrow) (Lab)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy	Ms Marie Rimmer (St Helens South and Whiston) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Kirsten Oswald (East Renfrewshire) (SNP)	Owen Thompson	Rob Roberts (Delyn) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Taiwo Owatemi (Coventry North West) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Mr Laurence Robertson (Tewkesbury) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Sarah Owen (Luton North) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Gavin Robinson (Belfast East) (DUP)	Sammy Wilson
Ian Paisley (North Antrim) (DUP)	Sammy Wilson	Mary Robinson (Cheadle) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Neil Parish (Tiverton and Honiton) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Matt Rodda (Reading East) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Priti Patel (Witham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Andrew Rosindell (Romford) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mr Owen Paterson (North Shropshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Douglas Ross (Moray) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mark Pawsey (Rugby) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Lee Rowley (North East Derbyshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Stephanie Peacock (Barnsley East) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Dean Russell (Watford) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Sir Mike Penning (Hemel Hempstead) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Lloyd Russell-Moyle (Brighton, Kemptown) (Lab/Co-op)	Chris Elmore
Matthew Pennycook (Greenwich and Woolwich) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Liz Saville Roberts (Dwyfor Meirionnydd) (PC)	Hywel Williams
John Penrose (Weston-super-Mare) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Selaine Saxby (North Devon) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Andrew Percy (Brigg and Goole) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Paul Scully (Sutton and Cheam) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mr Toby Perkins (Chesterfield) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Bob Seely (Isle of Wight) (Con)	Mark Harper
Jess Phillips (Birmingham, Yardley) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Andrew Selous (South West Bedfordshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
		Naz Shah (Bradford West) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
		Grant Shapps (Welwyn Hatfield) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
		Alok Sharma (Reading West) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
		Mr Virendra Sharma (Ealing, Southall) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
		Mr Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield) (Lab/Co-op)	Chris Elmore

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Alec Shelbrooke (Elmet and Rothwell) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Derek Thomas (St Ives) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Tommy Sheppard (Edinburgh East) (SNP)	Owen Thompson	Gareth Thomas (Harrow West) (Lab/Co-op)	Chris Elmore
Tulip Siddiq (Hampstead and Kilburn) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Nick Thomas-Symonds (Torfaen) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
David Simmonds (Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Emily Thornberry (Islington South and Finsbury) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Chris Skidmore (Kingswood) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Stephen Timms (East Ham) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Andy Slaughter (Hammersmith) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Edward Timpson (Eddisbury) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Alyn Smith (Stirling) (SNP)	Owen Thompson	Kelly Tolhurst (Rochester and Strood) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Cat Smith (Lancaster and Fleetwood) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Justin Tomlinson (North Swindon) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Chloe Smith (Norwich North) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Craig Tracey (North Warwickshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Greg Smith (Buckingham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Anne-Marie Trevelyan (Berwick-upon-Tweed) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Henry Smith (Crawley) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Jon Trickett (Hemsworth) (Lab)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy
Jeff Smith (Manchester, Withington) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Laura Trott (Sevenoaks) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Julian Smith (Skipton and Ripon) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Elizabeth Truss (South West Norfolk) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Nick Smith (Blaenau Gwent) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Tom Tugendhat (Tonbridge and Malling) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Royston Smith (Southampton, Itchen) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Karl Turner (Kingston upon Hull East) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Karin Smyth (Bristol South) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Derek Twigg (Halton) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Alex Sobel (Leeds North West) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Mr Shailesh Vara (North West Cambridgeshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Amanda Solloway (Derby North) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Martin Vickers (Cleethorpes) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Dr Ben Spencer (Runnymede and Weybridge) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Matt Vickers (Stockton South) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Alexander Stafford (Rother Valley) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Theresa Villiers (Chipping Barnet) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Keir Starmer (Holborn and St Pancras) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Christian Wakeford (Bury South) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Chris Stephens (Glasgow South West) (SNP)	Owen Thompson	Mr Robin Walker (Worcester) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Andrew Stephenson (Pendle) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mr Ben Wallace (Wyre and Preston North)	Stuart Andrew
Jo Stevens (Cardiff Central) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Dr Jamie Wallis (Bridgend) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Jane Stevenson (Wolverhampton North East) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	David Warburton (Somerset and Frome) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
John Stevenson (Carlisle) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Matt Warman (Boston and Skegness) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Bob Stewart (Beckenham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Giles Watling (Clacton) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Iain Stewart (Milton Keynes South) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Suzanne Webb (Stourbridge) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)	Wendy Chamberlain	Claudia Webbe (Leicester East) (Ind)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy
Sir Gary Streeter (South West Devon) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Catherine West (Hornsey and Wood Green) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Wes Streeting (Ilford North) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Matt Western (Warwick and Leamington) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Mel Stride (Central Devon) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Helen Whately (Faversham and Mid Kent) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Graham Stringer (Blackley and Broughton) (Lab)	Chris Elmore	Mrs Heather Wheeler (South Derbyshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Graham Stuart (Beverley and Holderness) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Dr Alan Whitehead (Southampton, Test) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Julian Sturdy (York Outer) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Dr Philippa Whitford (Central Ayrshire) (SNP)	Owen Thompson
Zarah Sultana (Coventry South) (Lab)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy	Mick Whitley (Birkenhead) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Rishi Sunak (Richmond (Yorks)) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Craig Whittaker (Calder Valley) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
James Sunderland (Bracknell) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	John Whittingdale (Malden) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Sir Desmond Swayne (New Forest West) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Nadia Whittome (Nottingham East) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Sir Robert Syms (Poole) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Bill Wiggin (North Herefordshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Sam Tarry (Ilford South) (Lab)	Chris Elmore		
Alison Thewliss (Glasgow Central) (SNP)	Owen Thompson		

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James Wild (North West Norfolk) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mike Wood (Dudley South) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Craig Williams (Montgomeryshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Jeremy Wright (Kenilworth and Southam) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Gavin Williamson (Montgomeryshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mohammad Yasin (Bedford) (Lab)	Chris Elmore
Munira Wilson (Twickenham) (LD)	Wendy Chamberlain	Jacob Young (Redcar) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Beth Winter (Cynon Valley) (Lab)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy	Nadhim Zahawi (Stratford-on-Avon) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Pete Wishart (Perth and North Perthshire) (SNP)	Owen Thompson	Daniel Zeichner (Cambridge) (Lab)	Chris Elmore

Written Statements

Wednesday 19 May 2021

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

Post Office Update

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Paul Scully): Following the Prime Minister's commitment on 26 February 2020 and the ministerial statements of 10 June 2020 and 30 September 2020, the Post Office Horizon IT inquiry was established as a non-statutory inquiry. In accordance with the terms of section 15 of the Inquiries Act, the Government have now given notice to convert the inquiry into a statutory inquiry under the Inquiries Act 2005 on 1 June 2021 and at the same time amend the inquiry's terms of reference, as set out below.

Scope of the inquiry

Government want to be fully assured that through the inquiry there is a public summary of the failings associated with Post Office Ltd's Horizon IT system. The inquiry will draw on the findings made by Mr Justice Fraser from the *Bates and others v. Post Office Limited* Group litigation, in particular judgment (No. 3) "Common issues" and judgment (No. 6) "Horizon issues", the judgments of the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) in *R v. Hamilton and others*, and other judgments in which convictions have been quashed. It will consider all other relevant evidence, listen to those that have been affected, understand what went wrong, and assess whether lessons have been learned and whether concrete changes have taken place, or are under way, at Post Office Ltd.

The inquiry shall:

A: Understand and acknowledge what went wrong in relation to Horizon, leading to the civil proceedings in *Bates and others v. Post Office Ltd* and the quashing of criminal convictions, by drawing from the judgments of Mr Justice Fraser in *Bates and others*, the judgments of the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) in *R v. Hamilton and others*, other judgments in which convictions have been quashed, affected postmasters' experiences and any other relevant evidence in order to identify what key lessons must be learned for the future.

B: Build upon the findings of Mr Justice Fraser and the judgments of the criminal courts specified in A above by obtaining all available relevant evidence from Post Office Ltd, Fujitsu, BEIS and UKGI to establish a clear account of 1) the implementation and failings of Horizon over its lifecycle and 2) Post Office Ltd's use of information from Horizon when taking action against persons alleged to be responsible for shortfalls.

C: Assess whether Post Office Ltd has learned the lessons from the criticisms made by Mr Justice Fraser in his judgments following the "Common issues" and "Horizon issues" trials and those identified by affected postmasters and has delivered or made good progress on the organisational and cultural changes necessary to ensure a similar case does not happen in the future.

D: Assess whether the commitments made by Post Office Ltd within the mediation settlement—including the historical shortfall scheme—have been properly delivered.

E: Assess whether the processes and information provided by Post Office Ltd to postmasters are sufficient:

- i. to enable both parties to meet their contractual obligations
- ii. to enable postmasters to run their businesses. This includes assessing whether Post Office Ltd's related processes such as recording and resolving postmaster queries, dispute handling, suspension and termination are fit for purpose. In addition, determine whether the quality of the service offer for postmasters and their relationship with Post Office Ltd has materially improved since the conclusions reached by Mr Justice Fraser.

F: Examine the historic and current governance and whistleblowing controls in place at Post Office Ltd, identify any relevant failings, and establish whether current controls are now sufficient to ensure that failings leading to the issues covered by this inquiry do not happen again.

The inquiry will consider only those matters set out in the preceding sections A-F. The inquiry will not consider any issue which is outside the scope of the powers conferred upon the inquiry by the Inquiries Act 2005. The Horizon group damages settlement (albeit the inquiry may examine the events leading to the settlement), and/or the engagement or findings of any other supervisory or complaints mechanisms, including in the public sector, are outside the inquiry's scope.

Governance

The inquiry will be led by Sir Wyn Williams FLSW, as the chair of the inquiry. There will be an inquiry secretariat and Sir Wyn will be supported by up to four assessors. These assessors will support Sir Wyn Williams by providing advice on the sources, content and interpretation of evidence received as appropriate. They may also provide independent scrutiny and challenge in relation to emerging findings and recommendations.

Publication report date

The inquiry should make any recommendations it sees fit, including actions that may, in its view, be appropriate as a result of its findings. The inquiry will aim to submit its findings to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in autumn 2022. The final report will be published by the Secretary of State and the Government will respond in due course.

[HCWS40]

TREASURY

PrivatBank (Recognition of Third-Country Resolution Action) Instrument 2021

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen): I wish to update the House on the steps that HM Treasury has taken in regard to public joint stock company commercial bank PrivatBank.

On 14 May 2021, I approved the Bank of England's decision to recognise the bail-in by the National Bank of Ukraine and the Ukrainian authorities between 18 and 20 December 2016 of four English law governed loans made by UK SPV Credit Finance plc to PrivatBank, in accordance with section 89H of the Banking Act 2009. The Bank of England instrument which gave effect to the recognition decision will be laid before Parliament today and has been published on the Bank of England website.

The Bank of England and HM Treasury have independently reached the determination that the bail-in of the four loans was broadly comparable in anticipated results and objectives to an equivalent UK resolution,

and that none of the conditions for refusal to recognise within section 89H(4) of the Banking Act 2009 was satisfied.

Decisions over whether to recognise a third-country resolution action are regarded by the Financial Stability Board as a key aspect of an effective cross-border resolution regime. Under UK law, the Bank of England is required to make a decision on whether or not to recognise resolution actions when requested to do so by a third-country resolution authority. That decision can only be made with the approval of HM Treasury.

[HCWS39]

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

First Implementation Plan for Genome UK

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock): My noble Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Innovation, Lord Bethell of Romford, has today made the following written ministerial statement:

Last September, after months of hard work across the UK genomics community, I was delighted to launch Genome UK—the UK's genomics healthcare strategy.

Ultimately, the strategy set out a vision to create the most advanced genomics healthcare system in the world to deliver better healthcare at a lower cost.

Thanks to achievements made over the last 70 years, from the discovery of the structure of DNA to the completion of the 100,000 Genomes Project, the UK is rightly recognised as a world-leader in genomics.

But for the UK to remain at the forefront of international competition in genomics research and healthcare, and attract investment, it is essential that we start to deliver on the commitments set out in our strategy.

I am therefore delighted to inform the House of the launch of the 2021-22 Genome UK implementation plan. This publication will demonstrate the great strides we have already made in delivering on our vision and outlines the clear actions we will progress over the next year.

This implementation plan has been agreed by members of the National Genomics Board, a group of senior life sciences sector stakeholders, which I chair with Sir John Bell. Over the last six months, we have engaged with our delivery partners and key stakeholders to identify projects and programmes that can be delivered during 2021-22.

We have drafted a diverse and ambitious package of actions and as part of this, I am pleased to announce the following:

A major drive, led by Genomics England, to improve the diversity of genomic data, addressing the historic under-representation of data from minority ethnic communities in genomic datasets, which results in health inequalities. The work will include widespread community engagement alongside sequencing and analytic tool development.

The roll-out of whole genome sequencing to patients with a suspected rare disease and certain cancers in the NHS Genomic Medicine Service, in partnership with Genomics England. This is a truly transformational milestone for

patients, and for our overarching one million genomes commitment—our ambition to sequence 500,000 genomes in the NHS and 500,000 in UK Biobank, creating the most advanced genomics healthcare system in the world.

Proof of concept work, led by Genomics England in partnership with the NHS, to deliver the first phase of a next-generation approach for the diagnosis and treatment of cancer, integrating multiple data sources and new technologies to support faster and more comprehensive genomic testing for cancer in line with the NHS long term plan.

Our Future Health (formerly known as the Accelerating Detection of Disease challenge) will help drive developments in the next generation of diagnostics and clinical tools—including the evaluation of polygenic risk scores (PRS), drug discovery, and smart clinical trials. In 2021, Our Future Health will pilot participant recruitment processes to build towards their five million participant ambition. Our Future Health will conduct feedback pilot studies in 2022 to test approaches to deliver health-related information, including PRS, to participants.

NIHR, MRC and Wellcome Trust will, over the next five years, provide funding to the Global Alliance for Genomics and Health (GA4GH) to develop standards and policies for sharing genomic and related health data. GA4GH aims to ensure its standards are easily accessible and ready for use by global genomic programs and data sharing initiatives. It will proactively engage stakeholders at national and organisational level to drive uptake of GA4GH standards.

Given that Genome UK runs over 10 years, some of its 45 commitments are either long term or will be delivered through cumulative action over the coming years. Implementation of the strategy will therefore be phased, so we have mainly focused on actions taking place this year. Genomics is a fast-moving field, and a phased approach will allow us to review our commitments and reflect emerging science and the latest research findings. Our intention is to align future iterations of this plan with Government funding cycles.

These commitments are just some of the first important steps on the journey to realising the vision set out in Genome UK. However, achieving all our objectives will require new investment over the next decade, with continued collaboration and funding from the public, private and charity sectors becoming ever more important.

Genomic research and innovation will transform healthcare in this country to benefit patients and drive our economic recovery. Given our reputation as a world-leader in genomics healthcare and research, it has the potential to play a key role in delivering our wider goal of becoming a global life sciences.

This iteration of the implementation plan is largely England-focused, but some aspects are UK-wide. For example, the world-leading research programs, including COG-UK, the consortium which delivered large scale covid genome sequencing. We have therefore developed this plan with the support of our partners in the devolved Administrations.

We will continue to work with our partners from the devolved Administrations, the NHS, industry and research, via the National Genomics Board and other venues, to ensure that we deliver on our goal to create the most advanced genomics healthcare system in the world. I also want to emphasise that engagement and dialogue with the healthcare workforce, patients and the diverse UK population, will be at the heart of the journey to reach the vision set out in the strategy.

[HCWS41]

Ministerial Correction

Wednesday 19 May 2021

HOME DEPARTMENT

Independent Review of Dyfed-Powys Police

The following is an extract from observations on the petition presented by the hon. Member for Llanelli (Nia Griffith) on Independent Review of Dyfed-Powys Police.

Subsequent criminal allegations made against and by the petitioners have been investigated and, as appropriate, reviewed by the Crown Prosecution Service; complaints against the force have been investigated at a local level and externally by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC); subsequent directions by the IOPC have been implemented; and civil claim proceedings between the petitioners and the force settled.

[Official Report, 12 March 2021, Vol. 690, c. 2P.]

Letter of correction from the Minister for Crime and Policing, the hon. Member for North West Hampshire (Kit Malthouse).

An error has identified in my observations on the petition presented by the hon. Member for Llanelli (Nia Griffith).

The correct response should have been:

Subsequent criminal allegations made against and by the petitioners have been investigated and, as appropriate, reviewed by the Crown Prosecution Service; complaints against the force have been investigated at a local level and externally by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC); subsequent directions by the IOPC have been implemented; and civil claim proceedings between the **petitioners' daughter** and the force settled.

ORAL ANSWERS

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MINISTERIAL CORRECTION

Wednesday 19 May 2021

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No proofs can be supplied. Corrections that Members suggest for the Bound Volume should be clearly marked on a copy of the daily Hansard - not telephoned - and *must be received in the Editor's Room, House of Commons,*

**not later than
Wednesday 26 May 2021**

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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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