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**HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT**

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES**

(HANSARD)

Monday 18 March 2024

House of Commons

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The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[Mr SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

BUSINESS BEFORE QUESTIONS

SPOILIATION ADVISORY PANEL

Resolved,

That an Humble Address be presented to His Majesty, That he will be graciously pleased to give directions that there be laid before this House a Return of the Report from the Right Honourable Sir Alan Moses, Chairman of the Spoliation Advisory Panel, dated 18 March 2024, in respect of three oil sketches by Sir Peter Paul Rubens now in the possession of the Courtauld Institute of Art, London.—(*Aaron Bell.*)

Oral Answers to Questions

WORK AND PENSIONS

The Secretary of State was asked—

Serious Medical Conditions: Financial Support

1. **Duncan Baker** (North Norfolk) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to support financially people unable to work due to serious medical conditions.

[902018]

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mel Stride): My Department does a great deal to support the long-term sick and disabled, including through universal credit and its health element, and through the personal independence payment, which is a contribution to the additional costs of sickness and disability.

Duncan Baker: My constituent Jenifer Picton is currently undergoing extensive treatment for cancer and is consequently unable to work. I wish Ms Picton all the very best with her treatment. She has come to my office, which has helped with universal credit, PIP and the new-style employment and support allowance. She has now managed to get PIP, but given that she is seriously ill, why should she have to come to my office for help? Why do we make it so arduous and difficult for people who need treatment to get help?

Mel Stride: I thank my hon. Friend for his question and the typical assiduity with which he takes up his constituency case. May I send my best wishes, and I am sure those of the whole House, to Ms Picton? I am happy to meet him to discuss in more detail the circumstances that he has described.

Marsha De Cordova (Battersea) (Lab): Data in responses to my written questions on PIP appeals shows that more than 50,000 ill or disabled people had their appeals upheld at tribunal without the need for new evidence. Given that the UK Government will be examined today by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities following its 2016 special inquiry that found that the threshold had been met for grave and systematic violations, is it not time to replace the flawed and outdated PIP system with a framework that is fit for purpose?

Mel Stride: Of course, we always keep all benefits under review at the Department, including PIP and the assessment processes. As the hon. Lady points out, there is rightly an appeals process for those who are not happy with the conclusions of those assessments. We keep those under review, and I can reassure her that they represent a relatively small proportion of the total number of applications.

Regional Variations: Unemployment and Inactivity

2. **Chi Onwurah** (Newcastle upon Tyne Central) (Lab): What recent assessment he has made of the potential implications for his policies of regional variations in levels of employment and inactivity. [902019]

The Minister for Employment (Jo Churchill): The regional employment gap is significantly lower than in 2010. Jobcentres take a place-based approach to deliver targeted support that reflects local need and the local economy.

Chi Onwurah: Health Equity North research shows high levels of economic inactivity in the north-east due to disability or ill health—40% above the national average. I visited the jobcentre in Newcastle and was very impressed by the dedication and hard work of the staff, but I know from the Public and Commercial Services union that one in four universal credit managers took time off in 2023 for mental illness, which is three times the figure before 2019. We are the only country in the G7 not to have the same level of employment as before the pandemic. Are those high rates not because of record NHS waiting lists, low staff morale and general Government incompetence?

Jo Churchill: As the hon. Lady found, within our jobcentres we have highly skilled people helping people to find work. We have a higher number of people with disabilities in work than in 2010—more than 2 million—and we intend to ensure that work coaches can work carefully and sensitively and attend to people's needs.

Stephen Crabb (Preseli Pembrokeshire) (Con): In recent months, the Welsh Affairs Committee has heard from young adults about their experiences with the benefits system. We have been struck by how this group of young people want to work and feel that they can work, but they have been written off as long-term sick and passed to the long-term sickness benefit roll by jobcentres. They feel incredibly let down. Does the Minister agree that we cannot afford to be signing off so many of our young people on long-term sickness?

Jo Churchill: That is why we have WorkWell, the back to work plan, and the occupational health group, led by Dame Carol Black, looking into fit note reform. It is also why we have youth employment coaches and the

youth hubs. We are working to ensure that there is the right attenuated support, including kickstart, the sector-based work academy programme and boot camps. Only last week, I met Steph, who is 27, 10 years out of work and grateful for the help that she has had.

Helping People into Work

3. **Gordon Henderson** (Sittingbourne and Sheppey) (Con): What steps he is taking to help people into work. [902020]

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mel Stride): Jobcentre Plus provides a variety of different support to encourage and support people into work, including training and one-to-one, face-to-face counselling by work coaches.

Gordon Henderson: In February, there were 615 claimants aged 18 to 24 out of work in Sittingbourne and Sheppey. Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is important that schools and businesses work together to ensure that young people have the qualifications and skills they need to progress into work once they finish full-time education?

Mel Stride: I could not agree more with my hon. Friend. It is exactly why we have youth hubs providing advice and support on not just getting into work but other important matters to young people, such as housing, their health and debt management.

Emma Hardy (Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle) (Lab): I was talking to the Royal National Institute of Blind People, which represents the blind and partially sighted. It told me of an employee who said,

“I am newly employed and I am unable to fulfil my role. It has been extremely stressful and frustrating”,

and this is because of Access to Work. Does the Minister agree that without having Access to Work in place within the first four weeks of someone entering work, it is incredibly difficult for them to maintain that position?

Mel Stride: I am pleased that the hon. Lady raises Access to Work, because it is extremely effective. The grant can be there year in, year out and be up to a maximum of £66,000. Along with other approaches, it has very much led to our meeting our employment goal for disabled people in half the time that we set in 2017—over a million more disabled people were in work by 2022.

Theresa Villiers (Chipping Barnet) (Con): What are the Government doing to use apprenticeships to help young people engage with the labour market, to tackle levels of economic inactivity and to give them the opportunities they need to get the careers that they want?

Mel Stride: My right hon. Friend raises economic inactivity, which is lower in our country than in the United States, France and Italy. It is below the average of the OECD, the G7 and the European Union. Apprenticeships play a very important part in producing those good figures, though there is of course always more to be done, not least through our approach of engaging extremely closely with employers, both at the national level and through our jobcentres.

Andrew Gwynne (Denton and Reddish) (Lab): As somebody who has fought really hard over the last four years to overcome the difficulties presented by long covid, I am sure that the Secretary of State will appreciate that a significant number of the people not in work because of health conditions will have some form of post-viral fatigue linked to long covid. What assessment has he made of the effect of long covid on the workforce, and what is he doing to help people who have it get back to work?

Mel Stride: The hon. Gentleman specifically raises long covid, which is one of many health pressures in our society and post covid in many other countries that were also affected by the virus. We have a number of approaches, including universal support, which places people in employment and gives them critical support for up to 12 months. We also have WorkWell, and we are looking at occupational health and what tax incentives we might put in place to encourage employers to do more on that front. We are doing a great deal.

Mr Speaker: I call the shadow Minister.

Alison McGovern (Wirral South) (Lab): Arguably, the biggest barrier to growth in the UK and to turning around the Prime Minister's recession is the supply of labour. Following the Chancellor's "Back to work Budget" in the autumn and all the measures unveiled since then, some of which the Secretary of State has just reeled off, did the Office for Budget Responsibility upgrade or downgrade its forecast on employment growth in the Budget 12 days ago?

Mel Stride: One of the most important figures in the spring Budget economic and fiscal outlook was a recognition by the OBR that there will be a net 200,000 more people in employment as a consequence of that fiscal event and the one that preceded it in the autumn. What the hon. Lady cannot get away from is that economic inactivity in our country is at a lower level than in every year under the last Labour Government.

Alison McGovern: What the Secretary of State cannot get away from is the fact that, as has already been said, our employment rate has not returned to the post-pandemic level. He cannot answer the question because the truth is that the OBR downgraded its forecast: the unemployment forecast is worse. The reason for that is a truth that the British people have known for a long time now: these Ministers sitting on the Treasury Bench have no idea, no plan for jobs, no plan for growth. They are done; it is time for a general election.

Mel Stride: I have already referred to the 200,000 additional jobs that the OBR suggests in its forecast, but the hon. Lady cannot get away from the fact that we have record levels of payroll employment in our country, and near record low unemployment. Let us contrast that with Labour's record: it always leaves unemployment higher than when it comes into office. Economic inactivity was higher than it is now in each year of the previous Labour Government, and we had more people in absolute poverty after housing costs under Labour as a direct consequence.

Welfare Reforms

4. **Nigel Mills** (Amber Valley) (Con): What his planned timetable is for the roll-out of welfare reforms. [902021]

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mel Stride): We are bringing forward a number of important reforms to our welfare system at pace. Phase 1 of our universal support has already been activated, and phase 2 will be later this year. Next month we will announce 15 WorkWell areas—about a third of England—that have been successfully selected, and will be rolled out live this autumn.

Nigel Mills: I thank the Secretary of State for listing all those reforms. The data is clear that after 13 weeks out of work, the chances of someone finding work starts to fall off rapidly. Therefore, there is a need for more intensive and tailored support. Could he update the House on the additional jobcentre support roll-out, and when my constituents might get access to those benefits?

Mel Stride: We are keen to do that. AJS, to which my hon. Friend refers, has been rolled out in parts of the country at six weeks, but shortly will be extended and strengthened for two weeks at the 13-week stage of the unemployment journey. That is part of the more intensive conditions that we apply to ensure that we help—and in many circumstances, require—people to go back into work.

Tim Farron (Westmorland and Lonsdale) (LD): Some of the poorest people I know in my constituency work for themselves. Hill farmers have seen a 41% drop in their income over the last four years. The welfare system does not work for them, because they are paid less than the minimum wage. Access to universal credit is less for them, because of the minimum income floor. Will the Secretary of State urgently look at that, so that small business owners—especially hill farmers in my constituency—are not made even poorer because of the Government's rules?

Mel Stride: The hon. Gentleman is right inasmuch as universal credit for the self-employed has to recognise the fact that sometimes there are inconsistent levels of income month to month. That is why we have a minimum income floor and the arrangements around that. I know he has a rural, agricultural constituency; I recognise some of those issues, and I am looking closely at them.

Social Security Benefits: Vulnerable People

5. **Margaret Greenwood** (Wirral West) (Lab): What assessment he has made of the effectiveness of his Department's support for vulnerable people who claim social security benefits. [902022]

The Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work (Mims Davies): [*In British Sign Language: "Happy Sign Language Week everybody."*] It is a key priority for the Department for Work and Pensions to provide effective support for our vulnerable customers. We provide training on how to support customers' mental health, and we have a six-point plan for supporting claimants who may be at risk of suicide or self-harm. The DWP regularly reviews processes to make improvements through colleague and customer feedback, and through the work of the serious case panel.

Margaret Greenwood: The Government estimated that 3% of households on legacy benefits would fail to move to universal credit under managed migration.

However, by last December, 21% had not managed to do so and, as a result, had their benefits stopped. This is a matter of real concern. The DWP will now ask more vulnerable people who are wholly reliant on benefits to transfer. What will the Government do to ensure that those vulnerable people do not fall out of the social security system?

Mims Davies: I thank the hon. Lady for her point about vulnerable customers who have come into our curtilage and purview. The Minister for Employment has reminded me that we will take this very slowly, and will engage with and support customers. Customers can speak to help to claim advisers at Citizens Advice, and we will ensure that we listen to them.

Justin Tomlinson (North Swindon) (Con): In addition to the financial support provided to personal independence payment claimants, what progress is being made to refer claimants proactively to the widest support available in their community?

Mims Davies: I thank my hon. Friend for highlighting this point. There is the household support fund, help to claim, and opportunities to pop into the local library to get additional support, for example. There is also an extra £500 million out there on top of the £1 billion through to the end of this month. I would say to anybody: "The benefits calculator is out there, and do talk to the CAB and your local council"—perhaps in Swindon.

Debbie Abrahams (Oldham East and Saddleworth) (Lab): Today the Government are in Geneva defending their policies to the UN committee that is investigating the UK for breaches of the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, including article 28 on the right of disabled people to social protection. Given that drastically cutting disabled people's social security support between 2012 and 2019 and austerity were found to be responsible for 148,000 avoidable deaths, how will the new wave of austerity announced in the Budget affect the health and wellbeing of disabled people?

Mims Davies: I am pleased to have this opportunity to make it clear to the House that the Government are committed to the UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities and we look forward to outlining the UK's progress on advancing the rights of disabled people across this country. Our national disability strategy and the disability action plan are delivering tangible progress. This includes ensuring that disabled customers can use the services they are entitled to, as we have spelled out today. Disabled people's needs are better reflected in planning for emergencies as well. We are making sure that this country is the most accessible and, importantly, equal place to live in the world.

Dean Russell (Watford) (Con): I truly welcome and am personally grateful for my hon. Friend's support for my campaign for parity between mental and physical health in the workplace, and for the recent publication of the national suicide prevention strategy, which referenced two of the points I have been campaigning on. I understand acutely that the Health and Safety Executive has worked hard on updating first aid guidance, and I would be grateful if the Minister could please update the House on this.

Mims Davies: The DWP is also proudly committed to becoming a more trauma-informed organisation, and we will be world-leading on that. I was pleased to see that in Hastings. The HSE continues to work with us, as does the Department of Health and Social Care, to support the suicide prevention strategy for England. I can confirm that the first phase of mental health guidance on the HSE website has been revised to include text that emphasises the importance of, and the need to consider, parity of risks to either mental or physical health.

Job Vacancies: Banff and Buchan

6. David Duguid (Banff and Buchan) (Con): What steps he is taking to help fill job vacancies in Banff and Buchan constituency. [902023]

The Minister for Employment (Jo Churchill): The jobcentre team are providing a broad range of support, including partnering with Morrisons and the Co-op to fill local vacancies in my hon. Friend's constituency and delivering targeted outreach at Banff library with local providers.

David Duguid: My hon. Friend is aware of the very low unemployment in Banff and Buchan and the difficulty in filling vacancies with local people, particularly in the food and drink sector. The seafood sector in particular is still in a transition away from dependency on overseas workers, which could take some years. What data can the DWP provide on the measures that local businesses have taken to maximise the employment of local people, and what other support can the Department offer to attract workers to areas of low unemployment such as Banff and Buchan?

Jo Churchill: There are the wages paid through the rise in the national living wage, my hon. Friend's local jobcentre and the range of access to support. I am sure we will be discussing all these issues tomorrow at the roundtable with seafood processors that I will be attending along with the Minister for Legal Migration and the Border, my hon. Friend the Member for Corby (Tom Pursglove).

Mr Speaker: I call the Chair of the Select Committee.

Sir Stephen Timms (East Ham) (Lab): A large number of people in Banff and Buchan are economically inactive. They are not claiming benefits so they are not eligible for employment support from jobcentres, but the Select Committee recommended last summer that such people should be eligible. Would that not be in their interests and in the interests of employers struggling to fill vacant posts at the moment, and therefore supportive of much-needed economic growth?

Jo Churchill: We always take these matters very seriously and keep them under full review.

Cost of Living: Food Bank Use

7. Mr Virendra Sharma (Ealing, Southall) (Lab): What recent assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of changes in the cost of living on levels of food bank use. [902024]

14. Gen Kitchen (Wellingborough) (Lab): What recent assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of changes in the cost of living on levels of food bank use. [902031]

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mel Stride): Food banks are independent organisations, with DWP having no direct role in their operation. We do, however, monitor the use of food banks through the family resources survey, and the next instalment of that will be later this month.

Mr Sharma: Nearly 50,000 people needed help from Ealing Foodbank last year. Some 38% of them were children under 16. It is amazing that the food bank and its volunteers are there to help, but it is a national shame that it is needed. What are the Government's plans to reduce dependence on food banks?

Mel Stride: This is the Government who have overseen a 400,000 reduction in the number of children in absolute poverty since 2010. Despite the chuntering from the Opposition Front Bench, unfortunately the figures were far worse under the last Labour Government than they may be at the moment. The hon. Gentleman asks directly what we are doing. We are again putting up the national living wage by substantially more than inflation this April. The Chancellor has already brought in national insurance cuts that will be worth £900 to the average earner. Benefits themselves are going up by 6.7% next month. We have also changed the arrangements for local housing allowance, which means that 1.6 million people, many of whom are on very low incomes, will be better off by an average of £800 a year.

Gen Kitchen: While on the campaign trail, I met the Daylight Centre and SERVE Rushden. Both have seen their service users increase in number, even with the extension of the household support fund, which they both welcome. What can the Secretary of State do to expand the eligibility of the fund, improve uptake and increase the value of the healthy start payment?

Mel Stride: May I welcome the hon. Lady to her place? In answer to her question, I will simply point out that there was much speculation before the spring Budget about whether the housing support fund was going to be extended. In my opinion, the Chancellor took exactly the right approach, and the fund has now been extended for a further six months.

Mr Speaker: I call the SNP spokesperson.

Kirsty Blackman (Aberdeen North) (SNP): Research from the Trussell Trust reveals the devastating truth: more than half of people receiving universal credit ran out of food in January and could not afford more, and 2.4 million universal credit claimants have fallen into debt because they could not keep up with essential bills. Will the Secretary of State back the Trussell Trust's joint campaign with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, and commit to legislate for an essentials guarantee in universal credit to reduce food bank use and ensure that everyone has a protected minimum amount of support in order to afford life's essentials—yes or no?

Mel Stride: The most important thing is that this Government recognise that the best way out of poverty, and the best way to address the circumstances that the hon. Lady describes, is through work. That is why the Chancellor reduced taxation, making work pay ever more, and why the national living wage is to be increased by close to 10% this April, following a similar increase around this time last year. Benefits are going up by 6.7% and increased by 10.1% this time last year. I have already mentioned local housing allowance, and of course we have now had eight consecutive months of real wage growth as inflation has fallen.

Jobcentres: Darlington

8. **Peter Gibson** (Darlington) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to increase the support offered by Jobcentres in Darlington. [902025]

The Minister for Employment (Jo Churchill): The team are working tirelessly with Darlington Borough Council, Tees Valley Combined Authority and other partners to deliver through job fairs, SWAPs and skills bootcamps.

Peter Gibson: I thank my hon. Friend for her answer, and may I be the first in the Chamber to wish her a very happy birthday? In addition to the issues that she has highlighted, may I highlight the wonderful work that Darlington jobcentre has done in setting up its Facebook page? Does she agree that it is a template for others to follow, and will she come to Darlington and meet my fantastic work coaches?

Jo Churchill: I thank my hon. Friend—it is seemingly quite a large number on my birthday cards today.

My hon. Friend has been a fantastic champion of his local jobcentre, and has campaigned vigorously to ensure that Darlington is at the forefront of innovation. I will be meeting his team in April. I have been to seven jobcentres since the last DWP questions, and I will make sure that his work coaches are at the top of my list.

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP): The Minister, in her response to the hon. Member for Darlington (Peter Gibson), has emphasised what she will do for his local jobcentre. Whatever she will do for Darlington, she will also do for the rest of the United Kingdom, including my constituency of Strangford. Across this great United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, how can we work better with further education colleges to get our young people ready for the jobs that become available?

Jo Churchill: I talk regularly to colleagues in the Department for Education, ensuring that those skilled boot camp SWAPs make people job-ready, because they have not only the experience but a guaranteed interview. That is the way we are driving those numbers up.

Support for Pensioners

9. **Mrs Heather Wheeler** (South Derbyshire) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to support pensioners. [902026]

10. **Greg Smith** (Buckingham) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to support pensioners. [902027]

19. **Mr Louie French** (Old Bexley and Sidcup) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to support pensioners. [902036]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Paul Maynard): In 2023-24 we will spend over £152 billion on benefits for pensioners in Great Britain—5.9% of GDP—including a forecast £125.4 billion on the state pension.

Mrs Wheeler: I thank my hon. Friend for his reply. South Derbyshire pensioners have been in touch with me following the Budget, emailing to say that it seemed to offer them nothing. Would he be kind enough to set out today the help that the Government have given and are giving to pensioners, to help them realise that “nothing” is far from the reality of what a Conservative Government are giving them?

Paul Maynard: I am grateful for that question. The answer could not be further from nothing. This is a Government with a proven track record of supporting pensioners, including our commitment to the triple lock. In April we will see the state pension raised by 8.5% this year, after an increase of 10.1% last year, meaning that it will be a full £3,200 higher in cash terms than it was in 2010.

Greg Smith: I very much welcome the record on supporting pensioners that my hon. Friend has just outlined. A number of pensioners in my constituency have contacted me about the effects of fiscal drag—they may have a very modest private pension that is now being dragged into tax when they never expected it to be. What steps is my hon. Friend taking in conjunction with the Treasury to ensure that we can get pensioners on modest private pensions out of tax?

Paul Maynard: This is the Government who have nearly doubled the personal allowance since 2010, ensuring that most of the lowest earners do not pay income tax. Indeed, thanks to the personal allowance, around 30% of individuals do not pay tax, and of course any pensioner solely reliant on the state pension does not pay income tax.

Mr French: Does my hon. Friend agree with me that while the Conservatives proudly continue to support pensioners in their hard-earned retirement with the triple lock and other cost of living support measures, it is disgraceful that the Labour Mayor of London has hammered pensioners and working people in Bexley by increasing council tax by approximately £200 per year, and ultra low emission zone charges to £12.50 per day?

Paul Maynard: I am sure my hon. Friend agrees with me that the Mayor of London seems to spend more time paying extremely expensive salaries to some of his key employees around Greater London. Of course ULEZ has an effect on pensioners: whether they are going to the shops, visiting their family or attending hospital appointments, they will be the ones to pay the price for the Mayor's overweening ambition.

Kate Hollern (Blackburn) (Lab): In early December, my constituent was informed by the DWP that they must renew their personal independence payment entitlement. They were told that if the necessary forms were not returned by 13 January, their PIP could be stopped. On Christmas day, the DWP informed my constituent that, as the forms had not been returned, their PIP entitlement had been stopped and they owed some money. My constituent returned the forms in early January, long before the deadline, but they have had no response since then, and nor have they received their benefits. Could I implore the Minister to intervene in this astounding case and work out exactly how this error could have occurred?

Paul Maynard: I thank the hon. Lady for her question. If she writes to me with further details, I will ensure that the relevant Minister is able to look into the case.

Steve McCabe (Birmingham, Selly Oak) (Lab): With more than 9 million pensioners now paying income tax—many, as we have just heard, as a result of frozen allowances—and almost 1 million not receiving pension credit to which they are rightly entitled, does the Minister think it might be time to improve the uptake of pension credit?

Paul Maynard: I am pleased to be able to say that applications to receive pension credit are currently increasing, quarter on quarter.

Steve McCabe *indicated dissent.*

Paul Maynard: If the hon. Gentleman will wait and listen to the answer, I will explain what we are doing to increase uptake of pension credit. Not only do we have major nationwide campaigns, our latest one featuring Harry Redknapp; we are also carrying out experimental campaigns, such as writing to all those pensioners who are in receipt of housing benefit, to make sure that those most likely to be eligible for pension credit are being targeted to take it up.

Alison Thewliss (Glasgow Central) (SNP): It is all very well people applying for pension credit, but The Well advice centre in my constituency has identified massive delays in people getting the pension credit for which they are eligible. One constituent got in touch with me in February, having applied for pension credit in August 2023, and they were still waiting for the application to be resolved, resulting in a backdating of more than £8,000. Would that money not have been much better in the pocket of a pensioner who needed it right then, rather than waiting indefinitely for the DWP to get back to them?

Paul Maynard: I am obviously disappointed to hear of that constituent's experience, but it is not something I hear very often about pension credit. We have an excellent delivery record and an extremely low level of complaints.

Anna Firth (Southend West) (Con): Southend's indomitable pensioners and WASPI women Frances Neil and Deborah Dalton came to see me on Friday on behalf of the 10,000 WASPI women across Southend. With the ombudsman's final report due within weeks,

will the Secretary of State please commit to coming to the House to make a statement so that these issues can be fully aired?

Paul Maynard: As I am sure my hon. Friend is all too aware, I am not able to comment until the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's report is published.

Mr Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield) (Lab/Co-op): When will this miserable Government wake up to the fact that there is a shortage of skilled labour in this country, and at the same time that we have an army of pensioners who could be retained in the workforce if they were given the right incentives to carry on working? There is a good relationship between work and staying healthy, so will the Minister act?

Paul Maynard: I am not sure whether the hon. Gentleman is volunteering himself for a post-Commons career, but there are many job opportunities for pensioners across the country. Indeed, many people working on attendance allowance in my part of Blackpool are in their 70s and 80s, and they are doing a fantastic job. We put an awful lot of effort, not just through the mid-life MOT but through the older worker support in our jobcentres, to make sure that we match jobseekers to the right job for them.

Mr Speaker: I call the shadow Minister.

Gill Furniss (Sheffield, Brightside and Hillsborough) (Lab): Time and again, pensioners have been let down by this Government. They suspended the triple lock, breaking a key manifesto promise; their disastrous mini-Budget knocked hundreds of billions of pounds from pension pots; and their failure to get a grip on the cost of living means that pensioners are mainly living in cold homes over the winter and have a choice between heating or eating. Against this backdrop, is the Minister at all surprised that almost one in five pensioners are now living in poverty?

Paul Maynard: It is as if the shadow Minister has not noticed the almost £900 of cost of living payments made to pension credit recipients across the country over the last year. I know the Opposition have relied on last week's Resolution Foundation report to criticise what we are doing, but this is what the report actually says:

“Pensioners used to be by far the most likely to be in poverty...now they are the least likely.” This change in the relationship between old age and low income is one of the most profound social and economic changes this country has seen”.

We achieved that under this Government, not under our failed Labour predecessors.

Rural Poverty: Benefits System

11. **Hywel Williams** (Arfon) (PC): What steps he is taking through the benefits system to tackle poverty in rural areas. [902028]

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mel Stride): We are bearing down on poverty, not least by incentivising work within the benefit system. As the hon. Gentleman will know, we have reduced the universal credit taper, for example, which has led to a record level of payroll employment and near record low unemployment.

Hywel Williams: I commissioned a poverty report for the Arfon constituency from the highly respected Bevan Foundation—copies are available online in Welsh and English. One finding is that, of the people receiving both universal credit and housing benefit in Arfon, 35% are paying the bedroom tax, compared with 21% across Wales. This is cushioned to some extent by the Gwynedd local authority's discretionary help, but will the Minister review the differential negative effects of the bedroom tax between communities, particularly those with a diminished housing stock because of, for example, high levels of holiday homes?

Mel Stride: I thank the hon. Gentleman for referring to that report, which I will look at with interest. Of course, there is no such thing as a bedroom tax, as it is not a tax at all; it is a spare room subsidy. It is there for very good reason: to free up additional space for those who need it. On the housing front, as I said earlier, local housing allowance has been improved such that 1.6 million people on low incomes in the private rented sector will be, on average, £800 a year better off come April.

Virginia Crosbie (Ynys Môn) (Con): One of the best ways to tackle poverty in rural areas such as Ynys Môn is through jobs fairs. Will the Secretary of State join me in thanking Alwen Gardiner and my brilliant Ynys Môn DWP team for organising an excellent tourism and hospitality jobs fair, which was attended by over 150 jobseekers in Llangefni and companies such as Tredici Butchers & Deli in Beaumaris, and the Breeze Hill in Benllech? Diolch yn fawr.

Mel Stride: I thank my hon. Friend for drawing attention to her jobs fair. She is a local dynamo in standing up for her constituents. When I arrived there recently thinking I was very special to support yet another jobs fair—a disability jobs fair—I was quickly reminded of the fact that I was the 32nd Minister to have been to her constituency in, I think, the past 12 months.

Housing Benefit: Landlords

12. **Jane Hunt (Loughborough) (Con):** What steps he is taking to tackle non-payment of housing benefit to district councils when the beneficiary is not a registered social landlord. [902029]

The Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work (Mims Davies): The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 brings reforms to the supported housing sector to improve quality and value for money. Any changes to funding models would need to be considered in the context of those broader reforms, but we keep the subsidy policy under review.

Jane Hunt: Charnwood Borough Council currently contributes £1.5 million a year to subsidise the supported housing benefit payment to local charities, which are unable to become registered social landlords. The charities provide excellent support and accommodation to those suffering from addiction, or ex-offenders undergoing rehabilitation. However, the cost to the council is unsustainable. Please will my hon. Friend look at funding those services, as the Department for Work and Pensions currently does for similar organisations that are registered social landlords?

Mims Davies: I thank my hon. Friend for raising this issue. The challenging fiscal environment means that we need to prioritise resources and ensure that support is targeted effectively to maximise impact for citizens. I chair a cross-Government group with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on quality issues and other matters, such as subsidy loss, which she raises. We will continue to review and monitor the concerns that she and other local authorities have raised. However, I point to the local housing allowance uplift, which is a central focus for me.

Personal Independence Payment Claims

13. **Alistair Strathern (Mid Bedfordshire) (Lab):** What recent estimate he has made of the average time it takes for claimants to complete medical assessments for personal independence payment claims. [902030]

The Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work (Mims Davies): We treat all claimants individually, recognising the differing needs of health conditions and disabilities, and the impact on claimants' daily lives. The length of time for an assessment is not included in the contract between the DWP and providers, but I can confirm that the average time for 2023 was 63 minutes.

Alistair Strathern: I was heartbroken to hear the experience of a constituent who had to go through an enhanced medical assessment for PIP. A bowel cancer survivor with severe arthritis, she was made to stay on a phone call for over three hours to be assessed. That meant that, due to her needs, she had to suffer the indignity of soiling herself just to complete the assessment. How on earth can that be okay? I would like to understand what steps are being taken to reduce the times of these assessments and to hear what can be done to ensure they are finally undertaken with basic human compassion.

Mims Davies: I thank the hon. Gentleman for raising a distressing case. The DWP is committed to assessing people as quickly as possible. I am happy to look into that particular situation to see why, in this case, the support the claimant was entitled to did not come promptly. Prioritising the reduction of processing times to maximise the number of assessments completed without affecting quality is key, but I am very happy to take that case away.

Mr Speaker: I call the shadow Minister.

Vicky Foxcroft (Lewisham, Deptford) (Lab): The Department for Work and Pensions has a staggering 288,000 outstanding PIP claims. The average clearance time is currently 15 weeks. People are waiting almost four months for a decision, which can have a significant impact on physical and mental health. What is the Minister doing to improve clearance times, so that people are not left in limbo, worrying about whether they can afford the extra costs associated with their disability or long-term health condition? The Government urgently need to get a grip.

Mims Davies: Claimants' satisfaction has remained above the service level of 90% or higher as of the three-month average that began in September 2016. The end-to-end clearance time from registration to a decision being made is currently 15 weeks, which has been reduced from

26 weeks in August 2021. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Lady asked very gently what we are doing. We have multi-channel assessments and I am engaging regularly with my officials twice a month to ensure that we are assessing the queues and the delays and, as I said at the start of this question, that we are treating everybody individually and in a tailored and suitable way.

Child Poverty

15. **Stuart C. McDonald** (Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East) (SNP): What steps his Department is taking to help reduce the number of children in poverty. [902032]

16. **Gavin Newlands** (Paisley and Renfrewshire North) (SNP): What steps his Department is taking to help reduce the number of children in poverty. [902033]

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mel Stride): We are reducing child poverty through the use of a large number of measures, not least ensuring that work pays, hence our increase in the national living wage in April and the reduction in the national insurance tax that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor announced recently.

Stuart C. McDonald: A total of 100,000 children will be kept clear of poverty this year thanks to the Scottish Government's policies—primarily the Scottish child payment. Surely the Secretary of State must now look to rolling out some of our policies in other parts of the UK and, at the very least, ditch the two-child limit, which deliberately forces children into poverty.

Mel Stride: The limit to which the hon. Gentleman refers is there for a very good reason, which is that people in those circumstances should face the same basic decisions as those not on benefits. That is an important matter of fairness across those who receive benefits as well as the many who are paying tax. As for the number of children in poverty, that has fallen by 400,000 since 2010.

Gavin Newlands: Many of those people are in work, Secretary of State. Some £14 million has been paid to more than 10,000 children's families in Renfrewshire thanks to the widely praised Scottish child payment. Praise has come from the Institute for Public Policy Research Scotland, which says that the Scottish Government are making employment for parents central to their child poverty strategy, but it says that devolved employment support programmes are

"held back by responsibility being split across governments and a reserved Jobcentre system which is more often focused on compliance than helping people reach their full potential."

It recommends the full devolution of employment support to tackle child poverty. Will the Secretary of State listen to the experts?

Mel Stride: I am always very interested in listening to the hon. Gentleman and any ideas that he has about how we should improve our welfare system, but I point to the fact that this country has seen a considerable drop in absolute child poverty, after housing costs, of 400,000 since 2010.

Richard Graham (Gloucester) (Con): What correlation does the Secretary of State see between children in poverty and workless families? Given that there is no age restriction on most apprenticeships, and today's announcement that there will be 20,000 more apprenticeships and that the apprenticeship levy can be spent on greater numbers of contractors and sub-contractors, what opportunities does he see for his Department to highlight those opportunities for people who are of working age and who may have children in poverty?

Mel Stride: My hon. Friend refers to workless households. He is absolutely right about the correlation: a child is five times more likely to be in poverty if they are growing up in a workless household. He was right to draw attention to the announcement that has been made today about even greater investment in apprenticeships, and also the change in the way that the apprenticeship levy works so that supply chains can benefit to a greater degree.

Topical Questions

T1. [902043] **Sir David Davis** (Haltemprice and Howden) (Con): If he will make a statement on his departmental responsibilities.

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mel Stride): May I join the House in saying happy birthday to the Minister for Employment, my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St Edmunds (Jo Churchill)? It should be a national holiday as far as I am concerned—perhaps that is an idea for a private Member's Bill, or something similar.

I am pleased that, since the last questions, we have published our review into autism employment, and I place on record my thanks to my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for South Swindon (Sir Robert Buckland) who did such excellent work in bringing that useful report forward.

Looking forward from April, we will see benefits generally rising by 6.7%, the state pension by 8.5%, the national living wage by around 10%, and the next tranche of the household support fund being brought forward. As I have already set out, our plan is working. It means more employment, historically low unemployment and an economic inactivity rate below countries such as the United States, France and Italy.

Sir David Davis: The economic inactivity rate is now very high, with 2.8 million people citing long-term sickness as a reason. Some 17 million days of work are lost, at a cost of £13 billion to the economy. Has the Secretary of State seen the Policy Exchange report published today, with policy proposals backed by two of his predecessors, David Blunkett and my right hon. Friend the Member for Norwich North (Chloe Smith)? What steps are the Government taking to improve the provision of workplace health services through occupational health pathways and vocational rehabilitation, and will he consider the 15 proposals in the Policy Exchange report?

Mel Stride: I will of course look closely at the report that my right hon. Friend refers to; indeed, I reached out to him recently to invite him to the Department to discuss that and other matters. With regard to long-term sickness and disability, we are working on an array of interventions, including occupational health support

within businesses; WorkWell, bringing together medical interventions with work coaches; universal support to help people into work, and to stay in work with that support; and fundamental reform of the work capability assessment, such that the OBR says that 371,000 fewer people will go on to those benefits going forward.

Mr Speaker: I call the shadow Secretary of State.

Liz Kendall (Leicester West) (Lab): In the Budget, the Chancellor said that he wants to end national insurance contributions because the

“double taxation of work is unfair.”—[*Official Report*, 6 March 2024; Vol. 746, c. 851.]

People’s NICs records help to determine their entitlement to the state pension, so if national insurance is scrapped how will they know what pension they will get?

Mel Stride: I am not surprised that the hon. Lady brings that up, because I am well aware of the position that her party has taken on the announcements that we have made. She will be clear in her own mind that the Chancellor has not guaranteed that we will reduce at one stroke national insurance contributions; it is an aspiration that has been spoken about as occurring over a number of years, if not Parliaments, so the problems that she is conjuring up to frighten pensioners are nothing short of political scaremongering.

Liz Kendall: The Secretary of State can bluster and deny all he likes, but the Prime Minister told *The Sunday Times*:

“We want to end this double taxation on work”.

It is there in black and white, so let me try again. How will people’s pension entitlement be determined if NICs are scrapped, and if the Government are going to merge NICs with income tax what will that mean for pensioners’ tax bills? Is the truth not that their unfunded £46 billion plan to scrap NICs is yet more chaos from the Conservatives, and Britain’s pensioners deserve so much better?

Mel Stride: The hon. Lady quoted from *The Sunday Times*, and I scribbled it down:

“We want to end this double taxation”.

Of course we do, but that is not the same as a near-term pledge; it is a longer-term aspiration—[*Interruption.*] We have been quite upfront, quite unlike—[*Interruption.*] If she would care to hear me out, it is quite unlike the £28 billion firm commitment that her party made, and subsequently U-turned on, which was nothing short of fiscally reckless, and would have led to increases in interest rates, inflation, unemployment, and so on.

T2. [902044] **Henry Smith** (Crawley) (Con): I extend my gratitude to the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work for recently holding a menopause roundtable that was particularly focused on employment in tourism and hospitality, and to Gatwick airport for hosting it. What steps will the menopause employment champion take next?

The Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work (Mims Davies): I am delighted about the regional roundtables, including in the leisure and hospitality sector, oil and gas, and education, among others. They are

informing the sector work of the menopause employment champion, and her one-year report is now available, showcasing a variety of stakeholders’ perspectives, and outcomes for women who need support.

Mr Speaker: I call the SNP spokesperson.

Kirsty Blackman (Aberdeen North) (SNP): The Resolution Foundation highlights that scrapping the two-child limit would be one of the most efficient ways to drive down child poverty rates, and would lift 490,000 children out of poverty overnight. Surely one child growing up in poverty is one child too many. The Secretary of State should reverse course on this, and the Labour party should also commit to scrapping the two-child limit. Does the Secretary of State agree that no child should grow up in poverty, and will he take action to ensure that that stops now?

Mel Stride: The hon. Lady raises the same point as her colleague, the hon. Member for Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East (Stuart C. McDonald), about the two-child limit. I will not detain the House by repeating exactly the same answer, other than to agree passionately with her that one child in poverty is one too many, and to say that, although we have further to go, it is important to recognise that we have reduced the number of children in absolute poverty, after housing costs, by 400,000 since 2010.

T3. [902045] **Dr Lisa Cameron** (East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow) (Con): As chair of the all-party parliamentary group for disability, I thank the Minister for recognising Sign Language Week in the Chamber. It is so important for disability inclusion in the workplace. Will she recommend that hon. Members from across the House meet representatives of the British Deaf Association, who are now welcoming people in Dining Room A at an event I am co-sponsoring?

Mims Davies: I am delighted to welcome Sign Language Week, which is marking its 21st anniversary of recognising British Sign Language as a language in its own right. I encourage Members to join the British Deaf Association reception after these questions have ended.

T8. [902051] **Dan Carden** (Liverpool, Walton) (Lab): The Government will move thousands of my constituents across to universal credit over the next year. They will be forced to wait five weeks for their first payment or up to nine weeks if they receive child or working tax credits. According to DWP data, 60% of the people across Merseyside who are in that situation will take out an advance loan. Does the Minister think it right that my constituents, who are among the most deprived in the country, should be pushed into debt or face weeks without the bare minimum that they need to afford the essentials?

The Minister for Employment (Jo Churchill): The plan is to roll out those migration notices by 31 March. We intend to publish data for the hon. Gentleman’s constituency. We are committed to ensuring that the transition works as smoothly as possible for everyone.

T4. [902046] **Mr Laurence Robertson** (Tewkesbury) (Con): Has the Minister made any recent assessment of what trades or occupations are short of workers at the moment,

and what steps are being taken to persuade people—perhaps more experienced people—back into the workforce to fill those vacancies?

Jo Churchill: We are working with other Departments, employers and stakeholders to isolate where those vacancies are, and on sector-based work academy programmes. We have put over 266,000 people through construction, care, tourism, hospitality—all those gaps that we need to fill.

Dame Meg Hillier (Hackney South and Shoreditch) (Lab/Co-op): Of people currently claiming tax credits, 20% are not moving over to universal credit in the migration. The Department tells us that those who are not claiming would have got a median amount of £3,200 a year. Will the Minister assure me and the House that she is doing everything she can to ensure that people are getting the money that they are owed?

Jo Churchill: I assure the hon. Lady that we are keeping a close eye on the issue, but ultimately it is the customer's responsibility to claim. I gently point out that we have been rolling out the migration in her constituency since May '23, with not one complaint. There is plenty of help available to those people as they transition.

T5. [902048] **Mrs Sheryll Murray** (South East Cornwall) (Con): As my right hon. Friend will know, fast diagnosis and treatment are key to getting people back into work. What representations has he made to his departmental and Cabinet colleagues to ensure that that is the case?

Mel Stride: I thank my hon. Friend and near neighbour for her question—I know that she cares deeply about the issue that she has raised. We work closely with other Departments. For example, we work with the Department of Health and Social Care on NHS talking therapies, of which we have announced 400,000 more over the next five years, as well as on WorkWell, which I have mentioned, and on fit note reform. With the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, we are working closely on housing—I have spoken about the local housing allowance changes coming through—and with the Department for Education we are working on SWAPs, and on training and apprenticeships.

Grahame Morris (Easington) (Lab): Schools, general practitioners, social services, charities and housing associations can all refer their clients to a food bank in an emergency, yet this Government, who are responsible for benefit sanctions, have ordered DWP staff to stop referring claimants to food banks. How can Ministers justify this decision to the families of the 4,027 children living in poverty in my east Durham constituency?

Jo Churchill: May I make it clear that that was just scaremongering? The DWP has not changed its policy. There are merely improvements being made to the signposting slip, so that we comply with our obligations under the GDPR. We continue to provide guidance to customers, signposting them to emergency support, as is right.

T6. [902049] **Gordon Henderson** (Sittingbourne and Sheppey) (Con): A couple in my constituency recently received an apologetic letter from the Department for

Work and Pensions that set out a catalogue of mistakes that it had made. Those mistakes almost led to their losing their home, which caused them enormous stress. My constituents are now waiting for a decision on the compensation that they may receive. Will my right hon. Friend look into the case, and ensure that a decision is taken as quickly as possible, to save my constituents any further stress?

Mel Stride: I thank my hon. Friend for raising this matter. I obviously cannot comment on an individual case. However, I am very happy to look closely into the matter he has raised, and either I or a relevant Minister will be happy to meet him.

Andrew Bridgen (North West Leicestershire) (Ind): The number of the long-term sick has risen from 2.1 million pre-pandemic to 2.8 million today. This huge increase started in spring 2021, at the same time as the roll-out of the experimental, emergency-use vaccines—or does the Secretary of State have an alternative explanation for the unprecedented rise in long-term sickness in the UK since spring 2021?

Mel Stride: Among the major drivers of the increase to which the hon. Gentleman refers are mental health issues and musculoskeletal issues. I am not entirely sure that he is accurate when he says that the upward trajectory in the number occurred just as vaccination occurred—I think it predated that moment—and I certainly do not subscribe to the view that vaccination is in any way unsafe.

T7. [902050] **Neil O'Brien** (Harborough) (Con): For many years, the Department published statistics giving a breakdown of welfare claims by nationality. Although the Department still has the data, it no longer publishes the statistics. Will the Minister look again at that, and start publishing those important statistics once again?

Jo Churchill: I thank my hon. Friend, but I would like to inform him that at the moment there are no plans to recommence the publication of those statistics.

Mike Amesbury (Weaver Vale) (Lab): The last Labour Government lifted 1 million children out of poverty. After 14 years of Tory Government, we have 1 million children in destitution. What has gone wrong?

Mel Stride: I have to take issue with the hon. Gentleman. He needs to look more closely at his party's record in government. Fact No. 1 is that the Labour party always leaves office with higher unemployment. Fact No. 2 is that economic inactivity in our country is lower than in any year in his party's time in office. Fact No. 3 is that absolute poverty has declined in our country since his party was in office. Fact No. 4 is that there were more children in workless households on his watch than there are on ours. Perhaps most tellingly of all, during his party's time in office, over 1 million people languished on long-term benefits for almost a decade. That is a disgraceful record.

T9. [902052] **Bob Blackman** (Harrow East) (Con): One of the most challenging groups of people to get back into the workforce is those in their 50s and 60s whose jobs disappeared during covid. They have possibly fallen

back on their personal pensions, although with inflation, that money is being eaten away. What actions is my hon. Friend taking to get those people back into work, and to encourage them into jobs that are valuable and improve our productivity?

Jo Churchill: I thank my hon. Friend for that question. I would ask people to go to their jobcentre, which can help them build their CV and their confidence. We have 50PLUS champions across all districts, and midlife MOTs. I for one think that working in my 50s—and now my 60s—is a very good idea indeed.

Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD): The two wellbeing hubs in my constituency, in Brora and Dunbeath, are crucial to the wellbeing of pensioners. They signpost the best mix of benefits and are a last safety net, but their future is uncertain because of the vagaries of NHS Scotland finance. Will a Minister meet me to discuss how we can safeguard the future of these two centres?

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Paul Maynard): I am always happy to have a debate with the hon. Gentleman. We sit next to each other almost every morning in Portcullis House, and I am sure that we can have a conversation.

Rob Butler (Aylesbury) (Con): Aylesbury is a wonderful place to live, work, visit and invest in, but sadly we have some areas of economic deprivation. Opportunity Bucks, run by Buckinghamshire Council, has identified Aylesbury north and Aylesbury north-west as areas for extra attention, where we could improve education, training and skills. How can my hon. Friend's Department assist such initiatives in getting more Aylesbury residents into work?

Jo Churchill: We are working with employers and jobcentres on the sector-based work academies programme and boot camps, but I am more than happy to visit my hon. Friend in Aylesbury, and to talk to his jobcentres and employers, to see how we can provide more encouragement.

Points of Order

3.36 pm

Dehenna Davison (Bishop Auckland) (Con): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. Over the weekend, I saw on social media that a number of Labour Members had the good judgment to visit the beautiful Bishop Auckland constituency, and while I am grateful to the one Member who gave me notice of their visit, that was in stark contrast to the four Members—the right hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Angela Rayner), and the hon. Members for Washington and Sunderland West (Mrs Hodgson), for Blaydon (Liz Twist), and for Newcastle upon Tyne North (Catherine McKinnell)—who did not have the good judgment to follow your advice, Mr Speaker, and notify me as the sitting MP. I have let them know of my intention to raise this issue in the Chamber today. Could you advise the House once again on how we can ensure that Members give notice of a visit to another Member's constituency?

Mr Speaker: I am grateful to the hon. Member for giving me notice of this point of order and informing the Members concerned. The courtesies apply to any visits made in an official capacity. I know that election fever has taken over, but I remind the House once again that, as I said on 29 November and 22 January, when a Member intends to visit another constituency other than in a private capacity, they should make every reasonable effort to inform the Member representing that constituency. Boundary changes do not take effect until the next election, and in the meanwhile we must observe the convention of not involving ourselves with other Members' constituencies. I have had complaints from Members on both sides of the House. Please do the right thing and stick to the conventions that we expect each other to follow.

Rushanara Ali (Bethnal Green and Bow) (Lab): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. On Thursday 14 March, during business questions, in response to a question from the hon. Member for Colne Valley (Jason McCartney) about council spending, the Leader of the House said that Labour had a “legacy” of “vote-rigging” in Tower Hamlets. That is a false claim. I wonder if the right hon. Lady got her parties confused, as there was a widely reported case in 2015 in which the Election Commission and Richard Mawrey voided the mayoral election of 2014 under the Representation of the People Act 1983 on the grounds of corrupt and illegal practices, but that related to the activities of a party named Tower Hamlets First, and had nothing to do with Tower Hamlets Labour party or the national Labour party. Can you offer advice, Mr Speaker, on whether and when the Leader of the House can come to the House to set the record straight?

Mr Speaker: The Leader of the House is here.

The Leader of the House of Commons (Penny Mordaunt): Further to that point of order, Mr Speaker. I take such matters extremely seriously, and in the past when I have

misspoken or got a fact wrong, I have corrected the record. However, if I am guilty of anything in our exchange last Thursday, it is of underplaying the situation. The incident that the hon. Lady refers to did indeed involve an independent politician, although backed by Ken Livingstone. However, in the year 2018 alone, there were 40 new cases of corruption under the then Labour Mayor John Biggs, and the incident I referred to was Labour's legacy because just a few weeks ago, Government inspectors were called in again to investigate Tower Hamlets. I fully understand it if the hon. Lady does not want to take my word for it, so I direct her to a letter written to her party's national executive committee in 2016 about a local selection. It was written on behalf of members of the local Labour party. It said:

“on behalf of a number of distressed members the Tower Hamlets Labour Party who have been victims of intimidation, bullying, harassment and blackmailing by members of John Biggs' campaign team; some of whom are senior and leading figures of the local Labour Party”.

If she looks up the letter and sees who is signatory to it, she may be more persuaded.

SUPPLY AND APPROPRIATION (ANTICIPATION AND ADJUSTMENTS) BILL

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 56), That the Bill be now read a Second time.

Question agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a Second time.

Question put forthwith, That the Bill be now read the Third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill accordingly read the Third time and passed.

SAFETY OF RWANDA (ASYLUM AND IMMIGRATION) BILL (PROGRAMME) (NO. 2)

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 83A(7)),

That the following provisions shall apply to the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill for the purpose of supplementing the Order of 12 December 2023 (Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill: Programme):

Consideration of Lords Amendments

(1) Proceedings on consideration of Lords Amendments shall (so far as not previously concluded) be brought to a conclusion at 8.00pm at today's sitting.

Subsequent stages

(2) Any further Message from the Lords may be considered forthwith without any Question being put.

(3) Proceedings on the first of any further Messages from the Lords shall (so far as not previously concluded) be brought to a conclusion two hours after their commencement.

(4) Proceedings on any subsequent Message from the Lords shall (so far as not previously concluded) be brought to a conclusion one hour after their commencement.—(*Aaron Bell.*)

Question agreed to.

Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill

Consideration of Lords amendments

Mr Speaker: I can confirm that none of the Lords amendments engage Commons financial privilege.

Clause 1

INTRODUCTION

3.41 pm

The Minister for Countering Illegal Migration (Michael Tomlinson):

I beg to move, That this House disagrees with Lords amendment 1.

Mr Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendments 2 to 10, and Government motions to disagree.

Michael Tomlinson: This Bill is an essential element of our wider strategy to protect our borders, and to stop the boats to prevent the tragic loss of life at sea caused by dangerous, illegal and unnecessary crossings of the channel. There are 10 Lords amendments. First, I turn to amendment 1. It implies that the legislation is not compliant with the rule of law, but I can confirm that it is. I do not accept that the Bill undermines the rule of law, and the Government take our responsibilities and international obligations incredibly seriously. There is nothing in the Bill that requires any act or omission that conflicts with our international obligations.

Stella Creasy (Walthamstow) (Lab/Co-op): The Minister will understand that many of us are deeply concerned that the Bill undermines the Good Friday agreement. He has told us previously that it does not, but he will also know that the Irish Parliament has been considering this matter. Indeed, on 20 February, the Irish Prime Minister admitted that the Irish Government were concerned and were following this debate closely. For the avoidance of doubt, can the Minister tell us when the UK Government consulted the Irish Government about this legislation, and about our obligations under the Good Friday agreement? What was the outcome of that consultation?

Michael Tomlinson: I am concerned with this Government and this Parliament. As for our obligations, nothing in the Bill requires any act or omission that conflicts with our international obligations. In fact, this Bill is based on compliance by both Rwanda and the United Kingdom with international law in the form of a treaty that recognises and reflects the international legal obligations of both the United Kingdom and Rwanda.

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP): At least the Minister responds to our questions and tries to address the issues. The last time I asked a question on this matter, he tried to answer it, but the fact is that because of Northern Ireland's border with the Republic of Ireland, it has special circumstances. We were reassured then about Northern Ireland's circumstances; the hon. Member for Walthamstow (Stella Creasy) referred to the Good Friday agreement, which is one example, but there is

also the matter before us. Can the Minister confirm that the concerns that the Democratic Unionist party put forward in our last debate on this issue have been taken on board? We do not see that from the legislation before us tonight, and if we do not see that, it will be hard for us to support the Government.

Michael Tomlinson: I do recall our earlier exchange across the Chamber, and the hon. Gentleman may know of my exchange with his hon. Friend the Member for Belfast East (Gavin Robinson) and the subsequent correspondence. The Government continue to believe that there is no incompatibility between the Bill and article 2 of the Windsor framework. I know the hon. Gentleman has been concerned about that, but I hope he was reassured by some of the details set out in the letter.

3.45 pm

Sammy Wilson (East Antrim) (DUP): I must say I am surprised that the Government are not concerned about the clash between the Bill and article 2 of the Windsor framework and the Northern Ireland protocol, given that the High Court in Belfast has ruled that legislation of this nature cannot apply in Northern Ireland because it is incompatible with the obligation in article 2 to accord with European law.

Michael Tomlinson: I understand the right hon. Gentleman's concerns, but I repeat that there is no incompatibility between article 2 and the Bill. He is right to cite the judgment, but there is to be an appeal, so it would not be right to debate it further at this stage. The Government's position on this point is very clear, as set out in previous exchanges and also in the letter that is now in the House of Commons Library.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Slough) (Lab): Rwanda cannot be deemed a safe country for refugees simply as a result of a unilateral declaration by the Government in the face of the courts and other independent organisations that have proved the contrary to be the case. But let me get this straight: it will cost nearly £600 million for just 300 refugees to be sent on a plane to Rwanda, which amounts to an eye-watering £2 million cost per person to the public purse. Does the Minister agree that that is precisely why this political gimmick of a Rwanda Bill is extortionate, unethical, unworkable and unlawful?

Michael Tomlinson: I disagree entirely with all the points that the hon. Gentleman has made; I know that he is patient, and he will hear me respond to each and every one.

Kevin Foster (Torbay) (Con): Like me, the Minister has always believed that immigration should be dealt with on a UK rather than a Great Britain basis, for obvious reasons. Given the comments that we have just heard, does he agree that there is plenty of precedent within our own law for deeming certain claims for certain citizens inadmissible? That has applied to the EU, and surely it is not a problem to extend it further, because we already have the principle that we can say a claim is inherently unfounded when a country is clearly safe.

Michael Tomlinson: I agree entirely with my hon. Friend, who speaks with great experience and authority. He will be aware of other instances in which we have legislated and continue to legislate, and have deemed countries to be safe.

Richard Graham (Gloucester) (Con): My right hon. and learned Friend is making a good case for the importance of the Bill and the irrelevance of the amendments offered by the other place to what we are trying to achieve. Does he agree that when people criticise the Bill on the ground of the cost of sending people to Rwanda, they entirely miss the point that this will act as a huge disincentive to people in families and communities, predominantly in the middle east, who fundraise vast sums of money in order for their children to arrive here in the UK and not end up in east Africa? Does he also agree that the accusations based on cost hugely underestimate the actual cost of housing current illegal immigrants in hotels across the country?

Michael Tomlinson: My hon. Friend is entirely right on both counts. I will develop the point about the deterrent effect in a few moments, because it is a point that is missed repeatedly by the Labour Members. He is also right about the cost, and the cost of not acting—not least the human cost of not acting.

Several hon. Members *rose—*

Michael Tomlinson: I am going to make some progress now.

The Bill is based on the compliance of both Rwanda and the United Kingdom with international law in the form of the treaty, which itself reflects the international legal obligations of both the UK and Rwanda. Along with other countries with similar constitutional arrangements to ours, we have a dualist approach; international law is treated as separate to domestic law, and international law is incorporated into our law by Parliament, through legislation. This Bill reflects the fact that Parliament is sovereign and can change domestic law as it sees fit, including, if it is Parliament's judgment, by requiring a state of affairs or facts to be recognised. That is the central feature of the Bill, and many other provisions are designed to ensure that Parliament's conclusion on the safety of Rwanda is accepted by the domestic courts.

The treaty sets out the international legal commitments that the UK and Rwandan Governments have made, consistent with their shared standards associated with asylum and refugee protection. We have made it abundantly clear that we assess Rwanda to be a safe country, and that we are confident in the Government of Rwanda's commitment to the partnership in order successfully to offer safety and protection to those relocated under the treaty.

I am unable to accept Lords amendment 2 as it is simply not necessary. Rwanda has a long and proud history of supporting and integrating asylum seekers and refugees into the region. The Government of Rwanda, the African Union and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees signed an agreement to continue the operations of the emergency transit mechanism centre in Rwanda, which temporarily accommodates some of the most vulnerable refugee populations, who have faced trauma, detentions and violence. Rwanda has showcased its willingness and ability to work collaboratively to provide solutions to refugee situations and to crises.

It is worth reflecting on the policy statement and some of the evidence that has been put forward in relation to this debate and previous debates, because there it is clear that the EU has announced a €22 million support package to the emergency transit mechanism. The ambassador has said that it

“is a crucial life-saving initiative to evacuate people...to safety in Rwanda. It is a significant example of African solidarity and of partnership with the European Union.”

Debbie Abrahams (Oldham East and Saddleworth) (Lab): The point the Minister has not mentioned is that the European scheme is voluntary. Are the Government intending the same sort of parameters within this scheme?

Michael Tomlinson: On the safety of Rwanda, the ambassador was very clear about his assessment; I am going to continue reading the quote, but there are others. There are more than 135,000 refugees safely in Rwanda and being looked after. The ambassador went on to say:

“We are grateful to the Government of Rwanda for hosting these men, women and children until such time, durable solutions can be found.”

There is evidence of the safety of Rwanda.

Yasmin Qureshi (Bolton South East) (Lab): The Minister says that he is accepting the word of the Rwandan Foreign Minister that the country is safe, yet our judges in the highest court of our country have decided that Rwanda is not safe—so is our Minister saying that the highest judges in our land are wrong?

Michael Tomlinson: No. Respectfully, I encourage the hon. Lady to listen to the debate, because I read out the words of the EU's ambassador, not of any representative from Rwanda. That is a powerful independent voice, which is why I cite it here in this Chamber.

The implementation of all measures within the treaty will be expedited. Indeed, since our previous debate on this matter, the legislation required for Rwanda to ratify the treaty has passed through both Houses of the Rwandan Parliament. Once ratified, the treaty will become law in Rwanda. The implementation of these provisions in practice will be kept under review by the independent monitoring committee, whose role was enhanced by the treaty and which will ensure compliance with the obligations as agreed.

Kevin Foster: Does the Minister recall that the Supreme Court judgment hinged on the issue of refoulement and not on whether or not refugees were safe in Rwanda? It might benefit some to have listened to its judgment.

Michael Tomlinson: I am grateful indeed to my hon. Friend; I will turn to refoulement and non-refoulement, and that important issue, which is exactly the basis of the Supreme Court judgment, and how we have met it through evidence from subsequent to the time when the Supreme Court was looking at the facts on the ground.

The implementation of these provisions in practice will be kept under review by the independent monitoring committee. As is stated clearly in clause 9 of the Bill, the provisions will come into force when the treaty enters into force, and the treaty enters into force once the parties have completed their internal procedures.

The Bill's purpose is to make it clear that Rwanda is safe generally and that decision makers, as well as courts and tribunals, must conclusively treat it as such. The amendment as drafted would open the door to lengthy legal challenges, which will delay removal. It therefore follows that I cannot support the amendment. We are confident in the Government of Rwanda's commitment, and I am clear that Rwanda is a safe country.

I turn to Lords amendment 3, which is also unnecessary. The Government will ratify the treaty only once we agree with Rwanda that all necessary implementation is in place for both countries to comply with the obligations under the treaty. As I said, the legislation for Rwanda to ratify the treaty has now passed through both Chambers of the Rwandan Parliament. Once ratified, the treaty will become law in Rwanda. It therefore follows that the Government of Rwanda would be required to give effect to the terms of the treaty in accordance with their domestic law as well as in international law.

In relation to the monitoring committee, it was always intended that the committee be independent to ensure a layer of impartial oversight over the operation of the partnership. Maintaining that committee's independence is an integral aspect of the policy's design. The treaty enhances the role of the previously established independent monitoring committee and will ensure that obligations to the treaty are adhered to in practice. The details of the monitoring committee are set out in article 15 of the treaty, and it, in turn, will report to a joint committee made up of both United Kingdom and Rwandan officials.

There will be daily monitoring of the partnership for at least the first three months—the enhanced period of time—to ensure rapid identification and response to any shortcomings. The enhanced phase will ensure that there is comprehensive monitoring and reporting and that that takes place in real time. The amendment risks disturbing the independence and impartiality of the monitoring committee and therefore should be resisted.

I turn to Lords amendments 4 and 5, and the issue of Rwanda's safety. We have already touched on this, but it is clear that the Bill's purpose is to respond to the Supreme Court's concern and enable Parliament to confirm the status of Rwanda as a safe third country to enable removal of those who arrive in the United Kingdom illegally. To the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Torbay (Kevin Foster), it is the treaty, the Bill and the published evidence pack that together demonstrate that Rwanda is safe for relocated individuals and that the Government's approach is tough but fair and lawful. The Government are clear that we assessed Rwanda to be safe, and we have published evidence to substantiate that point.

Joanna Cherry (Edinburgh South West) (SNP): With reference to the point made by the hon. Member for Torbay about the basis of the Supreme Court's decision, I am sure that, like me, the Minister will have read the decision carefully. Does he agree that paragraphs 75 to 105 make it clear that there were three reasons for the Supreme Court's decision? It was based on evidence: first, about the general human rights situation in Rwanda; secondly, about the adequacy of Rwanda's current asylum system; and thirdly, about Rwanda's failure to meet its obligations in a similar agreement regarding asylum seekers with Israel in 2013. Will he tell me what has

happened since the Supreme Court's decision to improve the general human rights situation in Rwanda? He will be aware that the Home Office published a 137-page document dated January this year detailing concerns about human rights in Rwanda.

Michael Tomlinson: In fact, that document supports the Government's position, because the evidence put forward is balanced. The accusations from Opposition parties that somehow partisan evidence has been put before the Chamber are completely wrong and are refuted by the hon. and learned Lady's own point. She, as Chair of the Joint Committee on Human Rights, has just been to Rwanda to see for herself—we had an exchange on that last week—and I look forward to her Committee's report. The answer is the treaty, the Bill and the published evidence pack. In the Bill is the conclusive presumption that Rwanda is generally a safe country.

Joanna Cherry: My question was this: in January this year, the British Government, through the Home Office, published a 137-page document about the human rights situation in Rwanda, detailing serious concerns from such august bodies as the US State Department about the protection of human rights on the ground in Rwanda, so what has changed since the Home Office published that note in January? The Minister has not answered that question. If he cannot answer it, then this House cannot say that Rwanda is a safe country.

4 pm

Michael Tomlinson: The answer is that the hon. and learned Lady must not cherry-pick her evidence. The evidence must be looked at in the round. As I say, it is the treaty, the Bill and the published evidence together. The hon. and learned Lady may not have confidence in our international partners to abide by their treaties, but this Government do. The Government of Rwanda will abide by their treaty.

Joanna Cherry: Will the Minister give way?

Michael Tomlinson: I will not give way. There is a conclusive presumption in the Bill that Rwanda is generally a safe country. There is a series of facts reinforced by statute. The courts have not concluded that there is a general risk to the safety of relocated individuals in Rwanda. Rather, as we have repeatedly set out, the treaty responds to the Supreme Court's findings. The assurances we have had, since negotiated in our legally binding treaty with Rwanda, directly address the findings. They make detailed provision for the treatment of relocated individuals in Rwanda, ensuring that they will be offered safety and protection with no risk of refoulement. Respectfully, that responds directly to the points that were raised.

Dr Luke Evans (Bosworth) (Con): Is the Minister aware of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' comments? It says:

"UNHCR will build on the favourable protection environment through continued advocacy and technical support to"

the Government of Rwanda. It goes on to say that it is moving from a humanitarian approach to a developmental approach, so that people will be able to have the chance of a livelihood and a safe environment to build their life for the future. Is this not exactly what Rwanda want to put across to people who find themselves there?

Michael Tomlinson: My hon. Friend proves the point I just made, that it is the evidence in the round that must be considered. I am grateful to him for drawing that to Parliament's attention.

Joanna Cherry: Will the Minister give way?

Michael Tomlinson: I have given way twice to the hon. and learned Lady, so I will make progress. We have been clear that the purpose of this legislation is to stop the boats, and to do that we must create a deterrent. That goes to the point of my hon. Friend the Member for Gloucester (Richard Graham).

Mr Dhesi: Will the Minister give way?

Michael Tomlinson: I have already given way to the hon. Gentleman, so I will make progress.

That shows that if you enter the United Kingdom illegally, you will not be able to stay. We cannot allow systematic legal challenges to continue to frustrate and delay removals. Those Opposition Members who support this amendment do not mind if there are continuing legal challenges that frustrate and delay removals, but we on this side are not supporting the amendments. It is right that the scope for individualised claims remains limited.

Mr Dhesi: On that point about the deterrent, will the Minister give way?

Michael Tomlinson: No, I am going to move on to amendment 6.

Amendment 6 seeks to enable United Kingdom courts and tribunals to grant interim remedies. As I have previously stated, one of the core principles of the Bill is to limit the challenges that can be brought against the general safety of Rwanda. This amendment completely undermines the purpose of the Bill and is not necessary.

Mr Dhesi: I thank the Minister for giving way. The Rwanda plan will not work as the deterrent that Ministers claim it will, not least because it will only account for less than 1% of all those seeking to cross the channel irregularly. Where is the plan for the other 99%? Will the Minister concede that instead of fixing their broken asylum system, the Conservatives have spent an eye-watering £5.4 billion on this, including over £4 billion on asylum hotels and accommodation? That is what is at the crux of the matter, and that is what they need to resolve.

Michael Tomlinson: On deterrence, which I think was the thrust of the question, the Albania scheme brought into effect by the Prime Minister back in December 2022 proves the deterrent effect. Crossings on small boats by those from Albania were down 90% as a result of that agreement. That shows the deterrent effect.

Lords amendment 6 completely undermines the purpose of the Bill. It is unnecessary because the Bill already contains appropriate safeguards to allow decision makers and the courts to consider claims of an individual person in particular circumstances, if there is compelling evidence.

Jim Shannon: The House will know that I am the chair of the all-party parliamentary group for international freedom of religion or belief. The people who go through the system and go to Rwanda need to have their religious beliefs protected, whether they be Christians, or belong

to other religions or no religion. My concern is that when they get to Rwanda, that protection may not be as strong as that which they have here. Can the Minister give some assurance that people's religious beliefs will have the same protections?

Michael Tomlinson: I know how seriously the hon. Gentleman takes this important issue. There is a policy of non-discrimination in the Rwandan constitution, which will provide some reassurance. The monitoring committee is also there on a daily basis. I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for raising that point. We have made it clear that we cannot continue to allow relocations to Rwanda to be frustrated and delayed as a result of systemic challenges on general safety.

On amendment 7, we need a strong deterrent to stop people putting their lives at risk by crossing the channel. While creating that deterrent, it is important that the Government take decisive action also to deter adults from claiming to be children.

Mrs Natalie Elphicke (Dover) (Con): My right hon. and learned Friend is right that it is essential that protections are in place to ensure that adults do not masquerade as children, to safeguard all those concerned. However, he will be aware, as was raised in the Lords, that the age assessment criteria were to be introduced in 2022—[*Interruption.*] My right hon. Friend the Member for Witham (Priti Patel) and my hon. Friend the Member for Torbay (Kevin Foster) agree. The criteria still have not come into effect at the border in Dover and Manston. Will the Minister assist the House by explaining how there can be confidence about age assessment and how it can be gamed if the amendment is agreed?

Michael Tomlinson: I noted some vigorous nodding from my right hon. Friend the Member for Witham (Priti Patel) and my hon. Friend the Member for Torbay (Kevin Foster). My hon. Friend is right that we need to introduce scientific age assessments. Our European and international friends and allies do so, and we must get that scheme up and running. There is nothing in amendment 7 that directly affects that or the 2022 policy, so I encourage her to be reassured on that point. I will take away her encouragement to expedite that and I am grateful for her intervention, because she is right.

My hon. Friend anticipated my point that assessing age is inherently difficult and there are obvious safeguarding risks if adults purporting to be children are placed in the care system. It is important that we take clear steps to deter adults from claiming to be children and to avoid lengthy legal challenges to age-assessment decisions to prevent the removal of those who have been assessed to be adults. However, the amendment would result in treating differently those who are to be removed to Rwanda from those removed to another country. We consider the provisions in place entirely necessary to safeguard genuine children and to guard against adults who seek to game the system by purporting to be children.

On Lords amendment 8, the House will be aware that the Home Office regularly publishes statistics on migration levels in the United Kingdom. It is not necessary to report the number of removals to Parliament in the manner proposed. We do not consider an obligation to report to Parliament on operational matters to be appropriate.

Yvette Cooper (Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford) (Lab): Reverting to the previous amendment on the facts that Parliament should be given, can the Minister confirm the reports in the paper that the Home Office is now seeking to pay people to go to Rwanda in order to fill the flights? Can he also confirm that if people take up that Home Office proposal, they will be subject to exactly the same very substantial payments to the Rwandan Government? Will they also be covered by the capacity questions in the treaty?

Michael Tomlinson: Respectfully, that is not directly relevant to amendment 8. The answer to the question on voluntary removals is yes, this will happen in exactly the same way. There have been voluntary removals—including 19,000 last year—all the way back to the dawn of time or possibly before. There is nothing new. The novel part is that there will be voluntary removals to Rwanda; that is absolutely right. Specifically in relation to amendment 8, it is not necessary to report the number of removals to Parliament and we do not consider obligations to report to Parliament to be appropriate.

Yvette Cooper: Will the Minister give way?

Michael Tomlinson: I am going to continue.

Amendment 9 would act to impede provisions already recently passed in the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 and the Illegal Migration Act 2023. The amendment is unnecessary. It is important to be clear that the Government of Rwanda have systems in place to safeguard relocated individuals with a range of vulnerabilities, including those concerning mental health and gender-based violence. Furthermore, under article 13 of the treaty, Rwanda must have regard to information provided about relocated individuals relating to any specific needs that might arise as a result of their being a victim of modern slavery or human trafficking, and must take all necessary steps to ensure that those needs are accommodated.

In relation to amendment 10, the Government greatly value the contribution of those who have supported us and our armed forces overseas. That is why there are legal routes for them to come to the United Kingdom. It remains the Government's priority to deter people from making dangerous and unnecessary journeys to the United Kingdom. Anyone who arrives here illegally should not be able to make the United Kingdom their home and eventually settle here. A person who chooses to come here illegally, particularly if they have a safe and legal route available to them, should be liable for removal to a safe country.

Neil Coyle (Bermondsey and Old Southwark) (Lab): The Minister seemed to try to brush over some of the costs involved. Is he aware that Virgin Galactic can send six people into space for less than this Government want to spend sending one person to Rwanda? Is it not time to rethink this absurd policy and its extortionate costs?

Michael Tomlinson: We had a debate on Thursday on the costs of the scheme and not a single Labour Back Benchers was there. There was only the right hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North (Dame Diana Johnson), who proposed the debate, and the shadow Minister. Of course, I do not treat the right hon. Lady as an ordinary Back Benchers, because she is the Chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee. It was her debate, and not a

single other Labour Back Benchers was there. That shows the lack of priority that Labour Members give to this matter.

In relation to amendment 10, section 4 of the Illegal Migration Act, passed last year, enables the Secretary of State, by regulations, to specify categories of persons to whom the duty to remove is not to apply, whether temporarily or permanently. For those who are not in scope of the IMA, the Home Secretary has discretion to consider cases on a case-by-case basis where circumstances demand it. I want to reassure Parliament that once the UK special forces and Afghan relocations and assistance policy review has concluded, the Government will consider and revisit how the IMA and removal under existing immigration legislation will apply to those who are determined to be eligible as a result of the review, ensuring that those people receive the attention that they deserve. The Government recognise the commitment and the responsibility that come with combat veterans, whether our own or those who showed courage by serving alongside us, and we will not let them down.

The Bill and the legally binding treaty will make it clear that Rwanda is a safe country to which we can swiftly remove those who enter the United Kingdom illegally. It addresses the factual concerns identified by the Supreme Court. It provides for clear, detailed and binding obligations in international law on both parties. It will prevent systematic legal challenges about the safety of Rwanda from frustrating and delaying removals. As my hon. Friend the Member for Gloucester (Richard Graham) set out, it provides a strong deterrent and a clear message to illegal migrants and criminal gangs that if people come to this country by unlawful means, they will not be able to stay.

Mr Speaker: I call the shadow Minister.

4.15 pm

Stephen Kinnock (Aberavon) (Lab): I rise to speak in favour of all 10 of the Lords amendments that are before us today. They each serve to make this shambolic mess of a Bill marginally less absurd and, as I will come to in a second, they would serve only to put in statute what Ministers have promised from the Dispatch Box. Not one of the amendments is designed to prevent the departure of flights to Rwanda, as the Prime Minister has repeatedly and wrongly implied.

We all want to end the Tory small boats chaos, and I am proud that the Labour party has consistently put forward a smart, pragmatic and sensible plan to do so, starting by going after the criminal smuggler gangs at source through a new cross-border police unit and a new security partnership with Europol. However, this Bill and the treaty that accompanies it will not contribute in any way to achieving that aim.

Dr Evans: Since 2020, we have seen 82 gangs disrupted and more than 400 people arrested because of the actions of this Government. I am keen to understand Labour's idea about smashing the gangs. How much more would that cost, and what would it look like as a total percentage of numbers?

Stephen Kinnock: We will eradicate the activity of the criminal smuggler gangs by having a proper security partnership with our European partners and allies. I remind the hon. Gentleman that his party has spent the last

[*Stephen Kinnock*]

eight years trashing and destroying our relationships with our European partners and allies. What we would have with a Labour Government is a basis of trust to get the results that we need to see for the British people—that is what sovereignty is all about.

The entire Rwanda debacle has absorbed a vast amount of time, energy and money that should instead have been focused on taking back control of our border security from the criminal gangs who trade in human misery. Let us not forget that more than 100,000 asylum seekers have crossed in small boats since 2020, with 40,000 arriving on this Prime Minister's watch alone. The chaos must end, and this Government are clearly unable to restore order at the border, so it is time for them to get out of the way so that Labour can get the job done.

Before I get into the substance of the amendments, I would like to pay tribute to the noble Members of the other place, who tabled them. In so doing, they were fulfilling their constitutional, democratic and patriotic duty by scrutinising and seeking to amend the Bill, just as they would with any other piece of legislation that comes before them. They have not been intimidated or sidetracked by the Prime Minister's mistaken assertion that the Bill should have some kind of special status or treatment, which would somehow allow Ministers to railroad it through Parliament and to drive a coach and horses through Britain's long-standing democratic conventions. Indeed, this profoundly dismissive attitude has manifested itself in the way in which the Government have point blank refused to engage with the Lords amendments. They have rejected every one of them, rather than seeking to use them and see them as a basis for negotiation and compromise.

Sir William Cash (Stone) (Con): On amendment 1, is the hon. Gentleman aware that the Constitution Committee of the House of Lords, which has a significant number of Members of the other place, has explicitly stated that it is clear and unambiguous in the words used in the statute that international law gives way to the supremacy and sovereignty of the United Kingdom Parliament? The Committee said that in paragraph 58 of its report, which was published only last year.

Stephen Kinnock: I would remind the hon. Gentleman that the Supreme Court—the highest court of our land—has ruled unanimously and in no uncertain terms that Rwanda is not a safe country to which to send asylum seekers. I know that he is very taken with parliamentary sovereignty, and that is very important, but parliamentary sovereignty must be based on having due regard to the findings of our judiciary. It is to be exercised with caution and moderation, which is why it is so important that our colleagues in the other place have played their role.

Sir William Cash: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Stephen Kinnock: I will give way one more time.

Sir William Cash: I am extremely grateful, because this question goes right to the heart of the matter. Paragraph 144 of the Rwanda judgment itself is unequivocal: the President of the Supreme Court ruled to dismiss one of the cases—

that of ASM, an Iraqi—on very specific grounds. He said that the consequence of the sovereignty of Parliament with respect to the legislation—the immigration Acts and the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023—was that the Court had to dismiss his claim. The supremacy of Parliament prevailed in that judgment for the very reason I have just given, as set out in paragraph 144 under the principle of legality.

Stephen Kinnock: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his intervention, but at the end of the day, we cannot legislate to turn dogs into cats. We cannot legislate for the sky to be green and the grass to be blue. That is a basic tenet of the respect with which our institutions should be treated, and putting this kind of absurd legislation before us is frankly turning our institutions into a laughing stock. I respectfully suggest that the hon. Gentleman keeps that in mind.

Let us be clear: the only special or unique status that can be found in the Rwanda Bill and the treaty that accompanies it is in its extortionate implementation costs, its unlawful nature and its glaring unworkability. Indeed, as I turn to address the details of the amendments, it is important to point out that since the Bill was last debated in this place, even more evidence of the astonishing unaffordability of the scheme has come to light. This failing scheme was already costing the British taxpayer almost £400 million, even though not a single asylum seeker has been sent to Rwanda, but every new detail is more astounding than the last. We recently learned that the first 300 asylum seekers to be sent to Rwanda would cost the British taxpayer an extra £200 million, earning an invoice of £570 million from the Rwandan Government for just 1% of the 30,000 asylum seekers who crossed in small boats last year. That is almost £2 million per asylum seeker. Let that sink in for a moment—£2 million to send just one asylum seeker from the UK to Rwanda, and then another £182,000 per person on top of that. In comparison, processing an asylum seeker in the UK costs just £21,000.

Rushanara Ali (Bethnal Green and Bow) (Lab): My hon. Friend will be aware of the thousands of asylum seekers who are being dispersed up and down the country, with very little support given to local services. While the Government are obsessing over gimmicks, they are not dealing with the real problems in local communities and supporting those communities to host the people they are dispersing up and down the country. This crisis continues, and the Government need to get a grip on it.

Stephen Kinnock: My hon. Friend is absolutely right that the smoke and mirrors that have been used about clearing the backlog—lots of administrative withdrawals and other ways of just getting people out of the backlog—are being combined with shortening the eviction period, which is leading to a staggering increase in homelessness among those who have been granted asylum. What is happening is frankly a stain on the conscience of our country. A total lack of co-ordination between the Home Office, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and our colleagues in local authorities is leaving those local authorities high and dry.

Sammy Wilson: Although the hon. Gentleman and I might not share many views on this Bill, does he share my surprise that the Government have refused to accept Lords amendment 8, which would require them to

report on this Bill's success? As the Government do not want the number of removals to be reported to Parliament, does he suspect that they know this Bill will not be as effective as they think?

Stephen Kinnock: I thank the right hon. Gentleman for his excellent question. Sometimes the mask slips in the Government's response to amendments. Perhaps they have decided, very disrespectfully, to refuse to engage on any of the Lords amendments because, exactly as he says, they worry that lifting the lid on this box might show a total failure inside.

Mr Dhesi: The shadow Minister is making an excellent speech. Let us not forget the history: the Tories' Rwanda Bill is the third new law on channel crossings in just three years. The first law has been partly suspended, because it had so many problems and actually made things worse, and the second Bill has still not been fully enacted. This third Bill is another gimmick costing the public purse £2 million a person. Does my hon. Friend agree that, rather than constantly chasing gimmicks and trying to dupe the British public, the Government finally need to get a grip on the situation?

Stephen Kinnock: I agree with every word my hon. Friend says.

Just imagine if the amount of time, money, resource, energy and political capital burned on this hare-brained Rwanda scheme had been used to do things that might actually deliver, and just imagine if the Government had listened to Labour's plan for delivering the change we need to see. We might have made some progress and seen things working. By the way, we supported what the Government have done with Albania. Why do we not see more of that, rather than this utterly ridiculous government by gimmick? What a waste of time and money.

The level of waste and this Government's cavalier attitude to taxpayers' money are utterly staggering. Where, oh where, is the plan for the remaining 99% of cases that the Government say will be inadmissible? Tens of thousands of people who are now ineligible to be processed and ineligible to claim asylum cannot be sent to Rwanda either. That backlog, the so-called perma-backlog, currently stands at 56,000 people, with most of them living in one of more than 300 taxpayer-funded hotels across the country, costing millions of pounds every single day.

Neil Coyle: My hon. Friend is making a very powerful argument against this Government's wasteful policy. Is he aware that the £2 million cost of sending each person to Rwanda would cover 67 new police officers or 72 new nurses in my constituency to fix the horrendous backlog created by this shambolic Government?

Stephen Kinnock: My hon. Friend has done his maths on the £2 million. I particularly enjoyed his analogy with the Virgin Galactic spacecraft, which shows that the Rwanda plan is a galactically wasteful policy. He is right that so much of this is about choices and priorities, and the Government's choices and priorities are simply wrong in wasting valuable taxpayers' money that would be much better focused elsewhere.

That is why we support Lords amendment 8, a Labour Front-Bench amendment in the name of my noble Friend Lord Coaker. The amendment would require the Government to report on the timetable for removing inadmissible asylum seekers under the Illegal Migration Act 2023. We need to see accountability on the inadmissibility provisions that have created the perma-backlog of 56,000 small boat asylum seekers who are stuck in limbo and are unable to be processed.

If 99% of the people crossing in small boats are not likely to be sent to Rwanda, perhaps the Minister can tell us what will happen to them. Will he admit that, despite all his bluff and bluster, they will simply be let into our asylum system after all? No? The premise of inadmissibility was always that it is a one-way street to limbo and shambles, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford (Yvette Cooper), the shadow Home Secretary, and I have continually warned Ministers in this Chamber over the past two years.

Of course, there is an alternative. I hope that Conservative Members have been listening because, for the past 18 months, my right hon. Friend and I have been absolutely clear from this Dispatch Box how Labour will prevent the dangerous and life-threatening channel crossings, and how we will fix our broken asylum system. I have already mentioned how we would redirect the money set aside for the Rwandan Government into a cross-border police unit, an intelligence-sharing security partnership with Europol, in order to smash the criminal smuggling gangs upstream.

4.30 pm

As part of our plan, we would also ensure that people who have no right to be here are removed to a safe third country. Since 2010, under the Tories, removals have collapsed: the returns of foreign national offenders have fallen by 27%, and the returns of failed asylum seekers have fallen by 44%. Under Labour's plan, a new returns and enforcement unit would include 1,000 additional officials to expedite removals, with £35 million set aside to create new Nightingale courts to fast-track appeals and pursue tougher action on employers who employ migrants illegally.

Kevin Foster: I thank the shadow Minister for giving way. He says he wants removals to a safe third country. Which one?

Stephen Kinnock: I am very sorry, but would the hon. Member mind repeating that?

Kevin Foster: It is always good to listen to an intervention, but I will repeat it for him. He said that one part of his plan was to remove people to a safe third country. Simply question: if not Rwanda, which one?

Stephen Kinnock: I apologise; I should have said "home country." I would like to correct the record. It was "home country". Apologies; I mis-spoke.

Labour's common-sense, pragmatic plan will smash the business model of the criminal gangs, deter dangerous journeys and tackle the backlog.

With your permission, Mr Speaker, I will now run through the remaining nine amendments from the other place. We support each of them for the reasons I will now set out.

Dr Luke Evans: How much would Labour's plan cost?

Stephen Kinnock: As I have already said—I do not know if the hon. Member was listening—this is about repurposing the vast quantities of taxpayers' money that are being squandered on the hare-brained Rwanda plan. The re-channelling of that money will fund the clearance of the backlog, sort out returns and smash the criminal gangs.

I would first like to focus on Lords amendment 10, tabled by the noble Lord Browne, which seeks to exempt individuals who have worked in support of the UK Government or armed forces from removal to Rwanda under the provisions of the Bill. The amendment is driven by a moral imperative: we owe a debt of gratitude to those who have supported our defence, diplomacy and development abroad, not least in Afghanistan. It beggars belief that the Government would even consider sending this cohort of heroes, who are fleeing the Taliban, to Rwanda. Britain's commitment towards these loyal-to-Britain Afghans is, of course, felt most strongly by our own armed forces, but the Government have continually shirked their responsibilities towards Afghans, including by leaving thousands who have a right to be in the UK stranded in Pakistan for more than a year. It is little wonder that they have resorted to making desperate journeys across the channel. Operation Warm Welcome has become "Operation Cold Shoulder."

Alexander Stafford (Rother Valley) (Con): The hon. Gentleman says that he wants more Afghan people to come from Pakistan to the UK. How many more immigrants does he want to come to the UK from Afghanistan?

Stephen Kinnock: The amendment is about stopping them being sent to Rwanda, but let us be absolutely clear: there are many, many Afghans, identified by the Government under the Afghan relocations and assistance policy and the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme, who are languishing in Pakistan. We remember the Prime Minister's memo to Whitehall saying, "By the way everybody, let's slow peddle on these Afghans who are in Pakistan and have been identified for resettlement under the ACRS and ARAP." If the hon. Member wants to know the number, I recommend that he goes to his own Government and asks how many have been identified under ARAP and ACRS.

Rushanara Ali: In my constituency I have met one family in a similar situation. The constituent's husband had been killed in Afghanistan, but the family were still in limbo because of the delay in decision making. Is my hon. Friend aware that Pakistan is now forcing Afghan asylum seekers back to Afghanistan? There are tens of thousands of people in that situation, some of whom worked to support our forces during the war in Afghanistan.

Stephen Kinnock: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. The scope of Lords amendment 10 is specifically for those who served shoulder to shoulder with our armed forces and in our diplomatic and development efforts in Afghanistan. These are people to whom the United Kingdom owes a debt of honour and a debt of gratitude. I am not sure whether honour is a word that we can apply very easily to those on the Conservative Benches, but that is what this is about.

Lords amendment 9, in the name of the noble Baroness Butler-Sloss, is also based on a moral imperative, as it would prevent the removal of potential victims of modern slavery to Rwanda until they receive a decision from the Government on whether there is credible evidence that the person is a modern slavery victim. It really should go without saying that modern slavery victims should not be sent to Rwanda but, sadly, with this Government, basic moral decency is a scarce commodity.

John McDonnell (Hayes and Harlington) (Lab): Let me speak to Lords amendments 9 and 10. Those of us who have dealt with trafficked victims and those who served us in Afghanistan feel that there is some loss of moral compass somewhere. Those who served us in Afghanistan, in a whole range of different functions, have only just survived getting out of the country. They have been chased by the Taliban and their families have been harassed. Some of them got to Pakistan and were then threatened with force back over the border again. They have got to us traumatised, and we are going to traumatised them again by sending them to Rwanda. That cannot be right. I cannot believe that any hon. Member who has dealt with such cases could not support these amendments, because it is human suffering in the extreme, and for those who have served us, it is human suffering brought about by their loyalty to us.

Stephen Kinnock: I thank my right hon. Friend for that intervention. He makes the case with passion and conviction. I know that he has a number of asylum seekers and refugees in his constituency and he does a huge amount of work on their behalf. He is absolutely right: there are some issues that should really transcend the day-to-day political considerations that we have in this place, because they are issues that are based on moral imperatives. It is deeply disappointing that, in Lords amendments 9 and 10, the Government have refused even to use them as the basis for negotiation or some kind of compromise. We find that deeply disappointing.

Sammy Wilson: With regard to the earlier question of how many, does the hon. Member not agree that the simple answer is, "All those who served and who risked their lives to help us in a war that required the support of the local population"? We have records of the help and support they gave. Surely we cannot turn our back on those people if they are in danger.

Stephen Kinnock: I thank the right hon. Gentleman for what he has said. What a contrast there is between his intervention and that of the hon. Member for Rother Valley (Alexander Stafford) from the Conservative Benches. I genuinely believe that when the hon. Member for Rother Valley reflects, he will regret making his intervention and perhaps reflect on what the right hon. Gentleman has just said.

We on the Opposition Benches are profoundly concerned about unaccompanied children being inadvertently sent to Rwanda. For this reason, we support Lords amendment 7, in the name of the noble Baroness Lister, which reverses changes to age assessment procedures established by the Illegal Migration Act 2023 in relation specifically to removals to Rwanda. It restores the ability of domestic courts and tribunals to fully consider suspensive judicial review claims regarding removal decisions taken on the basis of age assessment of unaccompanied children.

Lords amendments 1 to 6 all relate to the rule of law. We support all of those amendments, and they are all principles with which Government Ministers have said they agree. Indeed, the simple question that should be asked in relation to each one of these amendments is this: if Ministers believe that Rwanda is a safe country, then why are the Government refusing to support these amendments? They say that the Bill abides by international law, so why not make that clear in the Bill? They say that Rwanda is a safe country and is meeting its obligations, so let us see the evidence and agree a “trust but verify” mechanism. In that spirit, Lords amendment 1 is a Labour Front-Bench amendment that places a responsibility on the Government to comply in full with their current obligations under domestic and international law.

Mr David Jones (Clwyd West) (Con): Does the hon. Gentleman not accept that amendment 1 is entirely otiose? In terms of compliance with domestic law, the Bill when enacted will be an element of domestic law. In terms of compliance with international law, is it not the case that the Bill is predicated on international law—that is to say, the Rwanda treaty?

Stephen Kinnock: If that is the case, why will Ministers not accept the amendment? Those in the other place, who have a great deal more constitutional expertise than I have, are simply seeking reassurance that our democratic conventions and obligations in relation to alignment with the rule of law will be respected. If that is the case, as the right hon. Gentleman suggests, surely the amendments should be perfectly acceptable to the Government.

Stella Creasy: Perhaps I can help to shed light on this. The Minister has just shown that the Government are not abiding by their international obligations. The Good Friday agreement explicitly commits us to working together—those words are in it—with the Irish Government when it comes to the rights of individuals in Northern Ireland. The Bill will deny rights to individuals in Northern Ireland, yet the Minister admitted that the Government have not even consulted the Irish Government. Does my hon. Friend agree that our word is our bond as a country, and if we show that we cannot be trusted to stand up for international law, it is right that this place demands that the Government put it in the Bill?

Stephen Kinnock: I agree with my hon. Friend, who makes a very clear case. A lot of rhetoric has accompanied the Bill around the European convention on human rights and the United Kingdom’s obligations under international law. The implications of that for the Good Friday agreement are truly chilling. The way in which Government Members are prepared to sabre-rattle, and to use rhetoric in a way that undermines our reliability as a partner that can be trusted to respect our international legal obligations, is frankly shameful and deeply concerning, not least in the case of the Good Friday agreement.

Lords amendments 2 and 3, in the name of the noble Lord Hope, state that Rwanda may be considered a safe country only if and when the measures set out “in the Rwanda treaty have been fully implemented”

and the monitoring committee has established that that is the case. The Government claim that the measures in the treaty address concerns in the Supreme Court’s

recent ruling, so there is absolutely no reason why Ministers should refuse to accept Lord Hope’s amendments.

Lords amendments 4 and 5, in the name of the noble Lord Anderson, state that Rwanda can be considered a safe country unless there is

“credible evidence to the contrary”,

as determined by a court or tribunal. Following the Supreme Court’s ruling, the Government themselves accepted that the situation in Rwanda is not static but evolving, as it is in every country on the face of the Earth. If the Government accept that Rwanda could one day become safer for asylum seekers who are sent there from the UK, they must by definition accept that it could one day deteriorate. Lord Anderson’s amendments simply provide a basis for assessing the situation on the ground in Rwanda and acting accordingly.

Margaret Greenwood (Wirral West) (Lab): A joint statement signed by over 260 civil society organisations has branded the Bill

“a constitutionally extraordinary and deeply harmful piece of legislation. It threatens the universality of human rights and is likely in breach of international law, striking a serious blow to the UK’s commitment to the rule of law.”

Does my hon. Friend agree that the Bill represents an unethical gimmick that will potentially put very vulnerable people at risk and harm the UK’s reputation on the world stage?

Stephen Kinnock: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. If the amount of time and energy that has been wasted on this madcap Bill, which is also a constitutional outrage, unaffordable, unlawful and unworkable, had been put into addressing some of the challenges that we face in a pragmatic way, just think where we could have got to by today.

Finally, Lords amendment 6, in the name of the noble Baroness Chakrabarti, allows Government Ministers, officials and courts to consider whether Rwanda is safe on a case-by-case basis. Given that the Government have accepted that some appeals will be allowed, we see no reason for them to reject that amendment.

4.45 pm

After 14 years of incompetent and negligent governance, our asylum system is in a mess. The Conservatives have presided over a backlog of 130,000 asylum seekers, despite Ministers’ attempts to pull the wool over the public’s eyes through administrative withdrawals and various other ruses. There are still 46,000 asylum seekers in taxpayer-funded hotels, contributing to an asylum system that now costs 10 times what it did under Labour, at an eye-watering £5.4 billion. Only last week, we discovered that there were major problems with a broken immigration IT system, which has mixed up details of applicants, affecting a staggering 76,000 people.

However, this con of a Bill is not the way to fix the problems that the Conservative Government have created. The highest Court in our land has ruled unanimously that Rwanda is not a safe country, and no amount of ludicrous legislation such as this Bill can change that fact. The Government may well wish to say that the sky is green and the grass is blue, but introducing an Act of Parliament will never make it so. Even Conservative Members recognise that the Bill is on a hiding to nothing. Indeed,

a former Home Secretary has stated that it is highly unlikely to work, and the former Immigration Minister, the right hon. Member for Newark (Robert Jenrick), has described the Government's aim as being to get a few "symbolic half-filled flights taking off this spring"

rather than a plan that is a genuine attempt to tackle the dangerous channel crossings.

It is probably no surprise, then, that Ministers are finally turning to plan B: paying people a reported £3,000 per head to go to Rwanda instead. Can that really be true, and if so, will the Minister take the opportunity to enlighten the House on some of the details? Would that £3,000 per head come on top of the £570 million costs that we already know about? Will there be another treaty between the UK and Rwanda to implement it, and if so will he publish it? Has the National Audit Office done an assessment of those additional costs? Will the House be able to vote on the new plan that has been briefed? I await the Minister's responses with interest.

This Bill is a con. The treaty is a con. The whole Rwanda plan is a con. It is quite simply a headline-chasing gimmick, as unworkable as it is unaffordable. The country knows it, this House knows it, the Home Secretary knows it and the Minister knows it: at £2 million per head, the Rwanda scheme is the worst value-for-money policy in history. However, the amendments that I have spoken to today will not stop flights taking off. We expect those flights to happen this spring, as the Prime Minister has repeatedly promised the country. The amendments would simply insert into the Bill what Ministers have promised, so I encourage Members on both sides of the House to join me in the Division Lobby later to support them.

Several hon. Members *rose*—

Mr Deputy Speaker (Sir Roger Gale): Order. The Government and Opposition Front Benchers have, perhaps understandably, taken a certain amount of leeway in a broad-brush approach to the debate. Before we proceed, I remind Back Benchers that we are now debating Lords amendments; this is not a Second Reading debate. I call Sir Jeremy Wright.

Sir Jeremy Wright (Kenilworth and Southam) (Con): Thank you very much indeed, Mr Deputy Speaker. May I begin with an apology to you and others for the fact that I will not be in the Chamber for some part of the debate because of other parliamentary business that I have to attend?

I start my remarks by recalling that the fundamental purpose of the Bill is to locate with Parliament—rather than with decision makers in individual cases or with courts reviewing those cases—the decision on whether Rwanda is a safe country to send people to. A number of the amendments before us would undermine that fundamental purpose by transferring decisions on that question away from Parliament and back to the caseworkers and courts, so they are, I am afraid, wrecking amendments. They are incredibly elegant wrecking amendments, and they come from an honourable and fundamental opposition to the purpose of the Bill—an opposition that I entirely understand.

I confess that I did not find voting for this legislation a comfortable choice. It comes very close to the line on rule-of-law acceptability, but in my view stays just the

right side of it. Crucially, it asserts parliamentary sovereignty on an issue of huge political significance, where that issue is central to the delivery of a key Government policy. That significant and central issue is whether the Government of the day are entitled to pursue a policy on illegal immigration that contains an element of effective deterrence, and I think the Government must be able to do that. For a deterrent to be effective, it must be clear. To economic migrants seeking to reach the UK under cover of our asylum system, the deterrent is that they might end up in a different country—in this case, Rwanda. For that deterrent to be meaningful, the prospect of transfer to Rwanda must be a real one that it is not easy to evade, which means that the headline judgment on Rwanda's safety must be clear to all, subject of course, as it should be, only to persuasive individual circumstances.

I think that approach is worthy of support for two reasons. First, illegal migration is a huge problem, and the Government must be able to pursue innovative solutions to it, especially in the absence of credible alternatives.

Dr Luke Evans: My right hon. and learned Friend is making an excellent point about how we must be innovative. Is that not the reason why other countries are looking at what the UK is doing? The likes of Austria, Germany and Italy have all talked about using third nations because there needs to be a solution to the problem, as he is so eloquently setting out.

Sir Jeremy Wright: I am conscious, Mr Deputy Speaker, not to transgress into Second Reading territory, but I think my hon. Friend is right about that. As our right hon. and learned Friend the Minister has pointed out, other international agencies also make use of Rwanda for these purposes.

Secondly, Parliament is as able as any other body to make judgments about the safety of Rwanda. I am grateful for the information with which we have been provided, including the country information note that was referred to earlier in the debate, which in my view supports the conclusion that Rwanda is safe for the purposes of the Bill. But Parliament's decision making on the safety of Rwanda must have integrity not just for now, but for the future. I am, I have to say, troubled by what I might describe as the absolutist, if not the eternalist nature of the wording of the Bill, which says that Rwanda is safe and must be taken as such for a variety of purposes, and Parliament's judgment on that will stand, as far as I can see, until new legislation is passed.

That is why the noble Lord Hope's amendments—Lords amendments 2 and 3—are interesting, although I cannot support them as they essentially transfer authority to the treaty's monitoring committee to determine whether Rwanda remains a safe country, based on compliance or otherwise with the treaty. That cannot be right, as the Bill is intended specifically to give Parliament that authority, and Parliament should, in theory at least, retain the option to consider breaches of the treaty and nevertheless conclude that Rwanda remains a safe country for the purposes of the Bill.

Sir Robert Neill (Bromley and Chislehurst) (Con): My right hon. and learned Friend makes a very powerful point, with which I have much sympathy. Between now and future stages of the Bill, could the Government not think about how they can reconcile that with the legitimate

concerns expressed in Lord Hope's amendments, which I think are fair and honest? Facts change, and if Parliament sets itself up as an arbiter and decider on fact, it must have a means of changing its decision if the facts change, just as anything else would. I say to the Minister that Keynes comes to mind. Can we find a way forward?

Sir Jeremy Wright: My hon. and learned Friend anticipates my conclusion, and I agree with him entirely. In fact, he agrees with me entirely, in advance.

Mrs Elphicke: In light of what my right hon. and learned Friend says, how does he see Parliament's role in assessing any future breaches of the treaty?

Sir Jeremy Wright: Essentially, Lords amendments 2 and 3—flawed as they are—raise the valid issue of what happens if Rwanda at any point falls below the standards expected of it to justify its safe country status. The Bill would establish in legislation the largely unchallengeable conclusion that Rwanda is a safe country for the purposes of the Bill because Parliament says so, without any mechanism for Parliament to say differently if the facts change—save, presumably, for fresh primary legislation.

Yasmin Qureshi: I see two contradictions, almost, in what the right hon. and learned Gentleman is saying. He talks about the sovereignty of Parliament and whether Rwanda being designated as safe can be changed, but our Supreme Court, the highest court in the land, said after reading all the evidence that Rwanda was not safe. Yes, Parliament is sovereign but it has become almost a dictatorship because this is a bit like saying "Person A was found guilty in a criminal court but because we in Parliament do not like that, that person must be returned to court and be sentenced." That uses parliamentary sovereignty in a most nonsensical way.

Sir Jeremy Wright: I am afraid I do not accept what the hon. Lady says. First, as the Minister made clear, the Government have not ignored the conclusions of the Supreme Court, which we must remind ourselves were made in 2022: they have responded to those concerns and new information is now available for Parliament to consider. My point is that this is, on the Government's invitation, for Parliament to decide. It is for Parliament to determine whether we consider that Rwanda is, on the evidence available to us, a safe country. We may all reach different conclusions about that but the premise of this legislation is that, taking into account the concerns the Supreme Court has expressed, it is none the less for Parliament to determine whether Rwanda is a safe country for the purposes of the legislation. But it is simply not sensible for Parliament not to be able to say differently, save through primary legislation, if the facts were to change. We all hope, perhaps expect, that Rwanda will remain a safe place for migrants to go, but if we could guarantee that indefinitely we would not need the treaty the Government worked so hard to secure or the monitoring committee designed to scrutinise compliance with it.

Although the Government are entitled to reject the amendments, they should give some thought to the situation of the Bill, because it breaks new ground by giving Parliament specific authority over a judgment that will bind many but that Parliament cannot easily revise even if it comes to believe that revision is necessary.

The treaty and the monitoring of its terms provide a mechanism for Parliament to be alerted to significant changes in compliance, and I ask my right hon. and learned Friend the Minister and his colleagues in the other place to consider how Parliament might be given further scope to engage with that judgment if the need arises. I do appreciate that the Government retain means by which they can revise their judgment of the safety of Rwanda, but the Bill clearly and deliberately transfers the judgment on safety to Parliament. If it is a judgment in Parliament's name, it must be right for Parliament to retain the capacity to reconsider and if necessary revise it.

Alison Thewliss (Glasgow Central) (SNP): It remains the position of the Scottish National party that this is an irredeemably awful Bill. We do not support the Rwanda plan; we think it is both an offence to humanity and an egregious waste of public money, particularly at a time when many of our constituents are struggling to feed themselves. I thank the Lords for their work on the Bill and for at least trying to make it in some way better, and we would support all the Lords amendments and what they attempt to do with the Bill.

Lord Coaker's Lords amendment 1 would add a measure to comply with domestic and international law. That should be basic; any legislation in this place should abide by domestic and international law. It seems ludicrous that we have a Bill before us that does not abide by international and domestic law. It is a bit of a cheek for the Minister to talk about Rwanda abiding by treaties and its loyalties while at the same time the Tories go about the business of undermining the UK's own international commitments in international agreements that we helped to draft. The European convention on human rights, the refugee convention, the international covenant on civil and political rights and the Council of Europe convention on action against trafficking in human beings, as well as customary international law and domestic laws, are all things we have created here that the Government have set about undermining. It is absolutely ludicrous. It brings into question the Government's commitment to international agreements, and particularly the European convention on human rights, which underpins so much. We have heard from Members about the significance of some of the legislation to the Good Friday agreement and Scotland's devolution settlement. The Government see fit to undermine all that through their actions.

5 pm

Joanna Cherry: I am sure that my hon. Friend will have read the report of the Joint Committee on Human Rights on the Bill. We noted that other nations may be influenced by how the UK treats its international treaty obligations. In particular, we noticed that the Prime Minister of Pakistan has referred to the UK's Rwanda policy in defence of his country's decision to expel from Pakistan hundreds of Afghans who had fled from the Taliban regime. Does my hon. Friend agree that it is most regrettable that he can refer to the UK's cavalier attitude towards international law in support of his own cavalier attitude?

Alison Thewliss: I absolutely agree. Other countries around the world have looked to the UK as an upholder of rights—as a beacon of democracy and human rights—

[*Alison Thewliss*]

but following this tawdry Bill, we can see other countries looking at the UK's dissent from international norms that we set up.

Shailesh Vara (North West Cambridgeshire) (Con): Will the hon. Lady give way?

Alison Thewliss: I will make a little progress, because I am mindful of what Mr Deputy Speaker said about time. I want to touch on the misinformation that the Minister put forward about Rwanda and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The transit agreements are not the same at all as people being permanently relocated to Rwanda. The UNHCR has mentioned that Norway, Sweden, Canada, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Finland and the USA have taken people from the transit camps. People have come from 10 countries, including Sudan and Cameroon, to Libya and to the transit camps in Rwanda, and then are being moved on elsewhere. They are not staying in Rwanda permanently. Indeed, reports from the transit camp have highlighted that people have no desire to stay in Rwanda in transit camps, because of the conditions in which they are living, so the Government are not at all talking about the same thing there. They should be absolutely clear on that and not mislead the House with points that suit their arguments.

Lords amendment 2 in the name of Lord Hope of Craighead would ensure that Rwanda could be designated as safe only if the treaty was adhered to. It states that Rwanda

“will be a safe country when, and so long as, the arrangements provided for in the Rwanda Treaty have been fully implemented and are being adhered to in practice.”

Among the Supreme Court's concerns about the matter was the fact that Rwanda is not yet in a place where it can adhere to all those arrangements in practice. Perhaps it will in future, but it is not safe now. To declare it completely safe in all circumstances right now is a false argument.

Lords amendment 3 would create an obligation on the Government to report to Parliament on the terms of the treaty and how those are being monitored. That is perfectly reasonable. What are the Government afraid of? After all, if they think Rwanda is safe and fine, why do they not want scrutiny of the situation? It needs monitoring. There are continued reports of what the Rwandan-backed M23 rebels are doing on Rwanda's borders. This legislation is a poor way of gauging safety. It is not flexible or reasonable, and cannot take account of changing circumstances. Circumstances can change rapidly and unexpectedly, but we are legislating to say that Rwanda is safe in all circumstances in perpetuity. That is clearly ludicrous and giving a hostage to fortune; the Government should be aware of that.

Dr Caroline Johnson (Sleaford and North Hykeham) (Con): The hon. Lady makes the point that things change with time. Does she accept that many measures have been put in place by the UK Government and the Rwandan Government since the judgment of the UK Supreme Court last year?

Alison Thewliss: It is difficult to tell, because scrutiny mechanisms are not in place that would allow Committees of this House to ascertain whether that is entirely the

case. The Committee that my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Edinburgh South West (Joanna Cherry) is on has been to visit Rwanda, and she has information about that visit that she hopes to share with the House. I understand that the hon. Member for Sleaford and North Hykeham (Dr Johnson) was on that trip, too, but that is not good enough. There needs to be further, continued scrutiny, and it is important that Parliament has the opportunity for that.

I know from the Chair of the Home Affairs Committee, the right hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North (Dame Diana Johnson), that even information on the deal has been difficult to come by. Last week, in the Chamber, we discussed the obfuscation and secrecy surrounding the costs of the plan. If this is how the Government are beginning this journey, we can have no confidence—on this side of the House, certainly—that they can be trusted, which is why Lords amendment 3 is so important. The House needs a scrutiny mechanism.

Dr Johnson: Will the hon. Lady give way?

Alison Thewliss: I am conscious of what you said about time, Mr Deputy Speaker, and I should like to make some progress.

In Lords amendment 4, Lord Anderson of Ipswich proposes to add to the words

“Every decision-maker must conclusively treat the Republic of Rwanda as a safe country”

the words

“unless presented with credible evidence to the contrary”.

I agree that evidence is important. If judges and other decision makers are not allowed to make decisions on the basis of evidence, rather than relying on a bit of legislation drawn up in a short period, the Government have zero credibility. They are asking people to blindfold themselves to any other circumstances, and not to heed any evidence or proof. There must be an opportunity for every decision maker to treat the evidence with the due diligence that we would all expect.

Lords amendment 5 would remove the parts of the Bill that state that Rwanda should automatically be considered a safe country; it provides a rebuttal mechanism for the assertion of safety in Rwanda. Liberty says that the amendment corrects

“a deficiency in the Bill whereby Parliament is asked to state that Rwanda is and will continue to be safe, and there is no mechanism by which this can be revisited. This is a moderate safeguard”.

If the Government thought about this fully, they would surely conclude that the amendment would enhance the Bill; but they are, of course, rejecting all amendments, regardless of their source.

Lords amendment 6 effectively restores the power of the courts to make a factual judgment on the safety of Rwanda in an individual case, or for a group of people who share characteristics, such as LGBTQ people. I think it telling that the Minister said that it completely undermined the purpose of the Bill. “Well, good,” is all I can say in response. We should be trying to undermine the purpose of the Bill if its aim is, for example, to ship LGBTQ people off to a country that may not welcome them in all circumstances, without allowing them to check the position first. I think it perfectly reasonable to provide the ability to make judgments of this kind. I recall that at the back of the Illegal Migration Act 2023 was a list

of countries with exemptions for particular groups of people—in some cases specifying men or women—but the Bill does not even do that. I think it entirely reasonable for there to be some way of questioning this power in the Bill.

Lords amendment 7, tabled by Baroness Lister, concerns issues related to the age of unaccompanied children, which I consider to be of the utmost importance. The treaty makes provision for what happens if a child somehow mysteriously ends up in Rwanda by mistake, but that only happens if the Home Office has made an error of some kind in sending the child there in the first place. We know from medical professionals that some of the age assessments are effectively pseudo-science. We know that when children have come here, having crossed seas, continents and war zones in very difficult circumstances, it may be more difficult to assess their age, because they have had a much tougher paper round than my son, for example. We also know that not all children look exactly the same or present themselves in exactly the same way, although they may be the same age. We can all remember that when we were at school, there was always some great big guy with a beard and a hairy chest when the others were knee-high to a buttercup.

Joanna Cherry: Not at my convent school.

Alison Thewliss: That is another question, I suppose. The point is that everyone is different. We cannot reliably look at someone and tell their age. The Bill should contain more protections to ensure that children who have already gone through incredibly traumatic experiences are not sent to Rwanda.

Mrs Elphicke: Will the hon. Lady give way?

Alison Thewliss: As I have said, I am conscious of what we have been told about time. I am sure that if the hon. Lady wants to make a speech on this subject later, we will all listen to it.

Lords amendment 8 adds a mechanism for a report to Parliament. Under the heading

“Removals to Rwanda under the Illegal Migration Act 2023”, it states:

“Within 60 days of the day on which this Act is passed, the Secretary of State must lay before Parliament a statement”.

Again, that is an important scrutiny mechanism. We in this Parliament should know who is being sent to Rwanda and the timetable for those removals, as this Lords amendment suggests.

Most importantly, proposed new paragraph (c) in amendment 8 deals with the arrangements in place for people not sent to Rwanda. We know that only the tiniest percentage of people who end up here will be sent to Rwanda; it is entirely unrealistic to suggest that more than a few hundred people will ever get sent there, so we need to know what happens to the people who end up in immigration limbo—those who are inadmissible. Where are they? Who looks after them? Where do they live? How do they survive? What do they eat? We need to know what happens to the people this Government are committing to immigration limbo; it is important, and the Government should update Parliament on it. The Minister talked about publishing immigration statistics, but I think we need more than that; this House needs to hold the Government accountable for the people they send to Rwanda, and the people they do not send there.

The point about the timetable of removals is also important, because I am aware of people in Dungavel who are keen to leave the UK, yet the UK Government are taking an age to arrange the mechanisms for them to do so. Even when people want and have reason to go somewhere else, the Government are not facilitating that. Worryingly, the Minister said it was not necessary to report on that to Parliament. I disagree; it is entirely important and necessary to report on that to Parliament, so that we can hold the Government accountable. Again, if they think that this will go so well, surely they will want to tell us how many people they have sent away, rather than about those they have not.

Lords amendment 9 is about victims of modern slavery and human trafficking being removed without their consent. That is a deep concern for many organisations who support people who have been trafficked and have been through absolute hell. It is important that those people are not removed to Rwanda without their consent. Redress has provided a briefing about torture in Rwanda, and it highlights that there have been cases of it. Human Rights Watch’s reports on Rwanda, published in 2023, 2022 and 2021, all include examples of torture. There is list in the Redress briefing that I urge all Members to have a look at, although I will not detain the House with it now.

The briefing highlights that in the Supreme Court case, it was pointed out that

“evidence of human rights violations ‘raises serious questions as to its compliance with [Rwanda’s] international obligations’, since this has occurred despite the country having ratified many international human rights agreements”.

Furthermore, the British Medical Association’s briefing raised concerns about the ability of Rwanda to support those who have been victims of torture. Rwanda is on the list of countries experiencing a healthcare worker crisis; it is on the list of countries that the UK is not supposed to recruit from. Again, that calls into question whether people can be supported when they go to Rwanda. The BMA briefing states:

“Medical reviews of 36 people under threat of removal to Rwanda revealed that 26 displayed medical indicators of having been tortured, with 15 having symptoms or a diagnosis of PTSD and 11 having experienced suicidal thoughts while in detention.”

We are talking about an incredibly vulnerable group, and they deserve specific support. It is important that we recognise that Lords amendment 9 should stay in the Bill

I come to Lords amendment 10, in which Lord Browne of Ladyton proposes a change to protect supporters of the UK armed forces and their families from removal to Rwanda. That is a significant amendment, particularly in the context of Afghanistan. I have talked many times in this House about Afghans, such as the Triples, who supported the UK’s endeavours in Afghanistan and have been despicably left behind. I continue to get regular emails from a woman who was trained by UK forces and worked alongside them in Afghanistan. She is increasingly frustrated and terrified, but most of all she is despondent that the UK has let her down and has not kept the promises that she felt she had been made.

Yasmin Qureshi: On the hon. Lady’s point about the UK letting down people who were working for us and with us, that is all because of this gimmicky legislation, which is designed to appeal to a certain percentage of voters, from a Government who are bankrupt of any real ideas for tackling the real issues of concern in our country. This legislation is just a gimmick.

5.15 pm

Alison Thewliss: The hon. Lady is correct: it is a gimmick. It has no basis in fact and there a lot of doubt about whether it will even work, but it appeals to a certain section that the Government think need to be appealed to. It is not so much a dog whistle as a foghorn, but it is definitely there.

To continue with the point about Afghans, the Migration Observatory at Oxford University has pointed out that more Afghans have come by small boats than in any of the UK's schemes. In fact, between 1 January and 30 June last year, nine times as many Afghans arrived by small boats as under the routes that the Government specifically set up. The ARAP and ACRS are failing to deal with this issue; they are supposed to be safe and legal routes that prevent and dissuade people from getting in small boats, but they do not work. They take too long, they are inefficient, and they do not provide the security that people require to come here, so people take things into their own hands. Who can blame them in the circumstances?

I have seen far too many cases in my constituency. When Afghanistan fell, we had about 80 people in touch who had relatives in Afghanistan, but I know of only a handful who managed to get their family over here. That is despicable. I worry about those people all the time. I do not know where they are, and I do not know whether even their families know where they are. It is telling that so many people will come by small boats because they cannot rely on UK Government schemes to get them here safely.

The Bill is full of contradictions: it is a deterrent, but Rwanda is also safe; it undermines our own obligations internationally and our domestic courts while telling Rwanda that it must keep to its obligations; it is not tough enough for the far-right of the Tory party but too harsh for the more reasonable wing. It is a circus. It is a deflection from a broken Home Office that cannot even get the basics right—that is beset by delays, under investigation by the Information Commissioner's Office and wasting money hand over fist.

The Rwanda Bill is not Scotland's values. In Scotland, we see the humanity in people. An alternative is set out clearly in the Scottish Government's papers on the issue. We cannot trust the failed Westminster parties to dismantle the hostile environment that they created. Scotland must have these powers urgently. We must have independence to play our part in the world.

Sir William Cash: I signed the Government's motion to reject Lords amendment 1 and am happy to support them in it. The fact is that the Lords amendment would add to clause 1(1) the words:

“full compliance with domestic and international law.”

The problem is that that would make the clause one of the most serious and dangerous clauses I have seen in recent statutory history. It would contradict one of the most fundamental principles of our constitutional law.

As my right hon. and learned Friend the Minister for Countering Illegal Migration said, we have a dualist system—I have referred to it several times in the past—and it is fundamental. That is unlike Germany, as article 26 of its constitution states that international law is the most fundamental part of its constitutional arrangements; articles 65 and 66 of the Dutch constitution contain a

similar provision. We have a dualist system, and the sovereignty of our Parliament is imperative. Over many generations—in fact, going back centuries—all the court cases, whether in the House of Lords or in the Supreme Court, make it absolutely clear that where words used in statute are clear and unambiguous, and where Parliament's explicit intention is clear, parliamentary sovereignty means that the supremacy of Parliament can override international law and should do so. The “should do so” is equally important. Indeed, I would go further and say that in our courts, sovereignty—with those clear and unambiguous words—trumps international law.

As I mentioned in an intervention on the Labour spokesman, the hon. Member for Aberavon (Stephen Kinnock), the House of Lords Constitution Committee, including the likes of the noble Lord Falconer, Lord Robertson and various others, clearly stated in paragraph 58 of its report last year on the rule of law:

“Parliamentary sovereignty means that Parliament can legislate contrary to the UK's obligations under international law.”

That fundamentally disagrees with what is contained in Lords amendment 1, so what—if I may say—the heck is going on? The Lords had a very important decision to take, and paragraphs 54 to 60 of that report contain the very carefully detailed reasoning that led the Committee to the conclusion I have just read out.

I have mentioned in a previous debate the judgment of Lord Hoffmann in a case called *R v. Lyons*. I want to quote from it, because he clearly says that international law is trumped by the supremacy of the sovereignty of Parliament. Parliament has to be the key determinant. What he says is so important—I would not bother making my point in this way if it were not for this amendment. I am not sure whether the Leader of the Opposition really intends to achieve the objectives set out in clause 1; it worries me very much indeed if he is complicit in this operation. This was a Labour amendment and had a majority of 102 in the House of Lords, so we are going to have to take it seriously, which means we also have to deal with it seriously.

Lord Hoffmann said,

“English courts will not (unless the statute expressly so provides) be bound to give effect to interpretations of the treaty by an international court, even though the United Kingdom is bound by international law to do so.”

He went on to say,

“The sovereign legislator in the United Kingdom is Parliament. If Parliament has plainly laid down the law, it is the duty of the courts to apply it, whether that would involve the Crown in breach of an international treaty or not.”

Nothing could be more explicit. Nothing could be clearer.

Mr Alistair Carmichael (Orkney and Shetland) (LD): Will the hon. Member give way?

Sir William Cash: No. Amendment 1, put forward by the House of Lords, completely contradicts that principle, because in its wording it makes both domestic law and international law combined a matter of full compliance. I would go so far as to say that it is impossible in many circumstances to actually arrive at a point where there could be full compliance with domestic and international law according to our constitutional principles.

Sir John Hayes (South Holland and The Deepings) (Con): I am extremely grateful to my hon. Friend for again making a powerful argument about the sovereignty of Parliament, and he will understand why the sovereignty of Parliament is so fundamental. In democratic polity, Parliament speaks for the people and is given legitimacy by the people, and lawmakers here are answerable to the people. International obligations and treaties matter, but they do not matter more than the people's will.

Sir William Cash: I am bound to say, with no disrespect to the noble Lords, who passed this amendment with a majority of 102, that they do not have that legitimacy because constitutionally they are unelected; that is a fundamental point that needs to be taken into account. They have a function to perform, but it is our intention and the Government's clear, stated objective, to overturn the amendment. The issue goes much further and deeper, in my opinion, than just the question of the Rwanda Bill, but it is in the Bill. In my 40 years in this place, or in my constitutional legal practice beforehand, I have never seen any statute that purports to include words that are so all-embracing as the words in the amendment. I do not know who devised the amendment but, with a majority of 102, we had better look to our merits and make quite sure that we turn it down.

The people who are behind amendment 1 are internationalists. That worries me, too. There is a cohort of internationalists in various Government Departments: the Home Office and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office in particular. Being a mere Back Bencher, I am more than happy to castigate those who want to internationalise the sovereignty of our country. I had a bit of trouble—a local difficulty, as one might say—over our leaving the European Union. These internationalists wanted us to be part and parcel of this great European Union, and I have never been happier in my life than on 23 June 2016, when we decided to reject the proposals, as I had been arguing for—shall we say, for a year or two?

The European Union itself is in a terrible bind over the global problem of illegal migration. I have not yet discovered what Germany will do about its own constitution in this respect. It is not just the European Union but the United States of America—day in, day out we see the problems they face on the Texas border. It is beyond imagination. What that country is trying to do about the numbers of people flowing in raises all the same kind of questions on the international refugee convention. This issue affects not just the United Kingdom, but we are taking a stand. I say to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister that by rejecting the amendment we will enhance our international reputation—by using our unwritten constitution to make it clear that what the people want and what the principles of common sense demand is that we just cannot allow illegal migration to overtake our entire national interest.

I have been to Madrid for a summit of the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of the Parliaments of the European Union, as the British representative and Chairman of the European Scrutiny Committee, and I hope to go back again in a few weeks' time. There was sheer consternation at the last conference, which is comprised of the chairmen of the European affairs or scrutiny committees of the 27 member states;

they were appalled by the proposal by a majority vote to accept quotas and compulsory fines if they were to have any sensible arrangement in the European Union, which they cannot have because it is inconsistent with their constitutional arrangements. It is inconsistent with the charter of fundamental rights. That is why we need to focus on the European convention on human rights in this particular context. I am not going to make a speech about that, because that would be outside the terms of this debate.

5.30 pm

I wrote to the Prime Minister many months ago and sent him a paper of seven pages of breaches of international law by countries from all over the world, including in the European Union—France, Denmark, there were so many of them. It was not seven pages of arguments; it was seven pages, each line of which contained breaches of international law by the legion, so what are we worrying about? Get on with it! We must make sure that we reject this amendment and do not allow the Lords, if they come back again on ping-pong, to think that they are going to get away with it. We want to be very firm about this. We have a dualist system. We have sovereignty of Parliament, and we have an elected Parliament. We have our voters' wishes to take into account and we should stick by them and do nothing else.

Dame Diana Johnson (Kingston upon Hull North) (Lab): It is almost two years since the Rwanda scheme was first announced by the then Home Secretary in April 2022. This is now the third piece of legislation connected with that scheme. When this Bill had its Second Reading in the Commons at the end of last year, I noted that the challenge of stopping dangerous boat crossings was real and, despite what the Minister says, I think it is one that every Member of this House wishes to address.

The Home Affairs Committee's report on channel crossings was clear:

"There is no magical single solution to dealing with irregular migration."

Instead, our report recommended:

"Detailed, evidence-driven, fully costed and fully tested policy initiatives...to achieve...incremental change".

It also recommended:

"Close co-operation with international partners".

Those remarks are still relevant, and it is interesting to note the new tone of the Home Secretary in saying that this policy on Rwanda is now only a part of the solution to small boat crossings. As we know, however, it is very expensive and uses up a huge amount of time in this place and a great deal of political capital.

In the absence of any pre-existing evidence that the UK-Rwanda partnership will deliver on its primary objective to deter small boat crossings, the need for careful, considered and responsible planning and lawmaking is even more acute, and that is what the amendments under consideration today seek to address. I remind the House that the Lords as a revising Chamber have an important job to do in scrutinising legislation and improving it where necessary, and I think it is helpful for this House to see what improvements the other place is suggesting to legislation from this place.

Amendment 1 adds a requirement to maintain "full compliance with domestic and international law."

[*Dame Diana Johnson*]

I note that the Minister today and the Minister in the other place have argued that the Bill is already compliant with the rule of law and that it is predicated on compliance with international law in the form of the treaty. The Government commented:

“The treaty sets out the international legal commitments that the UK and Rwandan governments have made consistent with their shared standards associated with asylum and refugee protection.”

This is the same treaty that the House of Lords agreed a motion not to ratify on 22 January. It is the same treaty for which the Government refused to allow time for Members of this House to debate and reach a view on, despite a request from the Home Affairs Committee.

The time period for objections is over and the Government can ratify the treaty as long as they lay a statement setting out why they are doing so despite the decision of the Lords. If the Government want us to accept their assurances that the treaty is itself evidence of compliance with international law, they should really have given this House the opportunity to debate that treaty. In the absence of such an opportunity, amendment 1 would provide the reassurance of compliance with domestic and international law. As the Government insist that the treaty and Bill already satisfy the criteria, it stands to reason that there should not really be any issue with the amendment.

Sir William Cash: Will the right hon. Lady give way?

Dame Diana Johnson: I am going to carry on. The hon. Gentleman spoke at length, and I want to get through a number of amendments.

I turn to amendments 2 and 3, which also relate to the treaty. In the other place, Lord Hope argued that Rwanda being declared a safe country should be dependent on the arrangements provided for in the treaty being “fully implemented” and “adhered to in practice”, with amendment 3 setting out what that would actually look like and giving the independent monitoring committee a significant role in reporting on this. In response, the Minister in the Lords set out that the Government would ratify the treaty only

“once we agree with Rwanda that all necessary implementation is in place”.—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 4 March 2024; Vol. 836, c. 1358.]

As we know, the Bill will come into force only once the treaty has been ratified. Again, it would have been helpful and beneficial for this House to have had the opportunity to debate the treaty, yet scrutiny of its provisions did not happen in the Commons, just as financial details of the UK-Rwanda partnership had been held back from Parliament until very recently. As highlighted in last week’s estimates day debate on asylum and migration, the Home Office repeatedly refused the Home Affairs Committee’s requests for basic financial information about the scheme, and disclosed some of the costs only after our Committee joined forces with the Public Accounts Committee to request a National Audit Office investigation.

We now know that the core costs are very expensive: £370 million for the economic transformation and integration fund, an additional £20,000 per individual relocated, a further £120 million once 300 people have been relocated and, on top of all that, £150,874 for each

individual relocated to Rwanda. There is a direct cost to the Home Office of £28 million by the end of 2023-24, with £1 million per year in staff costs and £11,000 for the flight cost of each individual relocated, and I still do not know whether the Home Office has been able to enter into a contract with an airline to deliver the removals to Rwanda. Crucially, though, we still have not been told the costs for implementing the provisions in the treaty, such as a new asylum appeals body. Is there money available, and has it been allocated to pay for that?

We already know that the Home Office budget is under acute pressure. On 1 February this year, the Home Secretary requested an emergency drawdown of £2.6 billion from the reserves, because the Department had run out of money before the supplementary estimates had been approved. With serious questions still to answer about how the Government will fund the implementation of the treaty, and about its practical implementation, I believe that the amendments help to provide some necessary assurances that the Government have hitherto failed to provide to Parliament.

Amendments 4 and 5 would make it possible to argue that Rwanda is not a safe country on the presentation of “credible evidence to the contrary” and would allow appeals to be brought on that basis. Responding on behalf of the Government, the Minister in the Lords said:

“We have been clear that the purpose of this legislation is to stop the boats, and to do that we must create a deterrent that shows that, if you enter the UK illegally, you will not be able to stay.”—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 4 March 2024; Vol. 836, c. 1378.]

The Home Affairs Committee has repeatedly asked both Ministers and senior officials what evidence there is for the deterrent effect of the Rwanda scheme. The permanent secretary, Sir Matthew Rycroft, required a ministerial direction for the scheme, because there was no evidence that it would provide value for money. When he gave evidence before the Committee last year, he said that this was because

“the value-for-money judgment depends on the amount of deterrence that the policy will produce.”

He noted that although the number of people crossing the channel is falling, it

“is very hard to tell how much of that is the possibility of being relocated to Rwanda, particularly, as you suggest, before the first flights to Rwanda have taken off.”

The truth is that we actually do not have any idea whether the policy that this Bill facilitates will have the deterrent effect that the Minister cites. As I highlighted in Committee of the whole House, it does not seem sensible for the Government to propose that the status of Rwanda as a safe country should be fixed for ever more, which would, by extension, make Rwanda the only country on Earth in which nothing ever happens or changes. Amendments enabling the presentation of evidence relating to those changes and their implications for safety in Rwanda therefore seem eminently reasonable and, indeed, necessary.

Amendment 6 deletes clause 4 and introduces into the Bill a new clause that allows much wider grounds for legal challenge. The Home Affairs Select Committee has always recognised that appropriate legal challenge is a necessary part of any functioning asylum system. Amendment 7 disapplies section 57 of the Illegal Migration Act 2023, meaning that people claiming to be children

could appeal against a decision that they are over 18. The noble Baroness Lister, who tabled that amendment, explained that it was intended to

“minimise the risk of any unaccompanied child being sent to Rwanda”.—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 6 March 2024; Vol. 836, c. 1577.]

During the Home Affairs Committee’s channel crossings inquiry, we heard multiple examples of safeguarding processes failing across various parts of the asylum system, including cases of children being mistaken for adults. Section 57 of the Illegal Migration Act refers to the process of age assessment in the Nationality and Borders Act 2022. The Committee’s channel crossings report noted that that Act contains a number of provisions relating to age assessment, including a new national age assessment board and powers for the Home Secretary to make regulations specifying scientific methods for age assessments. Our report notes:

“The provisions are controversial because there is broad consensus that age assessment should not rely exclusively, or for some stakeholders, at all, on analyses of the skeleton or the teeth.”

I am concerned that without the amendment tabled by Baroness Lister, the Bill could produce a situation where a child is wrongly assessed as being an adult and sent to Rwanda.

Mrs Elphicke: Will the right hon. Lady give way?

Dame Diana Johnson: I am going to carry on, because I want other Members to be able to speak.

Amendment 8 relates to the timetable for removals under the Illegal Migration Act. It would require the Home Secretary to lay before Parliament a statement setting out all the individuals whose asylum claims have been deemed inadmissible since that Act received Royal Assent. The statement would have to include the number of individuals due to be removed to Rwanda and the timetable for those removals, as well as the arrangements for those individuals not being removed to Rwanda.

Again, that is information that the Home Affairs Committee has already tried to glean from the Home Office. Indeed, when the Home Secretary appeared before the Committee in January, I asked him how many individuals whose asylum claims had been deemed inadmissible since the Illegal Migration Act received Royal Assent would be sent to Rwanda. He replied:

“That will depend on which other countries we have returns agreements with.”

Despite pressing him several times on that point, our attempts to ascertain any further information were unsuccessful. As the noble Lord Coaker said when moving his amendment, this is a subject on which it would be good to have some facts. That is why his amendment has significant merit.

Mrs Elphicke: Will the right hon. Lady give way on that point?

Dame Diana Johnson: The hon. Lady is trying to get in, so I will give way, but I am keen to finish.

Mrs Elphicke: I am grateful to her for giving way, because I was hoping to intervene on the SNP spokesperson, the hon. Member for Glasgow Central (Alison Thewliss), on a similar point.

When it comes to facts, I am concerned that those being presented are slightly selective, particularly in relation to age assessment. In the House of Lords, the evidence that was brought before their lordships was that—as the right hon. Lady knows—the Age Estimation Science Advisory Committee, the expert committee that is independent and has been set up independently, has proposed that the accuracy of age assessment will be improved in multiple ways: not just using one biological method, but a range of methods alongside the existing one. I am concerned that partial evidence about age assessment is being presented in today’s debate, and I would be very grateful for the right hon. Lady’s confirmation that she supports the inclusion of those important methods of age assessment that the committee has recommended, in order to support accurate age assessment for safeguarding children.

Dame Diana Johnson: Very briefly, I am reporting what the cross-party Home Affairs Committee decided and put in our report on cross-channel small boat crossings. We produced that report nearly two years ago—this matter has been going on for some time. I am reporting our concerns, which are widely shared among all members of the Committee, about the problems that exist. It is very difficult to assess the correct age of a person who claims to be a child, so it is worth reflecting that this is not easy, and the Home Affairs Committee is mindful and concerned about it.

5.45 pm

It would be very helpful if the Minister were able to give a little more information on the widely circulating stories about the number of individuals who might be sent to Rwanda after Royal Assent. The story now seems to be that 150 people will travel to Rwanda, but that there will be a pause and that it will be a staggered process. It would be helpful to understand that and how it fits with the context of the thousands who have already been deemed to be inadmissible to the asylum system. It would also be helpful to hear about the scheme’s voluntary nature. Again, it has been widely reported in the press that people will be offered £3,000 to travel to Rwanda. All of this is widely circulating in the press, but Ministers have not given the House this information—the Home Affairs Committee certainly has not received any information.

As I said on Thursday, it is regrettable that we cannot have access to financial and practical information about how schemes will work, and that we repeatedly have to ask for basic information to allow us to come to a view on the Government’s proposals. The Home Office says it is very keen on scrutiny but, as Chair of the Home Affairs Committee, I have to say that has certainly not been my experience over the past few years. The Home Office does not want scrutiny, and any attempt to obtain information is rebuffed.

Lords amendment 9 was tabled by the noble Baroness Butler-Sloss, a formidable character who has fought modern slavery for years. When she tables amendments, we would do well to consider them carefully. Her amendment would create an exception relating to the removal of victims of modern slavery and human trafficking:

“A person with a positive reasonable grounds decision from the National Referral Mechanism...must not be removed from the United Kingdom on the basis of the Rwanda Treaty until a conclusive grounds decision has been made.

A person with a positive conclusive grounds decision...must not be removed...without a decision-maker considering whether such removal would negatively affect the physical health, mental health or safety of that person”.

The Home Affairs Committee recently produced its report on human trafficking, in which we expressed our concern that

“the Government is prioritising irregular migration issues at the expense of tackling human trafficking.”

Human trafficking is not an immigration offence but an exploitation offence, and the two things must not be conflated. People should not have to choose between continuing to be exploited or risking deportation to Rwanda—a point made to us very forcefully by the former Prime Minister, the right hon. Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May). That is why I believe that Lords amendment 9 has merit.

Lords amendment 10, tabled by the noble Lord Browne, would provide an exemption for people who have supported the armed forces overseas or who have otherwise been agents or allies of the UK overseas. When I look at the composition of those travelling in small boats, the top group is from Afghanistan—20%—and it is worth considering why they are travelling in small boats when we have set up schemes to facilitate people to travel from Afghanistan.

These Lords amendments go some way towards addressing concerns that the Home Affairs Committee has identified in relation to the Rwanda scheme, and I think the Government should give them serious consideration. I am disappointed that the Minister has been so dismissive of the genuine reasons for tabling these amendments.

I do not think the parliamentary scrutiny of the Bill and its associated treaty has been very satisfactory. A debate on the treaty was denied, and the provision of crucial information has been rejected for months on end. To stop the small boats, and to make the asylum system fit for purpose, we need an evidence-based approach that is informed and strengthened by parliamentary scrutiny, which has sadly been limited during the passage of the Bill.

Several hon. Members *rose*—

Sir William Cash: On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I in no way wish to seem churlish, but the right hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North (Dame Diana Johnson) refused to accept an intervention from me on the grounds that I had talked for too long. She has just managed to exceed the length of my speech by five minutes—

Mr Deputy Speaker (Sir Roger Gale): Order. I have to say to the hon. Gentleman that that is not even a nice try. I call Alexander Stafford.

Alexander Stafford: It is a pleasure to speak in this very important debate, which is about defeating these awful amendments from the House of Lords and then getting the Bill through Parliament, the flights off to Rwanda and the wheels down in Kigali. The hon. Member for Aberavon (Stephen Kinnock) claimed that Labour supported the Lords amendments not in order to wreck the Bill, but to help it along and make it better. Yet we also heard from the hon. Member for Glasgow

Central (Alison Thewliss), speaking from the SNP Front Bench, that they want to upset the Bill. These are clearly wrecking amendments—there are no ifs or buts about it.

My hon. Friend the Member for Stone (Sir William Cash), in his rejection of Lords amendment 1, made clear the dangerous precedent it would set—not just for this Bill but for all Bills—for the supremacy and primacy of this House, and that is the first thing we need to reflect on properly. This Parliament is sovereign. The House of Commons is sovereign. By taking that sovereignty away from us, we upset everything. Lords amendment 1 talks about compliance with the rule of law. How can it be against the rule of law when the democratically elected body of this House wants something, and the free and independent sovereign country of Rwanda wants something? By rejecting the amendment, we will enhance our sovereignty and the Bill.

It is clear that the Bill is needed, but why is it so needed and why is it essential that we stop these wrecking amendments? For far too long we have had far too many illegal immigrants coming into our country. Those illegal immigrants, who are jumping the queue by going outside the rules and regulations on how they should come into our country, are making it harder and harder for people in this country. The Bill is necessary, needed and proportionate. Illegal immigrants are putting a huge strain on public services. They are putting a huge strain on the things that everyday people use: doctors, GP services, schools. The human cost of people being killed as they travel across the channel needs to stop. The financial cost to residents in Rother Valley and across our areas needs to be curtailed. The amendments try to wreck the Bill, and that is why we need to double down.

For some reason, we have had a lot of debate about how many people will go to Rwanda. That is clearly out of the scope of the Bill, but many Opposition Members mentioned it. We have heard estimates of 150 or a handful. I sincerely hope that the number will be in the thousands and tens of thousands, to get rid of the backlog and stop the illegal immigrants coming here. Fundamentally, the point of the Bill is to stop illegal immigrants coming here. Any attempt to wreck it is an open-door policy to let human traffickers traffic people illegally into our country and upset our local communities. Ultimately, more people will die if the Bill does not pass, because of the loss of life in the channel.

No one has really talked about the Bill's deterrent factor. A similar process worked in Australia, where illegal immigration rapidly decreased due to the deterrent effect, and it is important that we reflect on that. If we stop people coming here in the first place, we will save lives and save money, so it is so important that we get the Bill through.

Sir John Hayes: My hon. Friend refers to the Australian system, which was known as Operation Sovereign Borders. It is true that the offshore processing that Australia enjoyed was only part of the solution, and the Government have always acknowledged that. Rwanda is not a be-all and end-all, but it is a critical part of our policy, as it was in Australia. I wonder whether he might comment on this: it seems to me that the House of Lords is either careless about the threat of our borders being breached with impunity, or clueless because it does not know it is happening. Which does he think it is: careless or clueless?

Alexander Stafford: I would not wish to comment on what is going on in their lordships' minds, but clearly they do not care about the concerns of the average person in Rother Valley about the high levels of illegal immigration, which I hear about when I knock on doors. Their lordships clearly do not care about the people dying while trying to cross the channel. They clearly do not care about the cost to the public purse of hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants coming over here. They clearly do not care about the everyday person in the street. Their lordships, ultimately, are not democratically elected and answerable to the people. We are, and that is the crucial point: we are the voice of the people, we are answerable to the electorate, we are answerable to our constituents, and we need to get this stopped.

There is so much more in the Lords amendments that will upset and disrupt the Bill, so I will touch on a few more of them. First, I want to talk about Lords amendments 4 and 5, which talk about whether Rwanda is a safe country. I would be very careful about some of the words used by Opposition Members to describe Rwanda. Fundamentally, Rwanda is a safe country. Not only are we in this House declaring it to be safe, but it is patently true. To say that Rwanda is not safe is a fundamentally colonialist attitude to other parts of the world. We are saying to another country, "Your country is not safe; your country is not good enough." We on the Government Benches are saying that Rwanda is safe. The 1.4 million tourists who went to Rwanda last year—

Patrick Grady (Glasgow North) (SNP): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Alexander Stafford: Of course.

Patrick Grady: If Rwanda is such a wonderful place to be deported to, why would the prospect of being deported there be a deterrent?

Alexander Stafford: That is an interesting point. I am under no illusion that Rwanda is a great country, but I will tell the hon. Gentleman a country that is even better than Rwanda: the United Kingdom. So of course they want to come to Britain, because we are a better country. That does not mean that Rwanda is not safe, or that it should not be safe.

On Lords amendments 4 and 5, the Government have already completed a detailed assessment that Rwanda is a safe country. We need to accept the facts of that assessment and start to take even more action while the boat crossings are low. And they are low: they were down 36% last year. As my right hon. Friend the Member for South Holland and The Deepings (Sir John Hayes) mentioned, that is because of the other stuff we are doing such as the Albanian deal, which is working, and stopping the boats physically getting to the sources.

Mrs Elphicke: Does my hon. Friend agree that another safe country is France?

Alexander Stafford: I thank my hon. Friend, who does so much work on this issue in her constituency. Indeed, France is a very safe country—as are Spain, Italy, Germany and so many countries crossed by illegal immigrants. They should claim asylum in the first safe country. They have no duty or right to come over this way, but we do have a right and duty to protect our

country, protect our borders, protect our sovereignty and protect our people. That is why we need to have a clear idea of who is coming here and ensure that we can deport the people we do not want or do not need, and process them elsewhere.

Turning back to Lords amendments 4 and 5, we cannot allow individuals to challenge their removal grounds on the basis that Rwanda is not a safe country. The UK Government have made the assessment and we cannot let the amendment allow for individuals to challenge their removal grounds. New international treaties mean that our decision cannot be second-guessed, and that is vital in moving forward with this legislation.

I disagree with Lords amendments 6 and 9, as Rwanda has its own safeguarding system to ensure the safety of individuals who will be relocated to Rwanda. If we start questioning each claim and whether to send them to Rwanda, we are adhering to the idea that Rwanda is not a safe country, which contradicts the safeguarding processes that Rwanda has already introduced. We have already identified that Rwanda is a safe country, so it should not be up for interpretation based on an individual's claim that they cannot be sent there.

I also disagree with Lords amendment 7, as it can incorrectly favour individuals who want to abuse our immigration system. We need robust measures to be implemented to ensure that the Rwanda plan is executed with efficiency to prevent those who want to play the system. We need to ensure that this is the toughest legislation ever. We need to do everything we can to prevent individuals from impersonating children to bypass the Rwanda scheme. We have already discussed checks on whether people are children. To protect children, we need to make sure who is a child and who is not. There are safe and independent ways of verifying a person's age. That goes on in other countries. I believe German and maybe France use similar processes, and I do not think any of us is claiming that France or Germany are not safe countries. If it is good for them, it is good for us. We heard how the legislation in Germany and France is different from ours, but if they can have such checks, then so should we. They will safeguard the British people but also genuine child refugees, to make sure they are not put in an awful situation.

Sir John Hayes: I am extremely grateful to my hon. Friend for giving way on two occasions. He will remember that when we were debating an earlier piece of legislation with the then Minister, my right hon. Friend the Member for Newark (Robert Jenrick), this issue of age verification was raised. My hon. Friend is right to say that other countries use it. On that occasion, my right hon. Friend explained why it is so important; it is because the oldest so-called asylum seeker found to be here claiming to be a child turned out to be 42 years of age.

6 pm

Alexander Stafford: I thank my right hon. Friend for that apposite intervention. That is the concern. Having a situation where some people can claim they are children when they are 42 years old is not good for anyone. We have been debating the Rwanda scheme in one shape or form for two years, and, at every step of the way, Opposition Members have been wrecking it. These amendments are just the latest of their objections to it.

Mrs Elphicke: Does my hon. Friend share my concern that the SNP objected to the regulations on age verification, while the Labour party did not even vote on the regulations, which had to be carried by Conservative votes?

Alexander Stafford: I thank my hon. Friend for that observation. That is shocking, and it just shows where the care and safeguarding of children lies in their priorities. As a local Member of Parliament, I know what Labour thinks about safeguarding our girls in Rotherham. We should be able to look after everyone. This Bill will ensure that we look after the people in Britain, that we give sovereignty to our people and that we control our borders. We have had two years of dither and delay, of wrecking amendments, of planes not taking off, of people being pulled off planes, and of Opposition Members trying everything possible to stop this well-needed, well-liked and well-supported policy going forward. Anybody trying to support the amendments is no better than those who want to wreck the Bill and have an open-door policy. I say to all Members of this House that we must reject the Lords amendments, we must stand up for Britain, we must stand up for our sovereignty and we must get wheels down in Kigali as soon as possible.

Joanna Cherry: I rise to support the Lords amendments. Lords amendments 9 and 10 because they are basic humanitarian amendments designed to exempt from the process of being sent to Rwanda the victims of modern slavery and human trafficking, as well as our agents—our allies—who have supported His Majesty's armed forces overseas and persons who have been employed or indirectly contracted to provide services to the UK. It would be shameful if this House did not support those amendments.

I will direct most of my remarks to Lords amendments 1 to 6. Lords amendment 1 relates to whether the Bill is fully compliant with the rule of law, and Lords amendments 2 to 6 broadly deal with the issue of the safety of Rwanda. As has been adverted to earlier in the debate, I visited Rwanda last month as part of the Joint Committee on Human Rights delegation. We will be reporting in due course on our findings as part of our inquiry into the human rights of asylum seekers. Therefore, although I am Chair of the Committee, any comments that I make today are in a personal capacity, because the Committee has not yet deliberated.

I am firmly of the view that Rwanda cannot be described as a safe country for the United Kingdom to send asylum seekers to. That is based on what I observed there, but also based on objective evidence about such arrangements as presently exist in Rwanda for asylum seekers—not refugees on their borders, but asylum seekers—the degree of expertise among its immigration officers, lawyers and judiciary, and, crucially, evidence that the Joint Committee on Human Rights has received about the state of human rights in Rwanda, and perhaps, most importantly, information, collated by the Home Office, which I referred to earlier, about the state of human rights in Rwanda. I will come on to that in a moment.

When we were in Rwanda, we met many Government officials and organisations, most of whom meet with Government approval, and naturally they had a good story to tell us. Like the Supreme Court, I believe that they are in good faith, but we need to weigh that against the evidence of what we have heard from others, the

evidence collated by the Home Office about human rights abuses in Rwanda and also a recognition of how long it will take Rwanda to put in place the arrangements required by the fresh treaty, and for them to bed down. In connection with that, I remind Members of this House what the House of Lords International Agreements Committee said when it undertook its scrutiny of the new treaty in January. It said:

“While the Treaty might in time provide the basis for such an assessment”—

of Rwanda as a safe country—

“if it is rigorously implemented, as things stand the arrangements it provides for are incomplete. A significant number of further legal and practical steps are required under the treaty which will take time”.

The International Agreements Committee listed those. It went on to say that

“the arrangements put in place by the Treaty need time to bed in to demonstrate that they operate in practice. The Home Office has been unable to offer any clear timeline for implementation, but we”—

the House of Lords International Agreements Committee—

“agree with the evidence we received that the Treaty is unlikely to change the position in Rwanda in the short to medium term.”

Several hon. Members rose—

Joanna Cherry: Let me just develop this point, and then I will take some interventions. I agree with the House of Lords on that. It fits with what I observed on the ground in Rwanda, which I will come on to in a moment. Importantly, the hon. Member for Bosworth (Dr Evans), who is no longer in his place, earlier referred to what he described as the views of the UNHCR. When I met UNHCR officials on the ground in Rwanda, they said that they did not believe that Rwanda is a safe country for asylum seekers. They said that it will take systemic and structural change to happen first and then that change will need to cascade through the system. That will take time. I also believe that a greater commitment to meaningful human rights protection is required.

Sir John Hayes: The hon. and learned Lady is making, as she usually does, a considered argument based on her visit to Rwanda. I have not been there. I wonder whether, in making that argument, she is mindful that previously both the United Nations and the EU have designated Rwanda as a suitable place to accept refugees. What does she make of that?

Joanna Cherry: The Rwandans host more than 100,000 refugees on their border who have come over from neighbouring countries such as Burundi and the Congo because of conflict in those countries. They are people from neighbouring countries who have the ambition to go back to their own country as soon as they can, and they live in refugee camps on the border. They are a completely different category from asylum seekers who have sought to come to the UK and who are going to be sent to Rwanda. That is not just my view; that was the view of the UNHCR.

Jill Mortimer (Hartlepool) (Con) rose—

Joanna Cherry: I will give way to the hon. Member who is a member of the Joint Committee on Human Rights.

Jill Mortimer: I thank the hon. Lady for giving way. I was also in that meeting with the UNHCR. Is it not also true that when we questioned the officials about their motivation for why they felt that we should not be sending our asylum seekers there for processing, they were very clear that it was because they felt that we were shirking our responsibility, that we should be taking all those asylum seekers, and that we had the capacity to. Is it not also true that, in that meeting, they agreed that they based their emergency transit base there, that they sponsor scholarships in Rwandan universities for refugees. It is a very safe place. Let me quote from my own notes. I said, “So, it’s nothing to do with safety. It was because you feel that we should be doing this ourselves.” And they said, “Yes.”

Joanna Cherry: I, too, have detailed notes of our meeting with the people from UNHCR. The hon. Lady is right to say that the UNHCR said quite clearly that it thinks that the United Kingdom is shirking its responsibilities, and actually so do I. That is my personal belief. I base that on the number of refugees there are in the world: there are more than 100 million displaced people and more than 36 million refugees in the world. Really quite a small number of them make their way to the shores of the United Kingdom. There will be a hell of a lot more in the years to come because of climate change, and my very firm belief is that the United Kingdom needs to shoulder its responsibilities as one of the richer countries in the world, rather than shuffling these people off on to a country such as Rwanda which, as we saw, has made great strides, but it cannot be compared with the United Kingdom in wealth.

A little more about why I do not believe that Rwanda can yet be described as a safe country: I mentioned in an intervention that it is important to read the United Kingdom’s Supreme Court judgment in its entirety, particularly paragraphs 75 to 105. The decision was based on a number of things: evidence about the general human rights situation in Rwanda, the adequacy of Rwanda’s current asylum system, and Rwanda’s failure to meet its obligations under a similar agreement regarding asylum seekers with Israel in 2013. There was a lot to the judgment. It is very rich in detail. The Court considered a lot of evidence over a long period. It is really not an adequate acknowledgment of the exercise in which the Supreme Court was engaged to simply say that a few months later an Act of Parliament can change the reality on the ground and solve all the legitimate concerns that the Supreme Court had about the situation in Rwanda.

Yes, the United Kingdom Government have entered into a new agreement, but the trouble is that none of the new measures to which Rwanda and the UK have agreed are yet properly in place. The UK Government’s insistence that, since the Supreme Court’s considered judgment last year, Rwanda has miraculously become a safe country for asylum seekers can only be described as a legal fiction. Nothing I saw on the ground in Kigali led me to doubt that. When we were there, the relevant legislation was still going through the Parliament. The legal reforms and new systems agreed had yet to be put in place, and although training had commenced it was still very much in its infancy.

The Supreme Court found that the Rwandans were acting in good faith, but that

“intentions and aspirations do not necessarily correspond to reality”.

Having spent some time in Rwanda, and met with Rwandan Government officials, healthcare workers, Ministers, lawyers, those who will deliver the legal training, its national commission for human rights and non-governmental organisations, I think that the Supreme Court got it right: the Rwandans are acting in good faith, but intentions and aspirations do not correspond to reality.

We heard a very interesting fact: owing to their recent history, 80% of Rwandans have themselves been refugees. As I said, on their borders they accommodate well over 100,000 refugees and displaced persons from neighbouring countries. Many of the Rwandans I met were at pains to emphasise to me that they see refugees as their friends, their brothers and their sisters. I was very struck by how their attitude contrasts with the UK Government’s hostility towards asylum seekers and desire to offload both their legal and, I believe, their moral responsibilities to asylum seekers on to others.

When the Joint Committee on Human Rights considered the UK Government’s original agreement with Rwanda and the Illegal Migration Act 2023, we expressed concern that the policy

“could be seen as an outsourcing of the UK’s own obligations under the Refugee Convention to another country.”

I know that not everyone will agree with that, but given the number of displaced persons and refugees in the world compared with the tiny fraction we take, I think that we are not living up to our moral obligations. Clearly, there is a legal argument that we are not doing so. The Joint Committee on Human Rights also said, back when we considered the original agreement with Rwanda and the 2023 Act:

“Removing asylum seekers to a state where they face a real risk of serious human rights abuses, or of being sent on to a dangerous third country as a result of an inadequate asylum system, is inconsistent with the UK’s human rights obligations”.

Dr Johnson: Will the hon. and learned Lady give way?

Joanna Cherry: I give way to the hon. Lady, who was also on the visit to Kigali.

Dr Johnson: The hon. and learned Lady says that the UK is taking a tiny number of refugees and asylum seekers. I am not sure that that is true, but I would be interested to know what she considers to be a reasonable number—or whether she believes that there is not one.

Joanna Cherry: I do not have time to get into redesigning the system, but—[*Interruption.*] Well, during our inquiry, as the hon. Lady will recall, the Committee heard very detailed evidence about what might be a reasonable number, and how the number we take compares with the number of refugees in the world. We heard very detailed evidence from the chief executive officer of the Refugee Council, Enver Solomon, about what might be a compassionate but reasonable way for the United Kingdom to approach its moral and legal obligations.

Let me focus on why I support the amendments that relate to the lack of a safe situation in Rwanda. Many of those I met in Rwanda were very keen to emphasise that their written constitution contains good human rights protections, which it does, but few of them were able to point to any case law showing people in Rwanda taking advantage of those protections, as we are—at least for the time being—able to in this country. I also found out

[Joanna Cherry]

when I was in Rwanda that in 2016, the Rwandan Government withdrew the right of individual petition to the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights because they were unhappy with the way in which it handled claims brought by Rwandan dissidents. I could not help but see an echo in that of the UK Government's attitude towards the European Court of Human Rights when it makes decisions that they do not like.

6.15 pm

As I said in an intervention, the Home Office has compiled a 137-page country information note on human rights in Rwanda, collating information from sources ranging from the US State Department to Human Rights Watch, and setting out serious shortcomings in the protection of human rights in Rwanda. I asked the Minister about that, and he seemed very reluctant to engage with that point. I hope that he will come back to it. How does he reconcile his, and his colleagues', repeated insistence that Rwanda is a safe country with the 137-page document issued by his own Government and updated in January this year? It sets out how it collates the evidence, and says that it tries to take things only from reliable sources. One of the biggest sources in the document is the US State Department—the State Department of one of our major allies.

Mr Carmichael: Would there not be some sense in allowing Home Office decision makers to take account of the Home Office evidence that has been gathered together in the way that the hon. and learned Lady describes?

Joanna Cherry: The document was withdrawn for a while and updated in January, so I only saw it and read it in detail just before my trip to Rwanda. I was really quite appalled that Government Ministers could continue to state that Rwanda is a safe country from a human rights perspective in the face of the evidence that they themselves collated. I really want to hear a colourable answer to that point.

Before the Joint Committee on Human Rights left the UK, we took steps to find out about the human rights situation in Rwanda. The evidence that we heard gave me great cause for concern about the curtailment of freedom of expression in Rwanda for those who wish to criticise the Government. The US State Department, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have reported evidence of unlawful or arbitrary killings, disappearances and torture. One area of particular concern for asylum seekers sent from the UK is the protection of same-sex-attracted and transgender people. The Foreign Office travel advice for Rwanda warns British gay people and British trans people that individuals "can experience discrimination and abuse, including from local authorities. There are no specific anti-discrimination laws that protect LGBT+ individuals".

When I put that to Government officials and others with whom we met, I was reassured that the Rwandan constitution contains a general protection against discrimination, which it does, but sexuality and gender identity are not listed there. Crucially, nobody was able to show me any evidence that a gay or transgender person has ever availed themselves of the anti-discrimination

protections in the constitution. People were at great pains to tell me that homosexuality and transgenderism are not criminal offences in Rwanda. Sorry to be light-hearted, but whoop-de-doo. As a lesbian, I can tell the House that the mere fact that one is not criminalised is only the start of the story.

I think Rwanda is where the UK was on LGBT rights about 50 years ago. Yes, it is ahead of many other African countries because it is not illegal to be gay or trans in Rwanda, but there are no positive rights and no equal rights protections. We need to acknowledge that, because there are people who come to the United Kingdom because they are gay, transexual or transgender, and they know that we in the United Kingdom have great, world-class equal rights for gay and transgender people. If they are coming here for those protections, they are perfectly entitled to be concerned about being sent to a country such as Rwanda, where no such protections exist.

Many others come to this country because they were dissidents in their country—they have criticised their Government. They come to the United Kingdom, because—so far at least; touch wood—we still have freedom of expression. I am not sure that Rwanda can be described as having the same freedom of expression protections that we enjoy in the UK.

Asylum seekers also come to this country who have been human rights defenders in their country and have been persecuted for it. Again, touch wood, we in this country still have full human rights protections. That, based on the evidence of the Home Office itself, is not the position in Rwanda.

Jill Mortimer: I thank the hon. and learned Lady for giving way again. The anti-discrimination law in the Rwandan constitution is not something that just ethereally hangs there. In fact, is it not true that, because of their recent history of genocide, it is a deeply ingrained feeling among Rwandans that everybody is equal and there is no discrimination? The law does not even allow asking someone whether they are Tutsi or Hutu. They are very, very sensitive to anybody discriminating about anything. Is it not also true that the heads of two non-governmental LGBT organisations we spoke to were very clear? We had a very good dig into this. My hon. Friend the Member for Sleaford and North Hykeham (Dr Johnson) asked them whether it would be okay for gay people to hold hands walking down the street in Rwanda, and their answer was, "Yes, of course." The hon. and learned Lady then asked if there might be—

Mr Deputy Speaker (Sir Roger Gale): Order. That is a speech, not an intervention. I am terribly sorry, but I must ask the hon. Lady to resume her seat.

Joanna Cherry: My answer to the hon. Lady is that, as I said at the outset of my speech, in assessing whether Rwanda is a safe country for asylum seekers, particularly LGBT asylum seekers, we need to consider what we heard from people when we were there, as well as the objective evidence. She will recall that I questioned several people on this subject. No one was able to give me an example of any gay or transgender person ever availing themselves of the law to protect their rights. There is a difference between that and the position in the United Kingdom, where anyone who is same-sex attracted or transgender is protected by the Equality

Act 2010 and by the European convention on human rights; if they lose their job or are refused housing, for example, they can go to court.

We need to look at what we heard in Rwanda. We heard very positive things from two Government-approved LGBT rights non-governmental organisations, but there is also evidence—again, particularly in the Home Office note—suggesting that the situation is rather different. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Hartlepool (Jill Mortimer) may scoff, but that note was prepared by her Government.

Caroline Lucas (Brighton, Pavilion) (Green): The hon. and learned Lady is making a case about the importance of evidence. Does she agree that there is evidence right in front of us in the fact that the UK Government accepted asylum claims from a number of people from Rwanda at the back end of last year? If it really is the paradise that we have just been hearing about, and if we can guarantee that into the future, it is quite surprising that people from that country are claiming asylum in the UK.

Joanna Cherry *rose*—

Mr Deputy Speaker (Sir Roger Gale): Order. Before the hon. and learned Member for Edinburgh South West (Joanna Cherry) resumes her speech, I remind her that we are beginning to go very wide again. I would be grateful if she could come back directly to the amendments, although I understand the context in which she is trying to make her remarks. While I am on my feet, may I say that, although I appreciate that she is being very careful, we are getting on to fairly thin ice when we start talking about a JCHR report that has not been published yet? We need to be a little careful.

Joanna Cherry: I was crystal clear at the start of my speech that I am speaking in a personal capacity, just as anything that I have written about my trip to Rwanda was written in a personal capacity. The reports that I referred to were historical reports of the Committee. I have gone out of my way to make it clear that I am speaking in a personal capacity. I explained in some detail that the Committee will deliberate, and will report on its trip to Rwanda in future. These are my personal reflections, but they are evidence-based, and I stand by them. I think that they are an important contribution to this debate—*[Interruption.]* And I do not intend to be shouted down by the right hon. and learned Member for Northampton North (Sir Michael Ellis), or anyone else who does not want to hear a lawyerly, evidence-based contribution. *[Interruption.]* I am terribly sorry if I am boring him, but he will be pleased to hear that I am coming to the end of my speech very soon.

To sum up, based on the evidence that I have read and that the Joint Committee on Human Rights has heard so far, and based on what I heard and saw on the ground in Kigali, I remain of the view that Rwanda is still not a safe country for asylum seekers, which is why I support Lords amendments 2 to 6. I am fortified in doing so by knowing that the House of Lords International Agreements Committee was of the same opinion when it undertook its scrutiny of the treaty, as was the UNHCR on the ground, which told me that systemic and structural change needs to happen in Rwanda, and then needs to cascade. I believe that that will take time, and that a greater commitment to meaningful human rights protections is required.

Several hon. Members *rose*—

Mr Deputy Speaker (Sir Roger Gale): Order. I said that we were skating on fairly thin ice because other, equally impressive legal advice suggests that there are three members of the Joint Committee in the Chamber who have come fairly close to quoting reports that have not yet been published. I hope that the hon. and learned Member for Edinburgh South West (Joanna Cherry) will accept the admonition in the terms in which it was offered. I call Dr Caroline Johnson.

Dr Caroline Johnson: I rise to support the Government in rejecting the Lords amendments. I will focus particularly on amendments 6 and 7.

Amendment 6 states that

“the Secretary of State or an immigration officer”
could decide

“if Rwanda is a safe country for the person in question”.

It is clearly a wrecking amendment. I wonder whether those immigration officers will go to Rwanda, as I and other members of the Joint Committee did last month, because if they do, their position on Rwanda may change.

During our visit to Rwanda, I saw in Kigali a beautiful city, and we met many very welcoming people. As the hon. and learned Member for Edinburgh South West (Joanna Cherry) said, many people in the Rwandan population are refugees, and as such, they are keen to support refugees and give them the best future. We saw the housing and education provision that the Government of Rwanda have made, jointly with the UK Government, to support refugees on arrival, and the level of detail with which they had considered what people may need when they arrive.

We saw a country that has welcomed people from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and transit camps in Libya, and accommodated an entire medical school from South Sudan, a girls’ school from Afghanistan and a large number of LGBT individuals from across African nations, because of its relative safety for them. We also saw a country, scarred by the genocide 30 years ago, that is keen and ambitious to work together for a cohesive and successful future.

As for what we heard on our visit, in the words of Her late Majesty the Queen, “Recollections may vary.” I think it would be helpful, as we have heard contrasting opinions, to give a little information about LGBT protections. Under proposed subsection (1)(b) in Lords amendment 6, a court or tribunal would be able to say that

“Rwanda is not a safe country for the person in question or for a group of persons to which that person belongs”.

I was very keen to see what LGBT rights there were in Rwanda, and to learn whether it was indeed a safe country. While we were out there, we learned from a Supreme Court judge, the President of the Rwanda Bar Association and the chief executive of the Legal Aid Forum in Rwanda that Rwanda has an anti-discrimination law in its constitution, which can be litigated on, if need be.

We visited Kepler, a higher education college, where we spoke to students and staff, including the chief executive, who has moved to Rwanda from Canada, and the diversity officer for the institution. We heard

[Dr Caroline Johnson]

from all those people—the students, staff, chief executive and diversity officer—that it was a safe place for LGBT individuals to live. They did say that there were some who were what they called “quietly disapproving”, among some of the older populations in Rwanda. I note that, while we have been talking, there has been a debate in Westminster Hill about LGBT content in the curriculum, which suggests, sadly, that the same may be true in this country.

6.30 pm

We also met LGBT activist groups, and I was not aware until the hon. and learned Lady said so that they were Government-approved, or that any of the people we met were necessarily Government-approved in that respect. They described themselves as LGBT activists—they were from two different organisations—and they, like others, told us that gay people can walk hand in hand with each other and are able to campaign openly without fear.

Another issue I want to raise is about subsection (1)(c), in Lords amendment 6, on

“a decision-maker considering whether there is a real risk that...Rwanda will remove or send the person...to another State in contravention of...its international obligations.”

This is the business of refoulement, which was brought up by our Supreme Court. How can someone prove they will not do something until they have not done it? That is quite difficult to prove. I note that other hon. Members have mentioned that somebody may have been subject to refoulement more than 11 years ago, and that may be true, but the question is whether it will be true now.

Rwanda, which has the world watching it, has entered into a legally binding treaty. It is very ambitious for its future, and its population and Government are very genuinely caring for those who seek refuge. Why would they breach the treaty? What damage would it do to the Rwandan Government's reputation to breach such a regulation by the refoulement of people? It would do huge damage, and I therefore think we can trust them. Having met members of the Government and members of the public there, I think we can trust them not to do that.

Sir John Hayes: My hon. Friend, as I and many other Members of this House did, sought to strengthen this Bill, including clause 4, knowing that people's individual circumstances as they game the asylum system can be acquired, altered or amended, and frequently are. However, Lords amendment 6 to which she refers not only does not strengthen the Bill; it weakens it. It makes clause 4 even weaker, and the interim orders that would be issued as a result of that amendment would delay, obfuscate and make a nonsense of the intentions of the Bill. She knows that—she has articulated it very well, as she always does—and the Lords knows it too. This is a wrecking amendment: nothing more and nothing less.

Dr Johnson: I completely agree with my right hon. Friend. It is, as he says, one of many wrecking amendments that the Lords have passed. We understand that those in the other place wish to do so, but as a democratically elected Chamber, we need to send the Bill back to the Lords with a very clear message that this is what the people of the United Kingdom want to see.

I want to clear up an issue relating to our meeting with the UNHCR, based on the contemporaneous notes that I made in Rwanda and have with me in the Chamber today. The UNHCR representative in Rwanda was asked why there is an apparent contradiction between its desire to bring refugees to Rwanda from other nations, but specifically not from the UK—what is it about a person having come from the UK that makes them less safe in Rwanda than a person who has come from Afghanistan directly, which does not seem to make sense to me?

The lady said very clearly that Rwanda is a welcoming country. She said this had “nothing to do with the safety of Rwanda”, and she felt that the UK should keep its own asylum claimants and was concerned about Rwanda's capacity. She also said that she thought the UK had a more experienced system, and she felt that, because most of the current refugees Rwanda is accommodating—95% of them—are from Congo or Burundi, there is a similar culture, and a similar ethnic and religious population. She thought there would therefore be greater inclusion more quickly, and that people would integrate more quickly. I asked her to expand on whether the UN would be more supportive of the scheme if all the individuals relocated were of such origin, but she was not willing to answer that question.

I want to touch on Lords amendment 7. There has been much talk this afternoon about the safety of children in Rwanda. The Government clearly have a duty to protect all children, but one of the challenges is that we know that there are people who will pretend to be a child when they are not; my right hon. Friend gave the example of a gentleman who did that at the age of 42. The Government have to protect children by preventing them from being deported to places they should not be deported to, but they also have a duty to protect children in the United Kingdom from being accommodated or educated with people who are not children, and who may therefore cause them harm. In my view, the Government have a duty to make their best efforts. These systems are not perfect, but they are the best we have, so it is right that the Government make their best efforts to ensure that they do assess the age of children using the most important medical interventions we have at the moment. I am pleased to say that I will be supporting the Government this evening.

Several hon. Members rose—

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): Order. We are introducing an eight-minute limit straightaway. I am hoping to get the Minister on his feet to respond no later than 7.50 pm. Clearly, if we finish before then, the Minister may have more time.

Claudia Webbe (Leicester East) (Ind): This Government remain in disarray for all the wrong reasons over this horrendous Bill. I applaud the noble Lords in the name of decency and humanity for bringing forward these amendments. The decision to force those seeking refuge here on to a cramped barge, the Bibby Stockholm docked at Portland port, was rightly condemned by human rights groups as inhumane and dangerous, and it has already seen at least one suicide. Yet this Government want to outdo themselves in their contempt for human rights and life by sending vulnerable asylum seekers, who have already been through a living and torturous nightmare to get here, to a country that our Supreme Court has ruled cannot be considered safe.

The Government are now resisting amendments from the other place that are clearly designed to prevent injustice and to stop the Government exploiting the Illegal Migration Act 2023 to truncate the process of forcing refugees to a country that does not become safe simply because it is called safe. That is how profound the Conservatives' contempt for justice and the rule of law is. The idea that Rwanda becomes safe simply by declaring it so is self-evidently nonsense. It is nothing more than a manoeuvre to scrape for votes by pandering to racism. If the Government declared tomorrow that Gaza is safe—a safe destination—would that mean no more bombs, bullets or starvation there? It seems that the Government think they can make juggling knives safe simply by declaring it safe; presumably any fingers chopped off would be someone else's fault—anyone else's—as long as our Government get their way.

As the Lords amendments make clear, the Bill remains clearly at odds with human rights law and our commitments under international conventions. Thus, the Lords amendments are an attempt to mitigate some of the worst harms of a manoeuvre that shames our nation. It is one that in effect tries to opt the UK out of international human rights law by saying that the courts cannot take it into account, all while the Prime Minister tries to save face by saying that the UK will not actually be leaving those international agreements. Amnesty International has rightly condemned this assault on human rights as “callous, immoral and an attack on the basic protections that keep us all safe.”

It is also a hugely expensive one. This wicked scheme has already cost the UK £240 million in payments to Rwanda, with at least another £130 million to come. The Bill fails to understand that there is no such thing as an illegal asylum seeker, and that safe and legal routes are needed to better protect all asylum seekers.

This Bill is ridiculous and toxic, racist and cruel, and it shows contempt for our legal system. The Government would have us believe that such attitudes reflect British values, but surely the people of this country stand for something better than stoking fear and hate towards desperate refugees alongside disdain for our legal system. I believe this whole Bill should be rejected, but I support all the amendments sent from the other place, as they go at least some way towards reducing its poison.

Priti Patel (Witham) (Con): All Members who have sat through debates on these matters in recent years must be feeling a strong sense of déjà vu today. It is almost two years ago today that we were considering Lords amendments to the Nationality and Borders Bill, some of which fitted closely in with this debate and the amendments that have come back from their lordships. They touched on processing asylum claims for third parties, issues around the safeguarding of children, and, obviously, the safety of asylum seekers. This debate and these Lords amendments should be focusing on the provisions in this Bill, and ensuring that the migration and economic development partnership—that is what it is called—with Rwanda can be operationalised and delivered as planned.

The House of Lords has a vital role to play in providing challenge and scrutiny. I—like, I hope, all Members—have read the contributions from the debates in the other place. Lord Baker of Dorking, who understands these issues, having been Home Secretary in the 1990s,

made some insightful comments on dealing with migration and the challenges and on the wider issues around asylum seekers, criminality and all those points that encapsulate the challenge confronting the Government. Today's debate about the amendments should be a balancing act, recognising that there are political choices that have to be made.

We have to recognise that some of the international conventions and agreements on human rights that have been mentioned were designed in a different era. The UNHCR has been mentioned and I have had many direct conversations with its director. It subscribes to the EU's position of burden sharing across countries around the world, but that is not a position we subscribe to and we should continue to uphold that and stand up for our own positions. The Government, through their proposals, are trying to put forward solutions.

I noted that the Lord Bishop of Durham spoke in measured and thoughtful terms about the developments and commitments from Rwanda, but he raised concerns over the opportunities that would exist for those transferred to Rwanda. That is why we negotiated this partnership. It is an economic and migration partnership. It is an innovative approach, as I was the first to say when I launched it from the Dispatch Box. It is novel and it is innovative but, importantly, we put security and scrutiny measures in place. The monitoring committee, which has not been discussed enough today but is mentioned in the Lords amendments, basically does what this House has asked for, as their lordships themselves will know. I am very concerned that some of the amendments are intended to derail the Bill and what is a pragmatic and innovative—I should stick with that word—approach to tackling these issues.

I want to touch on a few of the amendments, but many have been debated already so I will not cover them all. My hon. Friend the Member for Stone (Sir William Cash) touched on amendment 1 and I am in complete agreement with him. Lords amendment 7, tabled by Baroness Lister, on children has been subject to debate. We must recognise that it was the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 that put forward amendments and changes around safeguarding children in our education system and local government system. That is vital. The Lords tabling this amendment offers us a moment to reflect on implementing these measures and proposals; that is absolutely vital, as these were important provisions.

Dr Caroline Johnson: Does my right hon. Friend agree that measures to assess the age of children are necessary as there are adults who will pretend to be children?

Priti Patel: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. When I was Home Secretary, the case was brought to me of a 42-year-old who was masquerading as a child, and that became a national story. Through that, we looked at the age assessment measures and worked with scientists, and we looked at EU countries and what they were doing. I urge the Government to get on and implement the provisions. Time has lagged too long now; almost two years have passed, and these safeguards and protections are absolutely critical.

6.45 pm

It is important to remind the House, especially those tempted to back the Lords amendments, of the reasons why we have this Bill and the partnership. Again, it is because

of the global challenges that we face on migration. This is not about a disregard for human life. That is what the people traffickers have, and that is what we are having to tackle: lives lost at sea in the channel, and horrific and brutal acts. I have heard about them and I have seen them and I know, sadly, too much about criminal gangs benefiting and profiteering from these barbaric acts.

The partnership itself is evolving; it is starting to look somewhat different from the original economic and migration partnership, and that links to the concept of voluntary removals raised by the shadow Front-Bench spokesperson the hon. Member for Aberavon (Stephen Kinnock). We touched on it last Thursday in the estimates debate as well. In the light of the recent announcement, I am sure the Minister will address it and that their Lordships and all Members will want to press on it as well. There are benefits to voluntary returns—the principle has been in place for a number of years and it does work and we should encourage it—but there is the whole issue about re-entry bans. Section 40 of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 amended section 24 of the Immigration Act 1971 to deal with re-entries. We have to be honest about this: they do take place even though voluntary removals happen. Whatever happens in terms of the operationalisation of this Bill, it is important now that loopholes are shut down effectively. The voluntary removals scheme is strong, but we must make it work.

My final point is that there are so many aspects to these amendments, even Lord Browne's amendment. It is tragic that we are debating Afghans who should have been resettled in the right way in our country for various reasons. It pained me to listen to the Lords debating this. We have a proud record in this area and all of our constituencies have been host to so many people from Afghanistan. I remember Operation Pitking as if it was yesterday; it was a moment of crisis and Border Force staff were put into Afghanistan and into Kabul to do the right thing—to do the airlifts and to work with the Ministry of Defence. It was a harrowing time, but the Afghan relocations and assistance policy scheme and the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme and everything that followed was done in good faith, and we must uphold those principles.

To conclude, this is a pivotal moment for the Safety of Rwanda Bill and the Government's overall approach. I will be voting against the Lords amendments but, whatever direction the House chooses to take on this overall policy, we must recognise that we are sending out a very strong message to the British people, who are exasperated because they see a Government whose hands are constantly tied. There is a carousel now—a revolving door with setback after setback—and the Government must now be given not just the benefit of the doubt, but the tools and the ability to get on and operationalise this policy. We are at a pivotal stage.

John McDonnell: The right hon. Lady mentioned the Afghan scheme. I understand that the debate is about the safety of Rwanda, but I have a concern about this, and I have dealt with Afghani refugees as the right hon. Lady knows. Many of them are on the edge of real mental health issues as a result of the trials they have experienced, and I think the experience of them coming here and being put at risk of being deported again to another state will push many of them over the edge.

That must be taken into account as a factor, and that is why the amendment from the Lords is so significant.

Priti Patel: I absolutely and fully understand the right hon. Gentleman's position on this, but this is a moment of reflection for the Government, too, particularly around those who served our country and worked alongside us in Afghanistan. The Government need to clarify how they have aided and continue to aid those people, some of whom are on the border of Pakistan, which has a range of migration and governance problems right now.

To conclude, we are at a pivotal moment with this legislation. We are also at a crucial moment in our relationship with the Government of Rwanda, who have been a solid and respected partner, diligently working with us. Obviously I speak with full experience, as the original architect of the migration and economic development partnership. We have to go back to the basics of that partnership. As I said last week in the House, things have moved beyond some of the core principles of the original partnership. I urge the Government to do what they need to do in this House today and to settle some of the issues, but really they need just to knuckle down and work on the operational delivery of the scheme.

Mr Carmichael: It is a pleasure to follow the right hon. Lady, particularly given the context she gave to this debate, which is important and worth reflecting on for a second or two. She reminds us that this is in fact the third Bill in this area in this Parliament. Indeed, as the shadow Minister, the hon. Member for Aberavon (Stephen Kinnock), pointed out towards the end of his remarks, we now have another innovation: people are to be offered a cash payment to take the opportunity of going to Rwanda.

What do three Bills and a still evolving political situation and portfolio of arrangements tell us? They tell us that this Government have no strategic purpose in how they are tackling this problem, and that has become apparent from a number of the interventions today.

We have spoken an awful lot about the rule of law. To be honest, this Bill and this debate are not about the rule of law; they are an entirely political exercise. I am pretty certain that the Government will win the votes tonight, that they will face down their lordships, and that they will get their way. I would be astonished if any of the legislation makes any significant difference at the end of the day, because this is not about the law or even about a meaningful approach to the problem of boats in the channel; it is all about politics in the run-up to the election.

One of the most telling interventions came from the right hon. and learned Member for Kenilworth and Southam (Sir Jeremy Wright) and his point about permanence, which was absolutely on point. It is not without significance that nobody has chosen to pick it up, because I do not think there is an answer—or, at least, no good answer. On the question of permanence, let us not ignore the context of where Rwanda is and where Rwanda has been politically and in relation to its neighbours. In January, the US State Department was saying to Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo that they had to walk back from the brink in the conflict between them. If either or both of them choose not to, where will that leave the safety and stability of

Rwanda as a destination for us to send people? The determination, as the shadow Minister said, to legislate to say that somehow or another the sky can be green and the grass can be blue takes no account of those real challenges that are coming down the track.

The Government should look at the authors of the amendments that they will knock back today. One is Lord Hope of Craighead. I remember when he was first appointed as Lord President in Scotland, and I have watched his progression through to being head of the Supreme Court. This is not a man given to making grand political gestures. This is no wide-eyed radical. When he comes up with an amendment to say that the purposes of the Bill should be done in accordance with domestic and international law, that makes perfect sense.

It is not to be forgotten that the roots of this legislation are to be found in a Supreme Court judgment. That caused enormous frustration in Government circles, and we do not forget that, but obeying the law is not an optional extra for any Government. Even if what we are trying to do here is to circumvent the scrutiny of the courts, to resist an amendment that says that decision-makers should treat Rwanda as safe

“unless presented with credible evidence to the contrary”

simply defies any sense of logic.

The hon. and learned Member for Edinburgh South West (Joanna Cherry) made extensive reference to the Home Office guidance on human rights in Rwanda. Her point was good, but it is a nonsense, surely, that in the Home Office, people are beaver away, working out the human rights position in Rwanda, while in another office in the same building, people are drafting clauses saying that the people who will then make the decisions should not allowed to take any account of it. That makes no sense.

If we were serious about finding a solution to the problem and breaking the business model of the people traffickers, the Government would be taking in the Opposition, the Scottish nationalists, ourselves and all parties to try to find a common way forward. In fact, they are doing the opposite. They are seeking to manage the issue politically in such a way as to increase division and not to build consensus. In the time remaining to them in government, they will be able to win votes like this, but they will not do anything to stop the traffic. Ultimately, they will have to be replaced by those who will.

Sir Michael Ellis (Northampton North) (Con): I rise to reject and oppose all 10 of the Lords amendments. In the other place last week, peer after peer spoke of this Bill as an outrageous affront to the law or “international law”. With great respect, there seemed to be a collective amnesia that it is Parliament that is sovereign and that Parliament secured sovereign authority over generations from what had previously been an absolute monarchy. It probably stems from the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Parliament for centuries now has had sovereign authority to pass any law whatever.

No law that Parliament passes can be “outside the law”. In our system, it is Parliament that is supreme. Despite the misnomer of the court that Tony Blair invented, it is Parliament that is supreme, not lawyers or judges. That is unlike the United States, for example, where judges can strike down a law passed by Congress as unconstitutional. In fact, the UK legislature could do

the opposite of that, and strike the Supreme Court down out of existence, if such were Parliament’s will. That is, after all, what Tony Blair himself did when he abolished the 150-year-old principle of the Law Lords and the House of Lords as our highest court and created the Supreme Court just a few years ago. Many think that was an act of constitutional vandalism, and I happen to agree, but whether or not one does, it is axiomatic that what Blair did, one of his successors can at least in theory undo. That is the nature of our system.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Stone (Sir William Cash) said earlier, Parliament derives its authority from the people, and that is why parliamentary sovereignty is so important. It is not an aggrandisement. The law is a living, fluid concept. People change and people’s views change, which is why it is right that the people’s elected representatives in Parliament can have sovereignty over decisions that are made. Two hundred years ago, drawing graffiti on Westminster Bridge was an offence punishable by death; now people can block ambulances on Westminster Bridge and receive no more than a small fine. The law has changed in 200 years, and it is imperative that we bear in mind that it is a fluid concept. It has to keep up with the wishes and will of the people.

7 pm

The point is that society changes and the law changes with it, and that is a major advantage of the English common law system. Today, the British people have elected leaders—such as my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister of this country—who advocate a policy of increased vigilance on immigration, and the elected politicians must be able to enact laws in accordance with the wishes of the people, even if lawyers and Members of the other place do not like it. That is the very essence of democracy. I have worked in the law all my life—it is 30 years since I was called to the Bar—and I know that the law is not the master of the people, but a servant of the people, as is this House. It must serve the wishes of the British electorate and, if necessary, adapt accordingly. The British people’s current wishes on immigration are clear, and the Prime Minister is right to enact them.

This is not just a constitutional position. Nine people have died trying to cross the English Channel in small boats this year alone. The latest victim of the smuggling gangs was a seven-year-old girl, whose overloaded boat capsized in a French canal. For this reason, stopping the boats is not just a political imperative; it is a moral necessity. Only when those coming to the UK illegally know that they cannot stay will they stop risking their lives and the lives of others. I am sorry to say, however, that to Labour and Crossbench peers in the House of Lords last week, it seemed to be an outrage to try to stop this trade in human misery by establishing what would be an effective deterrent through the Rwanda partnership.

Notwithstanding the contributions of some Members in the other place who were opposing this process, it is clear to anyone who reads the Supreme Court’s judgment of last year that the Bill is the constitutionally appropriate response to it. The judgment related to the conditions in Rwanda at the time of the original challenge in June 2022, and Lord Reed, the senior judge in the Supreme Court, was explicit about the fact that the issues identified could be addressed in future. In other words, the Supreme Court explicitly invited Ministers of the Crown to remedy the problems that they had identified in their judgment,

and that is precisely what His Majesty's Government has now done, with a treaty that is binding under the international law frameworks that Labour and Crossbench peers so admire.

Nor does the Bill oust the jurisdiction of the courts. That is another misapprehension. Judges will be able to consider human rights claims and judicial reviews; they will just do so after people have been sent to Rwanda—unless, of course, claimants can prove that they will face a real risk of serious harm in Rwanda, in which case they can stay in the UK while the appeal is heard.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): Order. If the right hon. and learned Gentleman could mention the amendments now and again, that would be very useful.

Sir Michael Ellis: Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker.

That arrangement is entirely reasonable—and, as I said at the beginning, the amendments are relevant to this whole concept. If one comes to this country illegally, one should not have the ability to repeatedly prevent one's removal, at vast expense to the taxpayer. However, because of Labour votes that were no doubt whipped by the Leader of the Opposition, the House of Lords defeated the Government 10 times on amendments, seeking to neuter the Bill and ensure that no one was ever sent to Rwanda. They did not vote down the Bill, and did not vote for these 10 amendments, because they want it to work; they did so because they do not want it to work.

What none of those peers on the Opposition Benches did was provide an actual alternative to the Rwanda partnership. None of them could say how they would deter people from getting into overloaded dinghies on the beaches of northern France, or prevent the deaths that will surely follow. In voting against the Bill, the Lords were therefore constitutionally, legally and morally wrong, and I urge the House to overturn their amendments.

Caroline Lucas (Brighton, Pavilion) (Green): I am grateful for the opportunity to take part in the debate.

This Bill is an affront to the principle that human rights are universal and belong to all of us by virtue of our humanity. The amendments from the other place are an attempt to stop the Government violating that principle and, I would argue, undermining not just Parliament but the courts and the rule of law in the process. Despite unacceptable and unparliamentary pressure from the Prime Minister, who urged peers to rush their scrutiny and simply go along with his dangerous, authoritarian Bill, they have rightly inflicted 10 defeats on the Government. They have done so by large majorities, signalling profound opposition to the Prime Minister's deeply illiberal, deeply inhumane Rwanda legislation. The Home Secretary's motions to disagree are consistent with this Government's track record of cruelty towards people seeking asylum. We saw another example of that very recently in the Home Office's jaw-dropping admission that it does not routinely inform family members when asylum seekers die in Home Office care.

Lords amendment 1, tabled by Lord Coaker, simply adds maintaining full compliance with domestic and international law to the purpose of the Bill. One might have imagined that that would not be up for debate, and it is a measure of how low this Government have sunk

that they are opposing an amendment which simply says that their Bill should comply with the rule of law, something I had thought Conservative Members were meant to believe in. In particular, the amendment is needed to stop the disapplication of the landmark Human Rights Act, something I believe we should be proudly defending. It is also needed to protect interim measures—a vital human rights tool under international law, issued on an exceptional basis in extreme circumstances when individuals face a real risk of serious and irreversible harm.

The Bill states that

“the Parliament of the United Kingdom is sovereign”

and that

“the validity of an Act is unaffected by international law”,

and we have heard a great deal more of that from Conservative Members this afternoon. I think that Ministers should stop misusing the concept of parliamentary sovereignty, which is not embodied by riding roughshod over the courts. Let me draw their attention to a point made very clearly by Professor Mark Elliot, chair of the faculty of law at the University of Cambridge. As he explains,

“Parliament can be meaningfully sovereign only within a functional legal and constitutional system—and such a system can only exist if its other component elements are permitted to play their proper part.”

I suggest that that is exactly the principle that the Government are seeking to trample over with the Bill, which brings me to the way in which the Government are attacking parliamentary sovereignty by undermining the jurisdiction of the courts.

Lords amendment 6, in the name of Baroness Chakrabarti, is vital. It would allow our courts to play their proper part: to hear evidence and scrutinise the legality of Government decisions, allowing our system to protect individuals from risk to life or inhuman or degrading treatment. Likewise, Lords amendments 4 and 5 at least allow for the presumption in the Bill that Rwanda is safe to be rebutted. Without these amendments, the Bill directs courts to ignore the facts that are in front of them. The amendments are a modest reprieve for facts and evidence in what remains a thoroughly vile Bill.

It is extraordinary that the Government can be so fearful of evidence. Why would they not want to look at the evidence before them? Let me refer them to the recently published World Report 2024, which deals with human rights in Rwanda and makes pretty grim reading. It states:

“Commentators, journalists, opposition activists, and others speaking out on current affairs and criticizing public policies in Rwanda continued to face abusive prosecutions, enforced disappearances, and have at times died under unexplained circumstances.”

I also urge Members to consider how constitutionally and legally astonishing the Bill is. The Joint Committee on Human Rights has been explicit about how extraordinary it is, stating that

“Requiring the courts to conclude that Rwanda is safe, even though the evidence has been assessed by the UK's highest court to establish that it is not, is a remarkable thing for a piece of legislation to do.”

That brings me to Lords amendments 2 and 3, which stand in the name of Lord Hope of Craighead, the former Deputy President of the Supreme Court. There has been much discussion about them, but they require

monitoring of the safety of Rwanda, while accepting the assertion that the treaty makes Rwanda safe. Let us suppose for a moment that we suspend our disbelief and our notice of all the evidence now that suggests Rwanda is not safe. Even if it were safe, how on earth can we be legislating that it will be into the future, for any degree of indefinite time? Much in this Bill is an affront to common sense, but that seems to be in a league of its own. Facts change and when they do, we need to change our view of those facts—to do anything less is moving towards a moment of madness.

I want to be clear that although I will vote to uphold these Lords amendments, because they are an improvement on this dreadful Bill, I maintain my view that seeking to legislate by assertion that Rwanda is safe is as dangerous as it is ridiculous. The Government cannot sign a quick treaty one week and legislate the next to make a country safe, when the highest court in the land has said just the opposite. The facts on the ground are what matter and these amendments say that the facts should be monitored. What kind of Government would oppose that?

To conclude, I will vote to uphold Lords amendments 1 to 10 because they make this Bill slightly less constitutionally transgressive and inhumane. The Home Secretary's motions to disagree with the Lords are laughable, coming just days after he has been exploiting the desperation of vulnerable people by offering them £3,000 to go to Rwanda voluntarily. Amended or not, the Bill remains a grotesque waste of money that is neither practical nor strategic; it is no less than a piece of performative cruelty from a dying Administration.

John McDonnell: Leaving aside the decision of the Court, on Lords amendment 9 we are in danger of reversing the work that this House has put in to ensure the protection of victims of modern slavery and trafficking; removing the amendment makes them vulnerable again, particularly to re-trafficking. I cannot for the life of me understand why there is not support from the Government for Lords amendment 9, which merely asserts the decision maker's opportunity to assess the impact on the physical and mental health of the individual and their potential to be re-trafficked.

Caroline Lucas: I thank the right hon. Gentleman for his intervention and he is absolutely right in what he says. It is ironic that by refusing these amendments, the Government are, in a sense, going back on pledges and commitments they have made on trying to uphold issues relating to human trafficking; this Bill is hugely damaging on so many levels. Others have spoken about amendments to provide at least some possible protection for unaccompanied children or for victims of modern slavery and those at the highest risk of harm if removed to Rwanda. We must consider what voting against those amendments means, just as we must do in respect of Lords amendment 10, which relates to the people in Afghanistan who have done so much for us, putting their own lives at risk for our Government and our country. On the idea that we would simply send them off to Rwanda, the right hon. Gentleman has already made a powerful intervention about what that would do for people who are already so vulnerable.

I sum up with a message that I hope that peers in the other place will consider. It is, of course, right and fundamental that the House of Lords should act in

accordance with its subordinate position in relation to this elected House of Commons—that is the usual way in which we proceed. For the other place to override the Commons, the bar must be an extraordinary and profound attack on the very fabric and operation of our constitutional democracy. I regret to conclude that this Bill is just that and so the other place would be well within its rights—indeed, this is its responsibility—to uphold the amendments it has already put in place. This Bill is demeaning and degrades both Houses by ignoring the rule of laws that we have passed.

Furthermore, the Bill seeks to legislate facts and prevent courts from considering them. Fixing the facts on which the law is to be applied is the kind of thinking that dangerous conspiracies are based on. That way lies authoritarianism. I urge those in the other place to put a stop to this Bill, and I urge everyone in this House to vote in favour of the amendments tonight.

7.15 pm

Sir Robert Buckland (South Swindon) (Con): I note your strong exhortation to address the amendments, Mr Deputy Speaker, and I will address them in turn. It is tempting to get into a debate about whether the Bill offends the rule of law. “The rule of law” is used as an absolute term, but it is in fact a political term; it is an important principle that underlies much of our constitution, but it is sometimes misused and elevated in a way that does not do it or the debate justice. Inevitably, we have had wider discussions about the safety of Rwanda as a country, and about the geopolitics, but that misses the point. The point is whether we can be satisfied that the Rwandan Government are meeting the obligations they agreed to in the treaty of late 2022. That treaty was underpinned by a Government Command Paper and is, in effect, the basis of the Government's answer to the exam question put to them by their lordships in the Supreme Court.

In the other place, Lord Howard of Lympne spoke powerfully about the need for the arms of the constitution to respect each other, and I entirely agree with him on that. I have said the same here in debates on this issue. We are perhaps not in the place that constitutionalists like me want to be in, but none the less, we are dealing with a judgment of the Supreme Court, based on the merits of the case and the test that it is allowed to apply: was there was a risk of a breach of the European convention of human rights—or, in this case, more a risk of refoulement as set out under the refugee convention? The Supreme Court decided that there was a risk, and the Government have rightly tried to take action to fill that gap.

I simply ask the Minister: is he satisfied that the helpful steps outlined by their lordships' International Agreements Committee in its report of 17 January are being undertaken? I refer to those nine points that Ministers in the other place were pressed on repeatedly by, among others, Lord Carlile of Berriew, who made the point powerfully. I will not recite the nine steps, but they relate to making sure that Rwanda's process for dealing with claims is fair, transparent and in accordance with the treaty that it entered into. It is important that the Government and the Minister address that point.

Lords amendment 1 just adds more potential justiciability and legal argument to a clause that, as I have said on other occasions, I despise, because it is full of declaratory law at best, and it creates a lot of legal opportunities for

[Sir Robert Buckland]

my colleagues in the profession; I declare an interest, of course. I do not think that we can perfect the clause by adding Lords amendment 1. However, Lords amendments 2 and 3 seem to have force, because if we are to go down this road of using deeming provisions, it is vital that we do not end up in a position where the law goes so far ahead of reality—say, through Rwanda's failure to carry out its treaty obligations, or its slowness to do so—that we create that legal fiction that a lot of us are rightly worried about. I am therefore minded to support Lords amendments 2 and 3.

Sir Jeremy Wright: I am grateful to my right hon. and learned Friend for allowing me to intervene before he moves off Lords amendments 2 and 3. As he knows, I share his concern about the artificial finality that the Bill's drafting presents. When it comes to the treaty, does he agree that the problem with amendments 2 and 3 is that they give all the authority to the monitoring committee? They allow it to determine that there has not been adequate compliance with the treaty, and under the amendments, that automatically feeds through to a statement that Rwanda is no longer a safe country. Under the rubric of the rest of the Bill, that decision should remain with the House of Commons and the House of Lords, not with the monitoring committee.

Sir Robert Buckland: My right hon. and learned Friend makes a powerful point. The amendment is capable of perfection. The suggestion that I think I made on Report was that the Bill should not to come into force until a Minister of the Crown was satisfied that Rwanda had met its treaty obligations both internationally and domestically. I take his point—more can be done—but there is force in their lordships pursuing that point, so that we marry up the reality with what we want to achieve legally. Unless that is done, I am minded to support Lords amendments 4 and 5, because I am yet to be satisfied that we are in a position where a deeming clause, although not unprecedented—they have been used on a number of occasions—or unconstitutional, is reflective of the reality.

The Lords amendments relating to clause 4 complicate the position. That clause is clearly drafted to deal with individual cases, and I do not think that we should upset that. Lords amendments 7 and 8 do not take matters significantly further. However, Lords amendments 9 and 10 have some force. Exemptions relating to modern slavery should be clear. We have led the world in our modern slavery legislation, and have a proud record on it. That work was led by my right hon. Friend the Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May) and others in their lordships' House. It would be unfortunate, to say the least, to end up with the Bill riding a coach and horses through our important provisions on modern slavery; I am sure that is not the intention of my colleagues on the Front Bench.

Finally, on the Afghan provision, both my right hon. Friend the Member for Witham (Priti Patel) and I were in the trenches, working on that issue, back in the summer of 2021. I was helping to get judges out of Afghanistan, while she was working day and night to ensure that we saved people who had risked their lives for our way of life. I take her point and, in fact, would go further:

although I expect the Government to be sensible and sensitive to the position of any future Afghan refugees and not put them into this scheme, it seems to me that we would lose nothing by accepting amendment 10.

For the reasons that I have given, the Lords amendments are a curate's egg, as all Lords amendments will be, but there are times when it is important that a point is made. I am afraid that this is one of those occasions when I will make that point.

Sammy Wilson: The Democratic Unionist party supports the Bill, wishes it to come to fruition, and hopes that it achieves its objectives. I will not rehearse all the reasons why, which have been given plenty of times in other debates, but we must tackle the criminal gangs. We cannot go on with the pressures and costs that mass illegal immigration puts on society, the Government and the taxpayer. For that reason, we will oppose most of the Lords amendments. As the Minister and other speakers have pointed out, many of the amendments are designed to weaken the Bill, undermine it, and ensure that it does not work, so that we remain with the old, flawed system that we have been trying to put aside.

The Minister said that the Government oppose the Lords amendments because they do not want the Bill weakened, and he is right, but the Bill is already weakened in respect of one part of the United Kingdom. I seek assurances from him; how does he come to the conclusion that pushing the Bill through will safeguard all parts of the United Kingdom against illegal immigration that is being channelled through different parts of it? The Government promised in "Safeguarding the Union" that the Bill will apply to the whole of the United Kingdom, but that was written in full knowledge that following a court judgment in Northern Ireland, the Bill could not apply there because of section 7 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 and article 2 of the Windsor framework. Two more court judgments since then have made it quite clear that because of article 2, the Bill cannot apply to Northern Ireland, where the full weight of EU law and the full protections of the European convention on human rights and the European charter of fundamental rights apply. That means that many parts of the Bill will be disappplied in Northern Ireland. There are three court rulings on this.

The Government know what is in the Windsor framework, the withdrawal agreement and the withdrawal Act, yet they continue with the argument that, despite all that, the Bill applies to Northern Ireland. I would like to hear from the Minister where that assurance comes from, given that he knows the terms of the legislation and the Windsor framework, and about the three court judgments—from October, February and the end of February.

If Northern Ireland becomes the weak spot, the policy becomes meaningless. People think, "The boats aren't going to come from France across the sea to southern Ireland on a 24-hour journey, and people will not come up through to Northern Ireland," but it must be remembered that of 77 cities in the United Kingdom, Belfast already has second-highest number of illegal immigrants per 10,000 of population. There is already a channel through the Republic into Northern Ireland and then, of course, into England. That needs to be addressed, because a promise has been made in a Government deal, and because of how that could undermine the

whole immigration policy. Of course, if Northern Ireland does become that channel, the real danger is that we finish up not just with a border for goods, but with passport controls for people moving from Northern Ireland.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): Order. Could you mention some of the amendments as well?

Sammy Wilson: Yes, I am doing so, Mr Deputy Speaker. The point I was making was that we will support the Government in rejecting Lords amendments 1 to 6 because they weaken the Bill, but the Government must recognise that their own inaction is also weakening the Bill.

I am surprised at the attitude that the Government have adopted to Lords amendment 8. Since the policy is designed to assure people that the Government have got on top of illegal immigration, I would have thought they would have welcomed the opportunity to publish daily the number of people who have been removed from the United Kingdom. In fact, I would have thought they might have done a Ken Livingstone: put a banner on the building across the river and published daily, "This is how many people we have removed." Is the reality that the Government know that the Bill will not have the wanted effect, and that the publication of such information would be an embarrassment? We support that amendment, because we believe that there should be a very public way of judging the success of the policy.

I really cannot understand the Government's attitude to Lords amendment 10, either. We have a duty to those who served with the Army in Afghanistan at difficult times, putting their life in danger, and who are now in danger of losing their life under the brutal Taliban regime, which wants to take revenge. It is not that people could use such a provision to sneak their way into the United Kingdom; we have good records on those who served the Army. They and their families are at risk, and surely we have a duty to them.

I remember speaking to people from Northern Ireland who served in Afghanistan. They spoke glowingly of the folks who interpreted for them, and the folks who gave them background knowledge, supplied them with information, went out with them on patrol daily and so on. We have a duty to those people. I cannot understand why the Government would resist Lords amendment 10. We will certainly be supporting it, because we believe we have that obligation. I would like to hear from the Minister how the promise made in paragraph 46 of the "Safeguarding the Union" deal will be delivered in Northern Ireland, given that courts have judged and ruled that the Bill cannot apply in Northern Ireland. If it cannot apply in Northern Ireland, are the Government aware of the consequences for Northern Ireland of being further isolated from the rest of the United Kingdom?

7.30 pm

Kevin Foster: It is always a pleasure to follow the right hon. Member for East Antrim (Sammy Wilson). I agree with much of what he said, but I will differ from him on the one or two amendments he plans to support.

It is worth remembering the purpose of the Bill. It is about dealing with one of the knottiest problems in illegal migration policy, which is what we do about those who leave a safe and democratic country to come

to the UK, as a choice, who we then cannot return to their home country—either because of the domestic policy of the country, which the Minister will know about, or because it is a country we are realistically not going to be able to engage with on immigration removal. Then they seek to take advantage of our asylum system. In many cases, that is the core of the people traffickers' business model. These people can include those who have had lawful residence in another safe, democratic country but then come to this country and apply for refugee status. For me, the Bill has to be about delivering a process that breaks the people smugglers' business model.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Kenilworth and Southam (Sir Jeremy Wright)—I am pleased to see him in his place—really summed it up: these amendments are not about making the Bill work better or getting this process in a better place. They are about creating routes to challenge, delay and block up. I listened to the points he made, such as on permanence. Of course, Parliament is always free to take a different view on legislation presented. No Parliament can bind another constitutionally, so a future Parliament could take a view that Rwanda is no longer safe, but for now we are quite entitled to take a view as to whether it is. Particularly with the treaty obligations and the work being done, we can say that Rwanda is safe for a refugee to be transferred to.

The core of the Bill is about working with another country that is an expert in resettlement, and being able to provide for people with a genuine safety need or who are seeking safety. It is not about allowing the continuation of the idea that if someone pays a trafficker, they can choose where that safety need is met—that is, here in the United Kingdom. Lords amendment 6 allows a range of challenges to the idea that Rwanda is not safe. Again, I look at the fact that Rwanda is working with the UNHCR on refugee resettlement. If it were inherently dangerous to take someone to Rwanda or there were a massive danger of refoulement on to a country where they would face persecution, that system could not exist.

It is perfectly reasonable that we can come to our own agreement with Rwanda that will be effective and respected, and that we can rely on in defining the country as safe. I sadly do not have time to go into all the elements touched on in the debate, such as the issues we had with our age assessment system, but it is similarly perfectly reasonable to say that with new processes coming in, we can take a view. A lot of challenges are raised up not because they will ultimately succeed but because they delay removal.

I am going to disagree a little bit with what the right hon. Member for East Antrim and others said about amendment 8. First, it says "referring to all individuals". In a strict interpretation of that, we would list everyone's name and address, which would clearly not be appropriate at all, neither would it be appropriate to list the timetable for the removal of individuals from this country. That would involve going into a publication of data that the Government would not normally go into, for fairly obvious reasons. The idea that we will not get reports and constant commentary on how the process is going without amending the Bill does not stand up.

Like my right hon. Friend the Member for Witham (Priti Patel), I worked on Op Pitting, and I saw the work we did to get people out of Afghanistan. Yes, we do

[Kevin Foster]

need to look at how we can unblock some of the ARAP process, but a lot of that is to do with finding places to settle here in the UK. It is one of the biggest issues with many of our resettlement schemes. One of the great successes of the Ukrainian scheme was people coming forward, but with the Afghan one we were reliant in many cases on local councils to offer spaces, which—unsurprisingly, given the well-known housing pressures—not many rushed to do. There is a debate to be had there, but it is not resolved by amending this Bill and providing another route to challenge or make a claim, when there is a likelihood that that route will be used by those who perhaps never had anything to do with our forces but see it as a way to not be transferred to Rwanda.

I do find interesting some of the counterintuitive arguments we have heard from the Opposition Benches that this is all a bit of a gimmick and is not going to work. If that was the case, why waste time amending the Bill? Why not let it go through, let the Government get their legislation and then spend the rest of the year saying, “Look, it didn’t work”? We know what the real fear is: it is that if the Bill goes through, this plan will work. The Bill can be perfectly credible and go forward. Some of the objections we have heard sit with me and go against the fact that the UNHCR itself is taking people to Rwanda in very large numbers, as has already been mentioned.

Without the Bill, and without it being an effective Bill—that is, a Bill without these amendments—what is the plan B? What is on offer to try to break this fundamental part of the people smugglers’ business model? We are told about cracking down on gangs, but my hon. Friend the Member for Bosworth (Dr Evans) rightly pointed out that there have been a lot of prosecutions, arrests and convictions already, and he asked how many more the Opposition are proposing. There was no real answer. The answer is that their opposition is just a soundbite, nothing else. It is like the claim that all we need to do is walk in the door and we will get a great deal out of France. Well, good luck with that. I know from my own dealings with authorities on the continent that it is not just a case of walking in the door, making a demand and suddenly getting everything we want.

As was said earlier, the amendments may be very elegant and well worded, but at the end of the day they are nothing but wrecking amendments, intended to obfuscate the process, bung it up, delay it, and reopen routes to challenge that the Bill is specifically looking to shut down. The Bill looks to transfer people to a perfectly safe country that is an expert in resettlement, works with other groups on resettlement and is perfectly able to work with the United Kingdom. Parliament is perfectly able and right to take the view that it is safe to do so.

Patrick Grady: We have all heard the admonitions about speaking to the amendments, but it is worth reflecting on the absence of any amendments in lieu on the amendment paper. During earlier stages of the Bill there were star chambers, the five families, propositions to strengthen the Bill and all kinds of dark mutterings about what might happen if it was not strengthened sufficiently, but the Bill cleared this House without any amendment. Now consensus appears to have broken out on the Conservative Back Benches that the Bill does

not in fact need any further changes and should remain unamended—so it does not need strengthening after all. Perhaps that is because this is a Bill that nobody really wanted. All it has done is create problems for the Government and the Prime Minister that did not have to exist in the first place.

The Bill creates significant new precedents, undermines established principles and conventions, and moves the UK away from a framework and structure of international law that has protected our freedom and human rights for nearly 80 years since the end of the second world war. It is not really the Safety of Rwanda Bill; it is the safety of the Prime Minister Bill. It has all been designed to try to keep certain elements of his Back Benches happy, and on that test it seems to have failed, just as it has failed in practically every other criterion it could be assessed against. The evidence of that is before us in the 10 amendments that have been made on a cross-party basis by Members of the House of Lords. As we have heard in all the Opposition speeches today, many of these are completely reasonable, sensible tests and requirements. If the Government were genuinely confident about the effectiveness of their policy and the safety of Rwanda as a place for the deportation of asylum seekers, they should be able to accept the Lords amendments without difficulty.

The amendments to clause 1, proposed by Lord Coaker and Lord Hope of Craighead, simply lay out the criteria by which Rwanda should be judged safe, and on the Government’s own terms based on the treaty that they have signed. I agree with the points made by the right hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr Carmichael) about the significance of Lord Hope adding his name to the amendments—I declare an interest because, many years ago, he conferred an undergraduate degree on me when he was chancellor of the University of Strathclyde.

The amendments to clause 4 in some way get to the heart of the debate and the issues at stake in the Bill. The debate is not really about whether Rwanda is safe in general terms. As I said on Second Reading, I visited Rwanda, as have a number of Members who have spoken, in 2018 with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. It is a beautiful country with huge potential. Its people have had to live through incredibly difficult circumstances. For wealthy tourists who fly in, go on safari and stay in nice hotels—or those who go on Select Committee or CPA visits—Rwanda is a safe and welcoming country. However, citizens who speak up too loudly with questions about the regime, who ask why international observers have been unable to report that presidential elections have been free or fair, or who belong to the LGBT community in that country, or Rwandan citizens living in London under the protection of the Metropolitan police because they are being stalked by their country’s intelligence services, might not find Rwanda quite as safe and welcoming.

The question is not whether Rwanda is generally safe, which is how the FCDO official travel guidance describes the country—it will be interesting whether it will update that guidance on the basis of the Bill. The issue is whether it is safe for asylum seekers and, even then, not for asylum seekers generally as some amorphous mass but every individual asylum seeker who might be sent there. Everyone’s personal circumstances are different; everyone’s story is unique. As the Refuweggee charity says, “We’re all fae somewhere.” Lords amendment 6

recognises that and provides for consideration and review of individual claims and cases. Those kinds of checks and balances ought to be expected in any kind of decision-making system, especially ones that make fundamental choices about the lives of the individuals concerned, but Ministers do not like to individualise the issue. They have lost sight of—or perhaps they have never really cared about—the wellbeing of the human beings at the centre of this debate.

Last week the Minister kindly accepted an invitation to visit Glasgow—something none of his predecessors has been prepared to do. I hope that when he comes, he will meet and listen to some of my constituents who are supported by the Maryhill Integration Network, Refuweege, Glasgow Afghan United and other organisations that work with refugees and asylum seekers to make them welcome in the city. He will see how people who have come here on small boats, on the backs of lorries or through other irregular means have not done so for purely economic reasons. They have come fleeing war, climate change, persecution and many other situations barely imaginable to many of us who live in relative comfort and safety in Scotland and in the UK. All they want is to be safe and to be able to contribute to their new community and society.

There is nothing good about the Bill. It should be scrapped in its entirety. It is unnecessary, unworkable and unloved by all sides of the Conservative party and the House. The Lords amendments provide something in the way of mitigation, and the House should support each of them tonight. I hope that it has the chance to divide on each of them, too. The Government, their Back Benchers and everyone else who supports the Bill ought to be made to work for it. If they think walking around the Lobby for two hours is tough, they should try getting on a small boat or on the back of a lorry and see how they feel about that.

If the Government use their majority to send the amendments back, the Lords ought to think carefully about how their amendments in lieu might achieve similar aims, and not simply cave at the end of the first round of ping-pong. The Bill was not in the Government's manifesto or even in the King's Speech, so there is no convention, principle or anything else stopping the Lords from continuing to insist on versions of their amendments. We on the SNP Benches are not supporters of an unelected second Chamber, but if Members on the Government Benches—and, more pertinently, on the official Opposition's Benches—think that an unelected House of Lords is a good idea and has a role to play in the UK constitution, they ought not be prepared to see the Lords simply cave in on this kind of legislation; Opposition Members should ensure that their colleagues in the House of Lords continue to hold the Government to account in the way that they think the UK constitution ought to work.

In reality, all this is getting us further away from the SNP's vision of an independent Scotland with an open and welcoming asylum and immigration system—and the more that the Government and the official Opposition continue to push that divergence, the closer that independent Scotland will come.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): Order. I intend to call the Minister to wind up at no later than 7.50 pm. I expect 10 votes, starting at 8 pm or before. Those who

have participated in the debate should make their way to the Chamber now. Mr Shannon, I am not putting the clock on you, but I ask you to resume your seat by 7.50 pm.

7.45 pm

Jim Shannon: It is a real pleasure to speak in this debate, Mr Deputy Speaker. I thank right hon. and hon. Members for their comments. This is no doubt a contentious issue on which we all have opinions, but ensuring safety for all is everyone's main priority. My right hon. Friend the Member for East Antrim (Sammy Wilson) set out the position of the Democratic Unionist party.

I want to make three points in the next five minutes. The first relates to Lords amendment 10 and those who helped us in Afghanistan. In February 2022 I met an Afghan national who served alongside one of my constituents in an Army role. I do not want to go into any more detail about that, other than to say that that man and his four children are under threat in Pakistan. I have done everything in my power as an MP, along with other MPs, to try to get him home. We have got him a house and job. The hon. Member for Torbay (Kevin Foster) said that all they are getting is a place, but we have got him a house and a job in a company in Newtownards. We will get his children integrated into school, because we have done that already with Syrian refugees. We took them in, and they are established and do not want to leave. My first question to the Minister about ensuring that we can do that.

Secondly, I refer back to my earlier intervention about the Northern Ireland court ruling. A legal decision has been taken in Belfast, and the Minister clearly responded that it will be challenged. I wish the Minister well on that challenge, and I hope that the ruling can be overturned. If it is, Northern Ireland will be the same as every other part of the United Kingdom. If not, we are clearly different. I hope the Minister will come back to me on that.

Thirdly, I said earlier that I am the chair of the APPG for international freedom of religion or belief, which is an important issue for me and for many MPs in this House, and some Members of the House of Lords. We have 174 members—MPs and peers—which indicates the importance of the issue. Ensuring that religion is respected is so important to me and others. I am going to speak to some of the Lords amendments, as everyone has done in their own way. Clause 2 would require decision makers conclusively to treat Rwanda as a safe country. If that presumption is made, it is crucial that the same presumption applies to how members of certain communities will be treated once there. We can have all the freedom of religious belief in this great United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, but if they do not have it in Rwanda, the whole object of the exercise has been defeated. I seek that assurance.

Lords amendment 6 would further allow decision-makers to determine whether Rwanda can be deemed a safe country for certain individuals or groups of similar persons. I am pleased that this protection has been addressed, because it could protect certain groups of people of a particular religion, to ensure their safety. The only concern is that if there is more scope for granting injunctions that delay removals, we could see ourselves in a similar position of a long list of delayed Home Office decisions that could take months to be concluded.

[Jim Shannon]

I am pleased that protections are being considered for victims of slavery or human trafficking. Given that victims are brought to the UK involuntarily, their circumstances should be assessed differently to ensure their safety. Under-18s may not have a parent with them, so special provisions must be in place. In the short time that the Minister has, I ask him to ensure that protection is given to them so that they are not taken advantage of—that is critical.

It is always important to debate these issues thoroughly, as they have been by Members on all sides of the Chamber, with slightly different opinions. Other people's lives are in our hands, and these issues are paramount. There is no doubt that we have a problem with illegal migration in this country, as my right hon. Friend the Member for East Antrim said. No one in the Chamber, from whatever party, can ignore that issue, but there are exceptional circumstances for some people, and consideration must be given to them. No matter where they are being deported to, it must be a safe place for those with specific religious beliefs. They must be protected. If we can protect them and their freedoms, human rights and religious beliefs wherever they may be, that will be a step in the right direction for me, as the chair of the APPG for international freedom of religion or belief. More importantly, it will be a step in the right direction for those people who are making the choice to go to another country.

Michael Tomlinson: May I start by thanking every single right hon. and hon. Member who has contributed during the course of this debate? It has been detailed, thorough and constructive, and I am grateful to each and every one who has contributed. I shall start in reverse order with the hon. Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon), who is so often left until the end. It was delightful to see him without a time limit on the clock at least. I will come back to his point on amendment 10 at the end, as a number of hon. Members have mentioned it. On the question of under-18s, article 3.4 of the agreement does not cover unaccompanied children. I know that he will be partially reassured by that.

On his important comments on religion and faith, I point him to articles 11 and 16 of the constitution of Rwanda. I know that he will look at them, and I hope he will find reassurance there.

Turning to the penultimate speaker, the hon. Member for Glasgow North (Patrick Grady), to whom I always listen carefully, he has renewed his invitation and I accept once again. I confirm that I look forward to my visit with him to Glasgow.

Going back to the beginning of the debate, perhaps one of the most instructive parts was the exchange between the shadow Minister, the hon. Member for Aberavon (Stephen Kinnock), and my hon. Friend the Member for Torbay (Kevin Foster). It contained the foreshadowing of a comment made time and again by my hon. Friend the Member for East Worthing and Shoreham (Tim Loughton), who is in his place and who repeatedly makes the point that it is incumbent upon anyone who disagrees with this policy to come up with their own solution to the problem of how we should deal with people who enter the country with no legitimate, credible case for claiming asylum and being granted

safe haven but who cannot be returned to their home country. That point was made powerfully today by my hon. Friend the Member for Torbay, but once again, answer came there none.

I agree with the opening remarks of my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Kenilworth and Southam (Sir Jeremy Wright) and with hopefully more than just the first half of his speech, but certainly the first half of it. He characterised this debate, this Bill and this issue incredibly well and I encourage Members to turn to his speech. I agree with his assessment of amendments 2 and 3. He is right to say that they would transfer authority on to the monitoring committee rather than on to Parliament, which is the right place for it to be. He tempted me to delve further into issues that he rightly acknowledged are not strictly part of this debate—at least not today—but I will consider them carefully, as he knows. I am grateful to him for his contributions.

On the last occasion that the hon. Member for Glasgow Central (Alison Thewliss) and I exchanged views on this Bill, I undermined her credentials by not disagreeing with each and every one of her submissions. I will start to make amends today and pick her up on two issues. On the emergency transit mechanism, it is a treaty—it is an agreement that has been signed by the African Union, the UNHCR and the Government of Rwanda. It is important. It is supported and backed by the EU to the tune of €22 million and has been warmly welcomed by the EU ambassador with words that I do not have time to repeat now, but I read them out at the outset of the debate. I agree with the hon. Lady when she said that the amendments were designed to undermine the purpose of the Bill. She was very plain and open about that, in stark contrast to those on the Labour Benches.

My hon. Friend the Member for Rother Valley (Alexander Stafford) also made that point powerfully, as did the hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Caroline Lucas). They confirmed that these are wrecking amendments. If anyone wants to put a stop to the Bill, they should support these amendments. My hon. Friends the Members for Stone (Sir William Cash) and for Rother Valley talked about sovereignty of Parliament. My hon. Friend the Member for Stone talked about clear and unambiguous language and cited the famous paragraph 144 of the Supreme Court judgment. He also cited Lord Hoffmann. I agree with him when he speaks about the strengths of our unwritten constitution.

Can I gently push back on something that the Chair of the Select Committee, the right hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North (Dame Diana Johnson), said? My hon. Friends the Members for Gloucester (Richard Graham) and for Rother Valley tackled the deterrent effect powerfully at the outset. The deterrent effect is there. Albania has already shown that: numbers have dropped by over 90%. Can I also gently push back with her on scrutiny and respectfully point out once again that both myself and the Minister for Legal Migration and the Border, my hon. Friend the Member for Corby (Tom Pursglove), were in front of her Committee within hours of being appointed? Indeed, so much did my hon. Friend enjoy that experience that he was back in front of her Committee again last week. Having read the transcripts and seen the reports of it, I know that it was a constructive and instructive exchange between the Committee and the Minister, and rightly so. We had the debate last week and we have had the debate again today:

scrutiny, scrutiny, scrutiny—something I very much welcome and that I know my hon. Friend the Member for Corby welcomes, having appeared twice before the Committee in quick succession.

The hon. and learned Member for Edinburgh South West (Joanna Cherry) spoke about her visit to Rwanda. May I gently say that I disagree fundamentally with her assessment? I suggest that the evidence needs to be looked at in the round. It is a powerful thing that evidence has been put forward that represents the spectrum of views, but it needs to be looked at in the round. In relation to Rwanda, I disagree with her because we on this side are confident in the Government of Rwanda's commitment to implement this partnership. We are clear that Rwanda is a safe country.

There were some instructive and powerful interventions on this from my hon. Friend the Member for Hartlepool (Jill Mortimer). I am also grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Sleaford and North Hykeham (Dr Johnson) for her speech, having just been to Rwanda, and for giving her powerful assessment of where we are.

I am grateful to my right hon. Friend the Member for Witham (Priti Patel), who talked about the monitoring committee. What she said was absolutely right, and not just because one member of that committee is a former Solicitor General. It is an important institution. Paragraph 101 of the policy statement sets out more detail on that. My right hon. Friend is the author and architect of this and therefore speaks with great authority. I am grateful to her for reminding the House about this. I also have time to mention the economic partnership, which she mentioned last Thursday as well. That is something we should not forget, and it was mentioned on Second Reading.

I am very grateful to my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Northampton North (Sir Michael Ellis) for his intervention. He spoke about the essence of democracy: the law is our servant. I heard a “Hear, hear” from another former Solicitor General at the back of the Chamber at that point, and he was right to say so. As my right hon. and learned Friend said, this Bill is the constitutionally appropriate response to the Supreme Court judgment—respectful, listening and responding to the concerns contained therein.

The monitoring committee is the one thing that I would mention to my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for South Swindon (Sir Robert Buckland). I would gently point out to him, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Witham did, that the right checks and balances are in place. My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for South Swindon spoke about amendments 2 and 3, saying that they would transfer authority from Parliament to the monitoring committee, and he is right.

In response to the right hon. Member for East Antrim (Sammy Wilson), I only have time to repeat that the Bill applies across the entirety of the United Kingdom, but I am grateful to him for his intervention.

On amendment 10, I repeat that the Government recognise the commitment and the responsibility that come with combat veterans, whether our own or those who have shown courage by serving alongside us. We will not let them down.

These amendments either seek to undermine the primary purpose of the Bill or are simply unnecessary, as they do not support the purpose of the legislation.

Question put, That this House disagrees with Lords amendment 1.

The House divided: Ayes 328, Noes 250.

Division No. 98]

[7.58 pm

AYES

Afolami, Bim	Courts, Robert
Afriyie, Adam	Coutinho, rh Claire
Aiken, Nickie	Cox, rh Sir Geoffrey
Aldous, Peter	Crabb, rh Stephen
Anderson, Stuart	Crosbie, Virginia
Andrew, rh Stuart	Crouch, Tracey
Ansell, Caroline	Daly, James
Argar, rh Edward	Davies, rh David T. C.
Atherton, Sarah	Davies, Gareth
Atkins, rh Victoria	Davies, Dr James
Bacon, Gareth	Davies, Mims
Bacon, Mr Richard	Davies, Philip
Badenoch, rh Kemi	Davis, rh Sir David
Bailey, Shaun	Davison, Dehenna
Baillie, Siobhan	Dinenage, Dame Caroline
Baker, Duncan	Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
Baker, rh Mr Steve	Docherty, Leo
Baldwin, Harriett	Donelan, rh Michelle
Barclay, rh Steve	Double, Steve
Baron, Mr John	Doyle-Price, Dame Jackie
Baynes, Simon	Drax, Richard
Bell, Aaron	Drummond, Mrs Flick
Beresford, Sir Paul	Duddridge, Sir James (<i>Proxy</i> <i>vote cast by Mr Francois</i>)
Berry, rh Sir Jake	Duguid, David
Bhatti, Saqib	Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
Blackman, Bob	Dunne, rh Philip
Bottomley, Sir Peter	Eastwood, Mark
Bowie, Andrew	Ellis, rh Sir Michael
Bradley, Ben	Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
Bradley, rh Dame Karen	Eustice, rh George
Brady, rh Sir Graham	Evans, Dr Luke
Brereton, Jack	Evennett, rh Sir David
Bridgen, Andrew	Everitt, Ben
Brine, Steve	Fabricant, Michael
Bristow, Paul	Farris, Laura
Britcliffe, Sara	Fell, Simon
Browne, Anthony	Firth, Anna
Bruce, Fiona	Fletcher, Katherine
Buchan, Felicity	Fletcher, Mark
Burghart, Alex	Fletcher, Nick
Burns, rh Sir Conor	Ford, rh Vicky
Butler, Rob	Foster, Kevin
Cairns, rh Alun	Fox, rh Sir Liam
Cameron, Dr Lisa	Francois, rh Mr Mark
Campbell, Mr Gregory	Frazer, rh Lucy
Carter, Andy	Freeman, George
Cartlidge, James	Freer, Mike
Cash, Sir William	French, Mr Louie
Cates, Miriam	Fuller, Richard
Caulfield, Maria	Garnier, Mark
Chalk, rh Alex	Ghani, Ms Nusrat
Chishti, Rehman	Gibb, rh Nick
Chope, Sir Christopher	Gibson, Peter
Churchill, Jo	Gideon, Jo
Clark, rh Greg	Glen, rh John
Clarke, rh Sir Simon	Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
Clarke, Theo	Graham, Richard
Clarke-Smith, Brendan	Grant, Mrs Helen
Clarkson, Chris	Gray, James
Cleverly, rh James	Grayling, rh Chris
Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey	Green, Chris
Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse	Green, rh Damian
Colburn, Elliot	Griffith, Andrew
Collins, Damian	Grundy, James
Costa, Alberto	

Gullis, Jonathan
Halfon, rh Robert
Hall, Luke
Hammond, Stephen
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, rh James
Heaton-Harris, rh Chris
Henderson, Gordon
Henry, Darren
Higginbotham, Antony
Hinds, rh Damian
Hoare, Simon
Holden, rh Mr Richard
Hollinrake, Kevin
Hollobone, Mr Philip
Holmes, Paul
Howell, John (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
Howell, Paul
Huddleston, Nigel
Hudson, Dr Neil
Hughes, Eddie
Hunt, Jane
Hunt, rh Jeremy
Hunt, Tom
Jack, rh Mr Alister
Javid, rh Sir Sajid
Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
Jenkin, Sir Bernard
Jenkinson, Mark
Johnson, Dr Caroline
Johnson, Gareth
Johnston, David
Jones, Andrew
Jones, rh Mr David
Jones, Fay
Jones, rh Mr Marcus
Jupp, Simon
Kawczynski, Daniel
Keegan, rh Gillian
Knight, rh Sir Greg
Kruger, Danny
Lamont, John
Largan, Robert
Latham, Mrs Pauline
Leadsom, rh Dame Andrea
Leigh, rh Sir Edward
Levy, Ian
Lewer, Andrew
Lewis, rh Sir Julian
Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
Loder, Chris
Logan, Mark
Longhi, Marco
Lopez, Julia
Lopresti, Jack
Lord, Mr Jonathan
Loughton, Tim
Mackinlay, Craig (*Proxy vote cast by John Redwood*)
Mackrory, Cherilyn
Maclean, Rachel
Mak, Alan
Malthouse, rh Kit
Mangnall, Anthony
Mann, Scott
Marson, Julie
Mayhew, Jerome
Maynard, Paul
McCartney, Jason
McCartney, Karl
McPartland, rh Stephen
McVey, rh Esther
Menzies, Mark
Mercer, rh Johnny
Merriman, Huw
Metcalf, Stephen
Millar, Robin
Miller, rh Dame Maria
Mills, Nigel
Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
Mohindra, Mr Gagan
Moore, Damien
Moore, Robbie
Mordaunt, rh Penny
Morris, Anne Marie
Morris, David
Morris, James
Morrisey, Joy
Mortimer, Jill
Morton, rh Wendy
Mullan, Dr Kieran
Mumby-Croft, Holly
Mundell, rh David
Murray, Mrs Sheryll
Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
Neill, Sir Robert
Nici, Lia
O'Brien, Neil
Offord, Dr Matthew
Opperman, Guy
Patel, rh Priti
Pawsey, Mark
Penning, rh Sir Mike
Penrose, John
Percy, Andrew
Philp, rh Chris
Pow, Rebecca
Prentis, rh Victoria
Pritchard, rh Mark
Pursglove, Tom
Quin, rh Sir Jeremy
Quince, Will
Randall, Tom
Redwood, rh John
Rees-Mogg, rh Sir Jacob
Richards, Nicola
Richardson, Angela
Roberts, Mr Rob
Robertson, Mr Laurence
Robinson, Gavin
Robinson, Mary
Rosindell, Andrew
Ross, Douglas
Rowley, Lee
Russell, Dean
Rutley, David
Saxby, Selaine
Scully, Paul
Seely, Bob
Selous, Andrew
Shannon, Jim
Shapps, rh Grant
Shelbrooke, rh Sir Alec
Simmonds, David
Smith, rh Chloe
Smith, Greg

Smith, Henry
Smith, rh Julian
Smith, Royston
Solloway, Amanda
Spencer, Dr Ben
Spencer, rh Mark
Stafford, Alexander
Stephenson, rh Andrew
Stevenson, Jane
Stevenson, John
Stewart, Iain
Streeter, Sir Gary
Stride, rh Mel
Stuart, rh Graham
Sturdy, Julian
Sunak, rh Rishi
Sunderland, James
Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
Syms, Sir Robert
Thomas, Derek
Throup, Maggie
Timpson, Edward
Tolhurst, rh Kelly
Tomlinson, Justin
Tomlinson, rh Michael
Tracey, Craig
Trevelyan, rh Anne-Marie
Trott, rh Laura
Tuckwell, Steve
Tugendhat, rh Tom
Vara, rh Shailesh
Vickers, Martin
Vickers, Matt
Villiers, rh Theresa
Walker, Sir Charles
Walker, Mr Robin
Wallace, rh Mr Ben
Wallis, Dr Jamie
Warman, Matt
Watling, Giles
Webb, Suzanne
Whately, Helen
Wheeler, Mrs Heather
Whittaker, rh Craig (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
Whittingdale, rh Sir John
Wiggin, Sir Bill
Wild, James
Williams, rh Craig
Williamson, rh Sir Gavin
Wilson, rh Sammy
Wood, Mike
Wragg, Mr William
Wright, rh Sir Jeremy
Young, Jacob
Zahawi, rh Nadhim
Tellers for the Ayes:
Ruth Edwards and
Dame Amanda Milling

NOES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane (*Proxy vote cast by Bell Ribeiro-Addy*)
Abrahams, Debbie
Ali, Rushanara
Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
Amesbury, Mike
Anderson, Fleur
Ashworth, rh Jonathan
Bardell, Hannah
Barker, Paula
Beckett, rh Dame Margaret
Benn, rh Hilary
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
Bryant, Sir Chris
Buck, Ms Karen
Burgon, Richard
Butler, Dawn
Byrne, Ian
Byrne, rh Liam
Cadbury, Ruth
Callaghan, Amy (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Campbell, rh Sir Alan
Carden, Dan
Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
Chamberlain, Wendy
Champion, Sarah
Chapman, Douglas
Cherry, Joanna
Clark, Feryal
Cooper, Daisy
Cooper, rh Yvette
Corbyn, rh Jeremy
Cowan, Ronnie
Coyle, Neil
Crawley, Angela (*Proxy vote cast by Owen Thompson*)
Creasy, Stella
Cruddas, Jon
Cryer, John
Cummins, Judith
Cunningham, Alex
Daby, Janet
Dalton, Ashley
Davey, rh Ed
David, Wayne
Davies-Jones, Alex
Day, Martyn
De Cordova, Marsha
Debbonaire, Thangam
Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
Dixon, Samantha
Docherty-Hughes, Martin
Dodds, Anneliese
Doogan, Dave
Dorans, Allan (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Doughty, Stephen
Dowd, Peter
Duffield, Rosie
Dyke, Sarah
Eagle, Dame Angela
Eagle, rh Maria
Eastwood, Colum
Edwards, Jonathan
Edwards, Sarah
Efford, Clive
Egan, Damien

Elliott, Julie
Elmore, Chris
Eshalomi, Florence
Esterson, Bill
Evans, Chris
Farron, Tim
Farry, Stephen
Fellows, Marion
Flynn, Stephen
Foord, Richard
Foxcroft, Vicky
Furniss, Gill
Gardiner, Barry
Gibson, Patricia
Gill, Preet Kaur
Glindon, Mary
Grady, Patrick
Grant, Peter
Green, Sarah
Greenwood, Lilian
Greenwood, Margaret
Griffith, Dame Nia
Gwynne, Andrew
Haigh, Louise
Hamilton, Fabian
Hamilton, Mrs Paulette
Hanna, Claire
Hanvey, Neale
Hardy, Emma
Harman, rh Ms Harriet
Harris, Carolyn
Hayes, Helen
Healey, rh John
Hendry, Drew
Hillier, Dame Meg
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
Kitchen, Gen
Lake, Ben
Lavery, Ian
Law, Chris
Leadbeater, Kim
Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
Lewis, Clive
Lightwood, Simon
Linden, David (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Long Bailey, Rebecca
Lucas, Caroline
Lynch, Holly
MacNeil, Angus Brendan
Madders, Justin
Mahmood, Mr Khalid
Mahmood, Shabana
Malhotra, Seema
Maskell, Rachael
Mather, Keir
Mc Nally, John
McCabe, Steve
McCarthy, Kerry
McDonagh, Dame Siobhain
McDonald, Andy
McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
McDonald, Stuart C.
McDonnell, rh John
McFadden, rh Mr Pat
McGovern, Alison
McKinnell, Catherine
McLaughlin, Anne
McMahon, Jim
McMorrin, Anna
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 (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Norris, Alex
O'Hara, Brendan
Olney, Sarah
Onwurah, Chi
Oppong-Asare, Abena
Osborne, Kate
Oswald, Kirsten
Owatemi, Taiwo (*Proxy vote cast by Chris Elmore*)
Owen, Sarah
Peacock, Stephanie
Pennycook, Matthew
Perkins, Mr Toby
Phillips, Jess
Phillipson, Bridget
Pollard, Luke
Powell, Lucy
Qaisar, Ms Anum
Qureshi, Yasmin
Rayner, rh Angela
Reed, Steve
Rees, Christina
Reeves, Ellie
Reeves, rh Rachel
Reynolds, Jonathan
Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
Rodda, Matt
Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
Saville Roberts, rh Liz
Shah, Naz (*Proxy vote cast by Dawn Butler*)
Shanks, Michael
Sharma, Mr Virendra
Sheerman, Mr Barry
Sheppard, Tommy (*Proxy vote cast by Owen Thompson*)
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
Strathern, Alistair
Stringer, Graham
Sultana, Zarah
Tami, rh Mark
Tarry, Sam
Thewliss, Alison
Thomas, Gareth
Thompson, Owen
Thomson, Richard
Thornberry, rh Emily
Timms, rh Sir Stephen
Trickett, Jon (*Proxy vote cast by Ian Lavery*)
Twist, Liz
Vaz, rh Valerie
Wakeford, Christian
Webbe, Claudia
West, Catherine
Western, Andrew
Western, Matt
Whitehead, Dr Alan
Whitford, Dr Philippa (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Whittome, Nadia
Williams, Hywel
Wilson, Munira
Winter, Beth
Wishart, Pete
Yasin, Mohammad
Zeichner, Daniel
Tellers for the Noes:
Tonia Antoniazzi and
Colleen Fletcher

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 1 disagreed to.

8.13 pm

Proceedings interrupted (Programme Order, this day).

The Deputy Speaker put forthwith the Questions necessary for the disposal of the business to be concluded at that time (Standing Order No. 83F).

Motion made, and Question put, That this House disagrees with Lords amendment 2.—(Michael Tomlinson.)

The House divided: Ayes 324, Noes 253.

Division No. 99]

[8.13 pm

AYES

Afolami, Bim
Afriyie, Adam
Aiken, Nickie
Aldous, Peter
Anderson, Stuart
Andrew, rh Stuart
Ansell, Caroline
Argar, rh Edward
Atherton, Sarah
Atkins, rh Victoria
Bacon, Gareth
Bacon, Mr Richard
Badenoch, rh Kemi
Bailey, Shaun
Baillie, Siobhan
Baker, Duncan
Baker, rh Mr Steve
Baldwin, Harriett
Barclay, rh Steve
Baron, Mr John
Baynes, Simon
Bell, Aaron
Beresford, Sir Paul
Berry, rh Sir Jake
Bhatti, Saqib
Blackman, Bob
Bottomley, Sir Peter
Bowie, Andrew
Bradley, Ben
Bradley, rh Dame Karen
Brady, rh Sir Graham
Brereton, Jack
Bridgen, Andrew
Brine, Steve
Bristow, Paul
Britcliffe, Sara
Browne, Anthony
Bruce, Fiona
Buchan, Felicity
Burghart, Alex
Burns, rh Sir Conor
Butler, Rob
Cairns, rh Alun
Cameron, Dr Lisa
Campbell, Mr Gregory
Carter, Andy
Cartlidge, James
Cash, Sir William
Cates, Miriam
Caulfield, Maria
Chalk, rh Alex
Chishti, Rehman
Chope, Sir Christopher
Churchill, Jo
Clark, rh Greg
Clarke, rh Sir 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, rh Claire
Crabb, rh Stephen
Crosbie, Virginia
Crouch, Tracey
Daly, James
Davies, rh David T. C.
Davies, Gareth
Davies, Dr James
Davies, Mims
Davies, Philip
Davis, rh Sir David
Davison, Dehenna
Dinenage, Dame Caroline
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
Docherty, Leo
Donelan, rh Michelle
Double, Steve
Doyle-Price, Dame Jackie
Drax, Richard
Drummond, Mrs Flick
Duguid, David
Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
Dunne, rh Philip
Eastwood, Mark
Ellis, rh Sir Michael
Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
Eustice, rh George
Evans, Dr Luke
Evennett, rh Sir David
Everitt, Ben
Fabricant, Michael
Farris, Laura
Fell, Simon
Firth, Anna
Fletcher, Katherine
Fletcher, Mark
Fletcher, Nick
Ford, rh Vicky
Foster, Kevin
Fox, rh Sir Liam
Frazer, rh Lucy
Freeman, George
Freer, Mike
French, Mr Louie
Fuller, Richard
Garnier, Mark
Ghani, Ms Nusrat
Gibb, rh Nick
Gideon, Jo
Glen, rh John
Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
Graham, Richard
Grant, Mrs Helen
Gray, James
Grayling, rh Chris
Green, Chris
Green, rh Damian
Griffith, Andrew
Grundy, James
Gullis, Jonathan
Halfon, rh Robert
Hall, Luke
Hammond, Stephen
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, rh James
Heaton-Harris, rh Chris
Henderson, Gordon
Henry, Darren
Higginbotham, Antony
Hinds, rh Damian
Hoare, Simon
Holden, rh Mr Richard
Hollinrake, Kevin
Hollobone, Mr Philip
Holloway, Adam
Holmes, Paul
Howell, John (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
Howell, Paul
Huddleston, Nigel
Hudson, Dr Neil
Hughes, Eddie
Hunt, Jane
Hunt, rh Jeremy
Hunt, Tom
Jack, rh Mr Alister
Javid, rh Sir Sajid
Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
Jenkin, Sir Bernard
Jenkinson, Mark
Johnson, Dr Caroline
Johnson, Gareth
Johnston, David
Jones, Andrew
Jones, rh Mr David
Jones, Fay
Jones, rh Mr Marcus
Jupp, Simon
Kawczynski, Daniel
Keegan, rh Gillian
Knight, rh Sir Greg
Kruger, Danny
Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
Lamont, John
Largan, Robert
Latham, Mrs Pauline
Leadsom, rh Dame Andrea
Leigh, rh Sir Edward
Levy, Ian
Lewer, Andrew
Lewis, rh Sir Julian
Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
Loder, Chris
Logan, Mark
Longhi, Marco
Lopez, Julia
Lopresti, Jack
Lord, Mr Jonathan
Loughton, Tim
Mackinlay, Craig (*Proxy vote cast by John Redwood*)
Mackrory, Cherilyn
Maclean, Rachel
Mak, Alan
Malthouse, rh Kit
Mangnall, Anthony
Mann, Scott
Marson, Julie
Mayhew, Jerome
Maynard, Paul
McCartney, Jason

McCartney, Karl
McPartland, rh Stephen
McVey, rh Esther
Menzies, Mark
Mercer, rh Johnny
Merriman, Huw
Metcalfe, Stephen
Millar, Robin
Miller, rh Dame Maria
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, rh Wendy
Mullan, Dr Kieran
Mumby-Croft, Holly
Mundell, rh David
Murray, Mrs Sheryll
Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
Nici, Lia
O'Brien, Neil
Offord, Dr Matthew
Opperman, Guy
Patel, rh Priti
Pawsey, Mark
Penning, rh Sir Mike
Penrose, John
Percy, Andrew
Philp, rh Chris
Pow, Rebecca
Prentis, rh Victoria
Pritchard, rh Mark
Pursglove, Tom
Quin, rh Sir Jeremy
Quince, Will
Randall, Tom
Redwood, rh John
Rees-Mogg, rh Sir Jacob
Richards, Nicola
Richardson, Angela
Roberts, Mr Rob
Robertson, Mr Laurence
Robinson, Gavin
Robinson, Mary
Rosindell, Andrew
Ross, Douglas
Rowley, Lee
Russell, Dean
Rutley, David
Saxby, Selaine
Scully, Paul
Seely, Bob
Selous, Andrew
Shannon, Jim
Shapps, rh Grant
Shelbrooke, rh Sir Alec
Simmonds, David
Smith, rh Chloe
Smith, Greg
Smith, Henry
Smith, rh Julian
Smith, Royston
Solloway, Amanda
Spencer, Dr Ben
Spencer, rh Mark
Stafford, Alexander
Stephenson, rh Andrew
Stevenson, Jane
Stevenson, John
Stewart, Iain
Streeter, Sir Gary
Stride, rh Mel
Stuart, rh Graham
Sturdy, Julian
Sunak, rh Rishi
Sunderland, James
Syms, Sir Robert
Thomas, Derek
Throup, Maggie
Timpson, Edward
Tolhurst, rh Kelly
Tomlinson, Justin
Tomlinson, rh Michael
Tracey, Craig
Trevelyan, rh Anne-Marie
Trott, rh Laura
Tuckwell, Steve
Tugendhat, rh Tom
Vara, rh Shailesh
Vickers, Martin
Vickers, Matt
Villiers, rh Theresa
Walker, Sir Charles
Walker, Mr Robin
Wallace, rh Mr Ben
Wallis, Dr Jamie
Warman, Matt
Watling, Giles
Webb, Suzanne
Whately, Helen
Wheeler, Mrs Heather
Whittaker, rh Craig (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
Whittingdale, rh Sir John
Wiggin, Sir Bill
Wild, James
Williams, rh Craig
Williamson, rh Sir Gavin
Wilson, rh Sammy
Wood, Mike
Wragg, Mr William
Wright, rh Sir Jeremy
Zahawi, rh Nadhim
Tellers for the Ayes:
Ruth Edwards and
Dame Amanda Milling

NOES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane (*Proxy vote cast by Bell Ribeiro-Addy*)
Abrahams, Debbie
Ali, Rushanara
Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
Amesbury, Mike
Anderson, Fleur
Ashworth, rh Jonathan
Bardell, Hannah
Barker, Paula
Beckett, rh Dame Margaret

Benn, rh Hilary
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
Bryant, Sir Chris
Buck, Ms Karen
Buckland, rh Sir Robert
Burgon, Richard
Butler, Dawn
Byrne, Ian
Byrne, rh Liam
Cadbury, Ruth
Callaghan, Amy (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Campbell, rh Sir Alan
Carden, Dan
Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
Chamberlain, Wendy
Champion, Sarah
Chapman, Douglas
Cherry, Joanna
Clark, Feryal
Cooper, Daisy
Cooper, rh Yvette
Corbyn, rh Jeremy
Cowan, Ronnie
Coyle, Neil
Crawley, Angela (*Proxy vote cast by Owen Thompson*)
Creasy, Stella
Cruddas, Jon
Cryer, John
Cummins, Judith
Cunningham, Alex
Daby, Janet
Dalton, Ashley
Davey, rh Ed
David, Wayne
Davies-Jones, Alex
Day, Martyn
De Cordova, Marsha
Debbonaire, Thangam
Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
Dixon, Samantha
Docherty-Hughes, Martin
Dodds, Anneliese
Doogan, Dave
Dorans, Allan (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Doughty, Stephen
Dowd, Peter
Duffield, Rosie
Dyke, Sarah
Eagle, Dame Angela
Eagle, rh Maria
Eastwood, Colum
Edwards, Jonathan
Edwards, Sarah
Efford, Clive
Egan, Damien
Elliott, Julie
Elmore, Chris
Eshalomi, Florence
Esterson, Bill
Evans, Chris
Farron, Tim
Farry, Stephen
Fellows, Marion
Flynn, Stephen
Foord, Richard
Foxcroft, Vicky
Furniss, Gill
Gardiner, Barry
Gibson, Patricia
Gill, Preet Kaur
Glindon, Mary
Grady, Patrick
Grant, Peter
Green, Sarah
Greenwood, Lilian
Greenwood, Margaret
Griffith, Dame Nia
Gwynne, Andrew
Haigh, Louise
Hamilton, Fabian
Hamilton, Mrs Paulette
Hanna, Claire
Hanvey, Neale
Hardy, Emma
Harman, rh Ms Harriet
Harris, Carolyn
Hayes, Helen
Healey, rh John
Hendry, Drew
Hillier, Dame Meg
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
Kitchen, Gen
Lake, Ben
Lavery, Ian
Law, Chris
Leadbeater, Kim
Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
Lewis, Clive
Lightwood, Simon
Linden, David (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Long Bailey, Rebecca
Lucas, Caroline
Lynch, Holly
MacNeil, Angus Brendan
Madders, Justin
Mahmood, Mr Khalid
Mahmood, Shabana
Malhotra, Seema
Maskell, Rachael

Mather, Keir
Mc Nally, John
McCabe, Steve
McCarthy, Kerry
McDonagh, Dame Siobhain
McDonald, Andy
McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
McDonald, Stuart C.
McDonnell, rh John
McFadden, rh Mr Pat
McGovern, Alison
McKinnell, Catherine
McLaughlin, Anne (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
McMahon, Jim
McMorris, Anna
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 (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Norris, Alex
O'Hara, Brendan
Olney, Sarah
Onwurah, Chi
Oppong-Asare, Abena
Osborne, Kate
Oswald, Kirsten
Owatemi, Taiwo (*Proxy vote cast by Chris Elmore*)
Owen, Sarah
Peacock, Stephanie
Pennycook, Matthew
Perkins, Mr Toby
Phillips, Jess
Phillipson, Bridget
Pollard, Luke
Powell, Lucy
Qaisar, Ms Anum
Qureshi, Yasmin
Rayner, rh Angela
Reed, Steve
Rees, Christina
Reeves, Ellie
Reeves, rh Rachel
Reynolds, Jonathan
Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
Rodda, Matt

Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
Saville Roberts, rh Liz
Shah, Naz (*Proxy vote cast by Dawn Butler*)
Shanks, Michael
Sharma, Mr Virendra
Sheerman, Mr Barry
Sheppard, Tommy (*Proxy vote cast by Owen Thompson*)
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
Strathern, Alistair
Stringer, Graham
Sultana, Zarah
Tami, rh Mark
Tarry, Sam
Thewliss, Alison
Thomas, Gareth
Thompson, Owen
Thomson, Richard
Thornberry, rh Emily
Timms, rh Sir Stephen
Trickett, Jon (*Proxy vote cast by Ian Lavery*)
Twist, Liz
Vaz, rh Valerie
Wakeford, Christian
Webbe, Claudia
West, Catherine
Western, Andrew
Western, Matt
Whitehead, Dr Alan
Whitford, Dr Philippa (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Whittome, Nadia
Williams, Hywel
Wilson, Munira
Winter, Beth
Wishart, Pete
Yasin, Mohammad
Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:
Tonia Antoniazzi and
Colleen Fletcher

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 2 disagreed to.

Motion made, and Question put, That this House disagrees with Lords amendment 3.—(Michael Tomlinson.)

The House divided: Ayes 324, Noes 253.

Division No. 100]

[8.25 pm

AYES

Afolami, Bim
Afriyie, Adam
Aiken, Nickie
Aldous, Peter
Anderson, Stuart
Andrew, rh Stuart
Ansell, Caroline
Argar, rh Edward

Atherton, Sarah
 Atkins, rh Victoria
 Bacon, Gareth
 Bacon, Mr Richard
 Badenoch, rh Kemi
 Bailey, Shaun
 Baillie, Siobhan
 Baker, Duncan
 Baker, rh Mr Steve
 Baldwin, Harriett
 Barclay, rh Steve
 Baron, Mr John
 Baynes, Simon
 Bell, Aaron
 Beresford, Sir Paul
 Berry, rh Sir Jake
 Bhatti, Saqib
 Blackman, Bob
 Bottomley, Sir Peter
 Bowie, Andrew
 Bradley, rh Dame Karen
 Brady, rh Sir Graham
 Brereton, Jack
 Bridgen, Andrew
 Brine, Steve
 Bristow, Paul
 Britcliffe, Sara
 Browne, Anthony
 Bruce, Fiona
 Buchan, Felicity
 Burghart, Alex
 Burns, rh Sir Conor
 Butler, Rob
 Cairns, rh Alun
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Campbell, Mr Gregory
 Carter, Andy
 Cash, Sir William
 Cates, Miriam
 Caulfield, Maria
 Chalk, rh Alex
 Chishti, Rehman
 Chope, Sir Christopher
 Churchill, Jo
 Clark, rh Greg
 Clarke, rh Sir 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, rh Claire
 Crabb, rh Stephen
 Crosbie, Virginia
 Crouch, Tracey
 Daly, James
 Davies, rh David T. C.
 Davies, Gareth
 Davies, Dr James
 Davies, Mims
 Davies, Philip
 Davis, rh Sir David
 Davison, Dehenna
 Dinanage, Dame Caroline
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Docherty, Leo
 Donelan, rh Michelle

Double, Steve
 Doyle-Price, Dame Jackie
 Drax, Richard
 Drummond, Mrs Flick
 Duddridge, Sir James (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Mark Francois*)
 Duguid, David
 Dunne, rh Philip
 Eastwood, Mark
 Ellis, rh Sir Michael
 Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
 Eustice, rh George
 Evans, Dr Luke
 Evennett, rh Sir David
 Everitt, Ben
 Fabricant, Michael
 Farris, Laura
 Fell, Simon
 Firth, Anna
 Fletcher, Katherine
 Fletcher, Mark
 Fletcher, Nick
 Ford, rh Vicky
 Foster, Kevin
 Fox, rh Sir Liam
 Francois, rh Mr Mark
 Frazer, rh Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 French, Mr Louie
 Fuller, Richard
 Ghani, Ms Nusrat
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gibson, Peter
 Gideon, Jo
 Glen, rh John
 Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Mrs Helen
 Gray, James
 Grayling, rh Chris
 Green, Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Griffith, Andrew
 Grundy, James
 Gullis, Jonathan
 Halfon, rh Robert
 Hall, Luke
 Hammond, Stephen
 Hands, rh Greg
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harris, Rebecca
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Sally-Ann
 Hayes, rh Sir John
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Heappey, rh James
 Heaton-Harris, rh Chris
 Henderson, Gordon
 Henry, Darren
 Higginbotham, Antony
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Holden, rh Mr Richard
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Holloway, Adam
 Holmes, Paul
 Howell, John (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Howell, Paul

Huddleston, Nigel
 Hudson, Dr Neil
 Hughes, Eddie
 Hunt, Jane
 Hunt, rh Jeremy
 Hunt, Tom
 Jack, rh Mr Alister
 Javid, rh Sir Sajid
 Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard
 Jenkinson, Mark
 Johnson, Dr Caroline
 Johnson, Gareth
 Johnston, David
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Fay
 Jones, rh Mr Marcus
 Jupp, Simon
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Keegan, rh Gillian
 Knight, rh Sir Greg
 Kruger, Danny
 Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
 Lamont, John
 Langan, Robert
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Leadsom, rh Dame Andrea
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Levy, Ian
 Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Sir Julian
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Loder, Chris
 Logan, Mark
 Longhi, Marco
 Lopez, Julia
 Lopresti, Jack
 Lord, Mr Jonathan
 Loughton, Tim
 Mackinlay, Craig (*Proxy vote cast by John Redwood*)
 Mackrory, Cheryl
 Maclean, Rachel
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, rh Kit
 Mangnall, Anthony
 Mann, Scott
 Marson, Julie
 Mayhew, Jerome
 Maynard, Paul
 McCartney, Jason
 McCartney, Karl
 McPartland, rh Stephen
 McVey, rh Esther
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, rh Johnny
 Merriman, Huw
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Miller, rh Dame Maria
 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, rh Wendy

Mullan, Dr Kieran
 Mumby-Croft, Holly
 Mundell, rh David
 Murray, Mrs Sheryll
 Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
 Nici, Lia
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Patel, rh Priti
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Philp, rh Chris
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, rh Victoria
 Pritchard, rh Mark
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quin, rh Sir Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Randall, Tom
 Redwood, rh John
 Rees-Mogg, rh Sir Jacob
 Richards, Nicola
 Richardson, Angela
 Roberts, Mr Rob
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Robinson, Gavin
 Robinson, Mary
 Rosindell, Andrew
 Ross, Douglas
 Rowley, Lee
 Russell, Dean
 Rutley, David
 Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Bob
 Selous, Andrew
 Shannon, Jim
 Shapps, rh Grant
 Shelbrooke, rh Sir Alec
 Simmonds, David
 Smith, rh Chloe
 Smith, Greg
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, rh Julian
 Smith, Royston
 Solloway, Amanda
 Spencer, Dr Ben
 Spencer, rh Mark
 Stafford, Alexander
 Stephenson, rh Andrew
 Stevenson, Jane
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, Iain
 Streeter, Sir Gary
 Stride, rh Mel
 Stuart, rh Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunak, rh Rishi
 Sunderland, James
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Throup, Maggie
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, rh Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, rh Michael
 Tracey, Craig
 Trevelyan, rh Anne-Marie

Trott, rh Laura
Tuckwell, Steve
Tugendhat, rh Tom
Vara, rh Shailesh
Vickers, Martin
Vickers, Matt
Villiers, rh Theresa
Walker, Sir Charles
Walker, Mr Robin
Wallace, rh Mr Ben
Wallis, Dr Jamie
Warman, Matt
Watling, Giles
Webb, Suzanne
Whately, Helen

Wheeler, Mrs Heather
Whittaker, rh Craig (*Proxy vote*
cast by Mr Marcus Jones)
Whittingdale, rh Sir John
Wiggin, Sir Bill
Wild, James
Williams, rh Craig
Williamson, rh Sir Gavin
Wood, Mike
Wragg, Mr William
Wright, rh Sir Jeremy
Young, Jacob

Tellers for the Ayes:
Ruth Edwards and
Dame Amanda Milling

NOES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane (*Proxy vote*
cast by Bell Ribeiro-Addy)
Abrahams, Debbie
Ali, Rushanara
Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
Amesbury, Mike
Anderson, Fleur
Ashworth, rh Jonathan
Bardell, Hannah
Barker, Paula
Beckett, rh Dame Margaret
Benn, rh Hilary
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
Bryant, Sir Chris
Buck, Ms Karen
Burgon, Richard
Butler, Dawn
Byrne, Ian
Byrne, rh Liam
Cadbury, Ruth
Callaghan, Amy (*Proxy vote*
cast by Marion Fellows)
Campbell, rh Sir Alan
Carden, Dan
Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
Chamberlain, Wendy
Champion, Sarah
Chapman, Douglas
Cherry, Joanna
Clark, Feryal
Cooper, Daisy
Cooper, rh Yvette
Corbyn, rh Jeremy
Cowan, Ronnie
Coyle, Neil
Crawley, Angela (*Proxy vote*
cast by Owen Thompson)
Creasy, Stella
Cruddas, Jon
Cryer, John
Cummins, Judith
Cunningham, Alex
Daby, Janet
Dalton, Ashley

Davey, rh Ed
David, Wayne
Davies-Jones, Alex
Day, Martyn
De Cordova, Marsha
Debbonaire, Thangam
Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
Dixon, Samantha
Docherty-Hughes, Martin
Dodds, Anneliese
Doogan, Dave
Dorans, Allan (*Proxy vote cast*
by Marion Fellows)
Doughty, Stephen
Dowd, Peter
Duffield, Rosie
Dyke, Sarah
Eagle, Dame Angela
Eagle, rh Maria
Eastwood, Colum
Edwards, Jonathan
Edwards, Sarah
Efford, Clive
Egan, Damien
Elliott, Julie
Elmore, Chris
Eshalomi, Florence
Esterson, Bill
Evans, Chris
Farron, Tim
Farry, Stephen
Fellows, Marion
Flynn, Stephen
Foord, Richard
Foxcroft, Vicky
Furniss, Gill
Gardiner, Barry
Gibson, Patricia
Gill, Preet Kaur
Glindon, Mary
Grady, Patrick
Grant, Peter
Green, Sarah
Greenwood, Lilian
Greenwood, Margaret
Griffith, Dame Nia
Gwynne, Andrew
Haigh, Louise
Hamilton, Fabian
Hamilton, Mrs Paulette
Hanna, Claire
Hanvey, Neale
Hardy, Emma
Harman, rh Ms Harriet

Harris, Carolyn
Hayes, Helen
Healey, rh John
Hendry, Drew
Hillier, Dame Meg
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
Kitchen, Gen
Lake, Ben
Lavery, Ian
Law, Chris
Leadbeater, Kim
Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
Lewis, Clive
Lightwood, Simon
Linden, David (*Proxy vote cast*
by Marion Fellows)
Long Bailey, Rebecca
Lucas, Caroline
Lynch, Holly
MacNeil, Angus Brendan
Madders, Justin
Mahmood, Mr Khalid
Mahmood, Shabana
Malhotra, Seema
Maskell, Rachael
Mather, Keir
Mc Nally, John
McCabe, Steve
McCarthy, Kerry
McDonagh, Dame Siobhain
McDonald, Andy
McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
McDonald, Stuart C.
McDonnell, rh John
McFadden, rh Mr Pat
McGovern, Alison
McKinnell, Catherine
McLaughlin, Anne (*Proxy vote*
cast by Marion Fellows)
McMahon, Jim
McMorris, Anna
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 (*Proxy vote*
cast by Marion Fellows)
Norris, Alex
O'Hara, Brendan
Olney, Sarah
Onwurah, Chi
Oppong-Asare, Abena
Osborne, Kate
Oswald, Kirsten
Owatemi, Taiwo (*Proxy vote*
cast by Chris Elmore)
Owen, Sarah
Peacock, Stephanie
Pennycook, Matthew
Perkins, Mr Toby
Phillips, Jess
Phillipson, Bridget
Pollard, Luke
Powell, Lucy
Qaisar, Ms Anum
Qureshi, Yasmin
Rayner, rh Angela
Reed, Steve
Rees, Christina
Reeves, Ellie
Reeves, rh Rachel
Reynolds, Jonathan
Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
Rodda, Matt
Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
Saville Roberts, rh Liz
Shah, Naz (*Proxy vote cast by*
Dawn Butler)
Shanks, Michael
Sharma, Mr Virendra
Sheerman, Mr Barry
Sheppard, Tommy (*Proxy vote*
cast by Owen Thompson)
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
Strathern, Alistair
Stringer, Graham
Sultana, Zarah
Tami, rh Mark
Tarry, Sam
Thewliss, Alison
Thomas, Gareth
Thompson, Owen
Thomson, Richard
Thornberry, rh Emily
Timms, rh Sir Stephen
Trickett, Jon (*Proxy vote cast*
by Ian Lavery)
Twist, Liz
Vaz, rh Valerie
Wakeford, Christian
Webbe, Claudia
West, Catherine
Western, Andrew

Western, Matt
Whitford, Dr Philippa (*Proxy*
vote cast by Marion
Fellows)
Whittome, Nadia
Williams, Hywel
Wilson, Munira

Winter, Beth
Wishart, Pete
Yasin, Mohammad
Zeichner, Daniel
Tellers for the Noes:
Tonia Antoniazzi and
Colleen Fletcher

Question accordingly agreed to.
Lords amendment 3 disagreed to.

Clause 2

SAFETY OF THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA

Motion made, and Question put, That this House
disagrees with Lords amendment 4.—(Michael Tomlinson.)

The House divided: Ayes 321, Noes 252.

Division No. 101]

[8.37 pm

AYES

Afolami, Bim
Afriyie, Adam
Aiken, Nickie
Aldous, Peter
Anderson, Stuart
Andrew, rh Stuart
Ansell, Caroline
Argar, rh Edward
Atherton, Sarah
Atkins, rh Victoria
Bacon, Gareth
Bacon, Mr Richard
Badenoch, rh Kemi
Bailey, Shaun
Baillie, Siobhan
Baker, Duncan
Baker, rh Mr Steve
Baldwin, Harriett
Barclay, rh Steve
Baron, Mr John
Baynes, Simon
Bell, Aaron
Beresford, Sir Paul
Berry, rh Sir Jake
Bhatti, Saqib
Blackman, Bob
Bottomley, Sir Peter
Bowie, Andrew
Bradley, Ben
Bradley, rh Dame Karen
Brady, rh Sir Graham
Brereton, Jack
Bridgen, Andrew
Brine, Steve
Bristow, Paul
Britcliffe, Sara
Browne, Anthony
Bruce, Fiona
Buchan, Felicity
Burghart, Alex
Burns, rh Sir Conor
Butler, Rob
Cairns, rh Alun
Cameron, Dr Lisa
Campbell, Mr Gregory
Carter, Andy
Cartlidge, James
Cash, Sir William
Caulfield, Maria
Chalk, rh Alex
Chishti, Rehman
Chope, Sir Christopher
Churchill, Jo
Clark, rh Greg
Clarke, rh Sir 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, rh Claire
Crabb, rh Stephen
Crosbie, Virginia
Crouch, Tracey
Daly, James
Davies, rh David T. C.
Davies, Gareth
Davies, Dr James
Davies, Mims
Davies, Philip
Davis, rh Sir David
Davison, Dehenna
Dinenage, Dame Caroline
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
Docherty, Leo
Donelan, rh Michelle
Double, Steve
Doyle-Price, Dame Jackie
Drax, Richard
Drummond, Mrs Flick
Duguid, David
Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
Dunne, rh Philip
Eastwood, Mark
Ellis, rh Sir Michael
Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
Eustice, rh George

Evans, Dr Luke
Evennett, rh Sir David
Everitt, Ben
Fabricant, Michael
Farris, Laura
Fell, Simon
Fletcher, Katherine
Fletcher, Mark
Fletcher, Nick
Ford, rh Vicky
Foster, Kevin
Fox, rh Sir Liam
Frazer, rh Lucy
Freeman, George
Freer, Mike
French, Mr Louie
Fuller, Richard
Garnier, Mark
Gibb, rh Nick
Gibson, Peter
Gideon, Jo
Glen, rh John
Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
Graham, Richard
Grant, Mrs Helen
Gray, James
Grayling, rh Chris
Green, Chris
Green, rh Damian
Griffith, Andrew
Grundy, James
Gullis, Jonathan
Halfon, rh Robert
Hall, Luke
Hammond, Stephen
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, rh James
Heaton-Harris, rh Chris
Henderson, Gordon
Henry, Darren
Higginbotham, Antony
Hinds, rh Damian
Hoare, Simon
Holden, rh Mr Richard
Hollinrake, Kevin
Hollobone, Mr Philip
Holmes, Paul
Howell, John (*Proxy vote cast*
by Mr Marcus Jones)
Howell, Paul
Huddleston, Nigel
Hudson, Dr Neil
Hughes, Eddie
Hunt, Jane
Hunt, rh Jeremy
Hunt, Tom
Jack, rh Mr Alister
Javid, rh Sir Sajid
Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
Jenkin, Sir Bernard
Jenkinson, Mark
Johnson, Dr Caroline
Johnson, Gareth
Johnston, David

Jones, Andrew
Jones, rh Mr David
Jones, Fay
Jones, rh Mr Marcus
Jupp, Simon
Kawczynski, Daniel
Keegan, rh Gillian
Knight, rh Sir Greg
Kruger, Danny
Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
Lamont, John
Largan, Robert
Latham, Mrs Pauline
Leadsom, rh Dame Andrea
Leigh, rh Sir Edward
Levy, Ian
Lewer, Andrew
Lewis, rh Sir Julian
Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
Loder, Chris
Logan, Mark
Longhi, Marco
Lopez, Julia
Lopresti, Jack
Lord, Mr Jonathan
Loughton, Tim
Mackinlay, Craig (*Proxy vote*
cast by John Redwood)
Mackrory, Cherilyn
Maclean, Rachel
Mak, Alan
Malthouse, rh Kit
Mangnall, Anthony
Mann, Scott
Marson, Julie
Mayhew, Jerome
Maynard, Paul
McCartney, Jason
McCartney, Karl
McPartland, rh Stephen
McVey, rh Esther
Menzies, Mark
Mercer, rh Johnny
Merriman, Huw
Metcalfe, Stephen
Millar, Robin
Miller, rh Dame Maria
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, rh Wendy
Mullan, Dr Kieran
Mumby-Croft, Holly
Mundell, rh David
Murray, Mrs Sheryll
Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
Nici, Lia
O'Brien, Neil
Offord, Dr Matthew
Opperman, Guy
Patel, rh Priti
Pawsey, Mark
Penning, rh Sir Mike

Penrose, John
Percy, Andrew
Philp, rh Chris
Pow, Rebecca
Prentis, rh Victoria
Pritchard, rh Mark
Pursglove, Tom
Quin, rh Sir Jeremy
Quince, Will
Randall, Tom
Redwood, rh John
Rees-Mogg, rh Sir Jacob
Richards, Nicola
Richardson, Angela
Roberts, Mr Rob
Robertson, Mr Laurence
Robinson, Gavin
Robinson, Mary
Rosindell, Andrew
Ross, Douglas
Rowley, Lee
Russell, Dean
Rutley, David
Saxby, Selaine
Scully, Paul
Seely, Bob
Selous, Andrew
Shannon, Jim
Shapps, rh Grant
Shelbrooke, rh Sir Alec
Simmonds, David
Smith, rh Chloe
Smith, Greg
Smith, Henry
Smith, rh Julian
Smith, Royston
Solloway, Amanda
Spencer, Dr Ben
Spencer, rh Mark
Stafford, Alexander
Stephenson, rh Andrew
Stevenson, Jane
Stevenson, John
Stewart, Iain
Streeter, Sir Gary
Stride, rh Mel

Stuart, rh Graham
Sturdy, Julian
Sunderland, James
Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
Syms, Sir Robert
Thomas, Derek
Throup, Maggie
Timpson, Edward
Tolhurst, rh Kelly
Tomlinson, Justin
Tomlinson, rh Michael
Tracey, Craig
Trevelyan, rh Anne-Marie
Trott, rh Laura
Tuckwell, Steve
Tugendhat, rh Tom
Vara, rh Shailesh
Vickers, Martin
Vickers, Matt
Villiers, rh Theresa
Walker, Sir Charles
Walker, Mr Robin
Wallace, rh Mr Ben
Wallis, Dr Jamie
Warman, Matt
Watling, Giles
Webb, Suzanne
Whately, Helen
Wheeler, Mrs Heather
Whittaker, rh Craig (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
Whittingdale, rh Sir John
Wiggin, Sir Bill
Wild, James
Williamson, rh Sir Gavin
Wilson, rh Sammy
Wood, Mike
Wragg, Mr William
Wright, rh Sir Jeremy
Young, Jacob

Tellers for the Ayes:
Ruth Edwards and
Dame Amanda Milling

NOES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane (*Proxy vote cast by Bell Ribeiro-Addy*)
Abrahams, Debbie
Ali, Rushanara
Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
Amesbury, Mike
Anderson, Fleur
Ashworth, rh Jonathan
Bardell, Hannah
Barker, Paula
Beckett, rh Dame Margaret
Benn, rh Hilary
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
Bryant, Sir Chris
Buck, Ms Karen
Buckland, rh Sir Robert
Burgon, Richard
Butler, Dawn
Byrne, Ian
Byrne, rh Liam
Cadbury, Ruth
Callaghan, Amy (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Campbell, rh Sir Alan
Carden, Dan
Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
Chamberlain, Wendy
Champion, Sarah
Chapman, Douglas
Cherry, Joanna
Clark, Feryal
Cooper, Daisy
Cooper, rh Yvette

Corbyn, rh Jeremy
Cowan, Ronnie
Coyle, Neil
Crawley, Angela (*Proxy vote cast by Owen Thompson*)
Creasy, Stella
Cruddas, Jon
Cryer, John
Cummins, Judith
Cunningham, Alex
Daby, Janet
Dalton, Ashley
Davey, rh Ed
David, Wayne
Davies-Jones, Alex
Day, Martyn
De Cordova, Marsha
Debbonaire, Thangam
Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
Dixon, Samantha
Docherty-Hughes, Martin
Dodds, Anneliese
Doogan, Dave
Dorans, Allan (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Doughty, Stephen
Dowd, Peter
Duffield, Rosie
Dyke, Sarah
Eagle, Dame Angela
Eagle, rh Maria
Eastwood, Colum
Edwards, Jonathan
Edwards, Sarah
Efford, Clive
Egan, Damien
Elliott, Julie
Elmore, Chris
Eshalomi, Florence
Esterson, Bill
Evans, Chris
Farron, Tim
Farry, Stephen
Fellows, Marion
Flynn, Stephen
Foord, Richard
Foxcroft, Vicky
Furniss, Gill
Gardiner, Barry
Gibson, Patricia
Gill, Preet Kaur
Glindy, Mary
Grady, Patrick
Grant, Peter
Green, Sarah
Greenwood, Lilian
Greenwood, Margaret
Griffith, Dame Nia
Gwynne, Andrew
Haigh, Louise
Hamilton, Fabian
Hamilton, Mrs Paulette
Hanna, Claire
Hanvey, Neale
Hardy, Emma
Harman, rh Ms Harriet
Harris, Carolyn
Hayes, Helen
Healey, rh John
Hendry, Drew
Hillier, Dame Meg
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
Kitchen, Gen
Lake, Ben
Lavery, Ian
Law, Chris
Leadbeater, Kim
Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
Lewis, Clive
Lightwood, Simon
Linden, David (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Long Bailey, Rebecca
Lucas, Caroline
Lynch, Holly
MacNeil, Angus Brendan
Madders, Justin
Mahmood, Mr Khalid
Mahmood, Shabana
Malhotra, Seema
Maskell, Rachael
Mather, Keir
Mc Nally, John
McCabe, Steve
McCarthy, Kerry
McDonagh, Dame Siobhain
McDonald, Andy
McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
McDonald, Stuart C.
McDonnell, rh John
McFadden, rh Mr Pat
McGovern, Alison
McKinnell, Catherine
McLaughlin, Anne (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
McMahon, Jim
McMorrin, Anna
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 (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Norris, Alex
O'Hara, Brendan

Olney, Sarah	Spellar, rh John
Onwurah, Chi	Starmer, rh Keir
Oppong-Asare, Abena	Stephens, Chris
Osborne, Kate	Stevens, Jo
Oswald, Kirsten	Stone, Jamie
Owatemi, Taiwo (<i>Proxy vote cast by Chris Elmore</i>)	Strathern, Alistair
Owen, Sarah	Stringer, Graham
Peacock, Stephanie	Sultana, Zarah
Pennycook, Matthew	Tami, rh Mark
Perkins, Mr Toby	Tarry, Sam
Phillips, Jess	Thewliss, Alison
Phillipson, Bridget	Thomas, Gareth
Pollard, Luke	Thompson, Owen
Powell, Lucy	Thomson, Richard
Qaisar, Ms Anum	Thornberry, rh Emily
Qureshi, Yasmin	Timms, rh Sir Stephen
Rayner, rh Angela	Trickett, Jon (<i>Proxy vote cast by Ian Lavery</i>)
Reed, Steve	Twist, Liz
Rees, Christina	Vaz, rh Valerie
Reeves, Ellie	Wakeford, Christian
Reeves, rh Rachel	Webbe, Claudia
Reynolds, Jonathan	West, Catherine
Ribeiro-Addy, Bell	Western, Andrew
Rodda, Matt	Western, Matt
Russell-Moyle, Lloyd	Whitehead, Dr Alan
Saville Roberts, rh Liz	Whitford, Dr Philippa (<i>Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows</i>)
Shah, Naz (<i>Proxy vote cast by Dawn Butler</i>)	Whittome, Nadia
Shanks, Michael	Williams, Hywel
Sharma, Mr Virendra	Wilson, Munira
Sheppard, Tommy (<i>Proxy vote cast by Owen Thompson</i>)	Winter, Beth
Siddiq, Tulip	Wishart, Pete
Slaughter, Andy	Yasin, Mohammad
Smith, Alyn	Zeichner, Daniel
Smith, Cat	
Smith, Jeff	
Smith, Nick	Tellers for the Noes:
Smyth, Karin	Tonia Antoniazzi and
Sobel, Alex	Colleen Fletcher

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 4 disagreed to.

Motion made, and Question put, That this House disagrees with Lords amendment 5.—(Michael Tomlinson.)

The House divided: Ayes 322, Noes 249.

Division No. 102]

[8.48 pm]

AYES

Afolami, Bim	Bell, Aaron
Afriyie, Adam	Beresford, Sir Paul
Aiken, Nickie	Berry, rh Sir Jake
Aldous, Peter	Bhatti, Saqib
Anderson, Stuart	Blackman, Bob
Andrew, rh Stuart	Bottomley, Sir Peter
Ansell, Caroline	Bowie, Andrew
Argar, rh Edward	Bradley, Ben
Atherton, Sarah	Bradley, rh Dame Karen
Atkins, rh Victoria	Brady, rh Sir Graham
Bacon, Gareth	Brereton, Jack
Bacon, Mr Richard	Bridgen, Andrew
Badenoch, rh Kemi	Brine, Steve
Bailey, Shaun	Bristow, Paul
Baillie, Siobhan	Britcliffe, Sara
Baker, Duncan	Browne, Anthony
Baker, rh Mr Steve	Bruce, Fiona
Baldwin, Harriett	Buchan, Felicity
Barclay, rh Steve	Burghart, Alex
Baynes, Simon	Burns, rh Sir Conor

Butler, Rob	Fuller, Richard
Cairns, rh Alun	Garnier, Mark
Cameron, Dr Lisa	Ghani, Ms Nusrat
Campbell, Mr Gregory	Gibb, rh Nick
Carter, Andy	Gibson, Peter
Cartledge, James	Gideon, Jo
Cash, Sir William	Glen, rh John
Cates, Miriam	Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
Caulfield, Maria	Graham, Richard
Chalk, rh Alex	Grant, Mrs Helen
Chishti, Rehman	Gray, James
Chope, Sir Christopher	Grayling, rh Chris
Churchill, Jo	Green, Chris
Clark, rh Greg	Green, rh Damian
Clarke, rh Sir Simon	Griffith, Andrew
Clarke, Theo	Grundy, James
Clarke-Smith, Brendan	Gullis, Jonathan
Clarkson, Chris	Halfon, rh Robert
Cleverly, rh James	Hall, Luke
Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey	Hammond, Stephen
Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse	Hands, rh Greg
Colburn, Elliot	Harper, rh Mr Mark
Collins, Damian	Harris, Rebecca
Costa, Alberto	Harrison, Trudy
Courts, Robert	Hart, Sally-Ann
Coutinho, rh Claire	Hart, rh Simon
Crabb, rh Stephen	Heald, rh Sir Oliver
Crosbie, Virginia	Heapey, rh James
Crouch, Tracey	Heaton-Harris, rh Chris
Daly, James	Henderson, Gordon
Davies, rh David T. C.	Henry, Darren
Davies, Gareth	Higginbotham, Antony
Davies, Dr James	Hinds, rh Damian
Davies, Mims	Hoare, Simon
Davies, Philip	Holden, rh Mr Richard
Davis, rh Sir David	Hollinrake, Kevin
Davison, Dehenna	Hollobone, Mr Philip
Dinenage, Dame Caroline	Holmes, Paul
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan	Howell, John (<i>Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones</i>)
Docherty, Leo	Howell, Paul
Donelan, rh Michelle	Huddleston, Nigel
Double, Steve	Hudson, Dr Neil
Doyle-Price, Dame Jackie	Hughes, Eddie
Drax, Richard	Hunt, Jane
Drummond, Mrs Flick	Hunt, rh Jeremy
Duddridge, Sir James (<i>Proxy vote cast by Mr Francois</i>)	Hunt, Tom
Duguid, David	Jack, rh Mr Alister
Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain	Javid, rh Sir Sajid
Dunne, rh Philip	Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
Eastwood, Mark	Jenkin, Sir Bernard
Ellis, rh Sir Michael	Jenkinson, Mark
Elphicke, Mrs Natalie	Johnson, Dr Caroline
Eustice, rh George	Johnson, Gareth
Evans, Dr Luke	Johnston, David
Evennett, rh Sir David	Jones, Andrew
Everitt, Ben	Jones, rh Mr David
Fabricant, Michael	Jones, Fay
Farris, Laura	Jones, rh Mr Marcus
Fell, Simon	Jupp, Simon
Firth, Anna	Kawczynski, Daniel
Fletcher, Katherine	Keegan, rh Gillian
Fletcher, Mark	Knight, rh Sir Greg
Fletcher, Nick	Kruger, Danny
Ford, rh Vicky	Lamont, John
Foster, Kevin	Largan, Robert
Fox, rh Sir Liam	Latham, Mrs Pauline
Francois, rh Mr Mark	Leadsom, rh Dame Andrea
Frazer, rh Lucy	Leigh, rh Sir Edward
Freeman, George	Levy, Ian
Freer, Mike	Lewer, Andrew
French, Mr Louie	

Lewis, rh Sir Julian
Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
Loder, Chris
Logan, Mark
Longhi, Marco
Lopez, Julia
Lopresti, Jack
Lord, Mr Jonathan
Loughton, Tim
Mackinlay, Craig (*Proxy vote cast by John Redwood*)
Mackrory, Cherylyn
Maclean, Rachel
Mak, Alan
Malthouse, rh Kit
Mangnall, Anthony
Mann, Scott
Marson, Julie
Mayhew, Jerome
Maynard, Paul
McCartney, Jason
McCartney, Karl
McPartland, rh Stephen
McVey, rh Esther
Menzies, Mark
Mercer, rh Johnny
Merriman, Huw
Metcalfe, Stephen
Millar, Robin
Miller, rh Dame Maria
Mills, Nigel
Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
Mohindra, Mr Gagan
Moore, Damien
Moore, Robbie
Mordaunt, rh Penny
Morris, Anne Marie
Morris, David
Morris, James
Morrisey, Joy
Mortimer, Jill
Morton, rh Wendy
Mullan, Dr Kieran
Mumby-Croft, Holly
Mundell, rh David
Murray, Mrs Sheryll
Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
Nici, Lia
O'Brien, Neil
Offord, Dr Matthew
Opperman, Guy
Patel, rh Priti
Pawsey, Mark
Penning, rh Sir Mike
Penrose, John
Percy, Andrew
Philp, rh Chris
Pow, Rebecca
Prentis, rh Victoria
Pritchard, rh Mark
Pursglove, Tom
Quin, rh Sir Jeremy
Quince, Will
Randall, Tom
Redwood, rh John
Rees-Mogg, rh Sir Jacob
Richards, Nicola
Richardson, Angela
Roberts, Mr Rob
Robertson, Mr Laurence
Robinson, Gavin
Robinson, Mary

Rosindell, Andrew
Ross, Douglas
Rowley, Lee
Russell, Dean
Rutley, David
Saxby, Selaine
Scully, Paul
Seely, Bob
Selous, Andrew
Shannon, Jim
Shapps, rh Grant
Shelbrooke, rh Sir Alec
Simmonds, David
Smith, rh Chloe
Smith, Greg
Smith, Henry
Smith, rh Julian
Smith, Royston
Solloway, Amanda
Spencer, Dr Ben
Spencer, rh Mark
Stafford, Alexander
Stephenson, rh Andrew
Stevenson, Jane
Stevenson, John
Stewart, Iain
Streeter, Sir Gary
Stride, rh Mel
Stuart, rh Graham
Sturdy, Julian
Sunderland, James
Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
Syms, Sir Robert
Throup, Maggie
Timpson, Edward
Tolhurst, rh Kelly
Tomlinson, Justin
Tomlinson, rh Michael
Tracey, Craig
Trevelyan, rh Anne-Marie
Trott, rh Laura
Tuckwell, Steve
Tugendhat, rh Tom
Vara, rh Shailesh
Vickers, Martin
Vickers, Matt
Villiers, rh Theresa
Walker, Sir Charles
Wallace, rh Mr Ben
Wallis, Dr Jamie
Warman, Matt
Watling, Giles
Webb, Suzanne
Whately, Helen
Wheeler, Mrs Heather
Whittaker, rh Craig (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
Whittingdale, rh Sir John
Wiggin, Sir Bill
Wild, James
Williams, rh Craig
Williamson, rh Sir Gavin
Wilson, rh Sammy
Wood, Mike
Wragg, Mr William
Wright, rh Sir Jeremy
Young, Jacob

Tellers for the Ayes:
Ruth Edwards and
Dame Amanda Milling

NOES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane (*Proxy vote cast by Bell Ribeiro-Addy*)
Abrahams, Debbie
Ali, Rushanara
Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
Amesbury, Mike
Anderson, Fleur
Ashworth, rh Jonathan
Bardell, Hannah
Barker, Paula
Beckett, rh Dame Margaret
Benn, rh Hilary
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
Bryant, Sir Chris
Buck, Ms Karen
Burgon, Richard
Butler, Dawn
Byrne, Ian
Byrne, rh Liam
Cadbury, Ruth
Callaghan, Amy (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Campbell, rh Sir Alan
Carden, Dan
Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
Chamberlain, Wendy
Champion, Sarah
Chapman, Douglas
Cherry, Joanna
Clark, Feryal
Cooper, Daisy
Cooper, rh Yvette
Corbyn, rh Jeremy
Cowan, Ronnie
Coyle, Neil
Crawley, Angela (*Proxy vote cast by Owen Thompson*)
Creasy, Stella
Cruddas, Jon
Cryer, John
Cummins, Judith
Cunningham, Alex
Daby, Janet
Dalton, Ashley
Davey, rh Ed
David, Wayne
Davies-Jones, Alex
Day, Martyn
De Cordova, Marsha
Debbonaire, Thangam
Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
Dixon, Samantha
Docherty-Hughes, Martin
Dodds, Anneliese
Doogan, Dave
Dorans, Allan (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Doughty, Stephen
Dowd, Peter
Duffield, Rosie
Dyke, Sarah
Eagle, Dame Angela
Eagle, rh Maria
Eastwood, Colum
Edwards, Jonathan
Edwards, Sarah
Efford, Clive
Egan, Damien
Elliott, Julie
Elmore, Chris
Eshalomi, Florence
Esterson, Bill
Evans, Chris
Farron, Tim
Farry, Stephen
Fellows, Marion
Flynn, Stephen
Foord, Richard
Foxcroft, Vicky
Furniss, Gill
Gardiner, Barry
Gibson, Patricia
Gill, Preet Kaur
Glindon, Mary
Grady, Patrick
Grant, Peter
Green, Sarah
Greenwood, Lilian
Greenwood, Margaret
Griffith, Dame Nia
Gwynne, Andrew
Haigh, Louise
Hamilton, Fabian
Hamilton, Mrs Paulette
Hanvey, Neale
Hardy, Emma
Harman, rh Ms Harriet
Harris, Carolyn
Hayes, Helen
Healey, rh John
Hendry, Drew
Hillier, Dame Meg
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
Kitchen, Gen
Lake, Ben
Lavery, Ian
Law, Chris
Leadbeater, Kim
Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
Lewis, Clive
Lightwood, Simon

Linden, David (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lynch, Holly
 MacNeil, Angus Brendan
 Madders, Justin
 Mahmood, Mr Khalid
 Mahmood, Shabana
 Malhotra, Seema
 Maskell, Rachael
 Mather, Keir
 Mc Nally, John
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonald, Andy
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
 McDonald, Stuart C.
 McDonnell, rh John
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat
 McGovern, Alison
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McLaughlin, Anne (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
 McMahon, Jim
 McMorrin, Anna
 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 (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
 Norris, Alex
 O'Hara, Brendan
 Olney, Sarah
 Onwurah, Chi
 Oppong-Asare, Abena
 Osborne, Kate
 Oswald, Kirsten
 Owatemi, Taiwo (*Proxy vote cast by Chris Elmore*)
 Owen, Sarah
 Peacock, Stephanie
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Mr Toby
 Phillips, Jess
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Pollard, Luke
 Powell, Lucy
 Qaisar, Ms Anum
 Qureshi, Yasmin
 Rayner, rh Angela
 Reed, Steve
 Rees, Christina

Reeves, Ellie
 Reeves, rh Rachel
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
 Rodda, Matt
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Saville Roberts, rh Liz
 Shah, Naz (*Proxy vote cast by Dawn Butler*)
 Shanks, Michael
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr Barry
 Sheppard, Tommy (*Proxy vote cast by Owen Thompson*)
 Siddiq, Tulip
 Slaughter, Andy
 Smith, Alyn
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Jeff
 Smith, Nick
 Smyth, Karin
 Sobel, Alex
 Spellar, rh John
 Starmar, rh Keir
 Stephens, Chris
 Stevens, Jo
 Stone, Jamie
 Strathern, Alistair
 Stringer, Graham
 Sultana, Sarah
 Tami, rh Mark
 Tarry, Sam
 Thewliss, Alison
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thompson, Owen
 Thomson, Richard
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Sir Stephen
 Trickett, Jon (*Proxy vote cast by Ian Lavery*)
 Twist, Liz
 Vaz, rh Valerie
 Wakeford, Christian
 Webbe, Claudia
 West, Catherine
 Western, Andrew
 Western, Matt
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whitford, Dr Philippa (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
 Whittome, Nadia
 Williams, Hywel
 Wilson, Munira
 Winter, Beth
 Wishart, Pete
 Yasin, Mohammad
 Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:
Tonia Antoniazzi and
Colleen Fletcher

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 5 disagreed to.

Clause 4

DECISIONS BASED ON PARTICULAR INDIVIDUAL
CIRCUMSTANCES

Motion made, and Question put, That this House disagrees with Lords amendment 6.

The House divided: Ayes 324, Noes 251.
Division No. 103]

[8.59 pm

AYES

Afolami, Bim
 Afriyie, Adam
 Aiken, Nickie
 Aldous, Peter
 Anderson, Stuart
 Andrew, rh Stuart
 Ansell, Caroline
 Argar, rh Edward
 Atherton, Sarah
 Atkins, rh Victoria
 Bacon, Gareth
 Bacon, Mr Richard
 Badenoch, rh Kemi
 Bailey, Shaun
 Baillie, Siobhan
 Baker, Duncan
 Baker, rh Mr Steve
 Baldwin, Harriett
 Barclay, rh Steve
 Baron, Mr John
 Baynes, Simon
 Bell, Aaron
 Beresford, Sir Paul
 Bhatti, Saqib
 Blackman, Bob
 Bottomley, Sir Peter
 Bowie, Andrew
 Bradley, Ben
 Bradley, rh Dame Karen
 Brady, rh Sir Graham
 Brereton, Jack
 Bridgen, Andrew
 Brine, Steve
 Bristow, Paul
 Britcliffe, Sara
 Browne, Anthony
 Bruce, Fiona
 Buchan, Felicity
 Buckland, rh Sir Robert
 Burghart, Alex
 Burns, rh Sir Conor
 Butler, Rob
 Cairns, rh Alun
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Campbell, Mr Gregory
 Carter, Andy
 Cartledge, James
 Cash, Sir William
 Cates, Miriam
 Caulfield, Maria
 Chalk, rh Alex
 Chishti, Rehman
 Chope, Sir Christopher
 Clark, rh Greg
 Clarke, rh Sir 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, rh Claire
 Crabb, rh Stephen

Crosbie, Virginia
 Crouch, Tracey
 Daly, James
 Davies, rh David T. C.
 Davies, Gareth
 Davies, Dr James
 Davies, Mims
 Davies, Philip
 Davis, rh Sir David
 Davison, Dehenna
 Dinenage, Dame Caroline
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Docherty, Leo
 Donelan, rh Michelle
 Double, Steve
 Doyle-Price, Dame Jackie
 Drax, Richard
 Drummond, Mrs Flick
 Duddridge, Sir James (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Francois*)
 Duguid, David
 Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
 Dunne, rh Philip
 Eastwood, Mark
 Edwards, Ruth
 Ellis, rh Sir Michael
 Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
 Eustice, rh George
 Evans, Dr Luke
 Evennett, rh Sir David
 Everitt, Ben
 Fabricant, Michael
 Farris, Laura
 Fell, Simon
 Firth, Anna
 Fletcher, Katherine
 Fletcher, Mark
 Fletcher, Nick
 Ford, rh Vicky
 Foster, Kevin
 Fox, rh Sir Liam
 Francois, rh Mr Mark
 Frazer, rh Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 French, Mr Louie
 Fuller, Richard
 Garnier, Mark
 Ghani, Ms Nusrat
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gibson, Peter
 Gideon, Jo
 Girvan, Paul
 Glen, rh John
 Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Mrs Helen
 Gray, James
 Grayling, rh Chris
 Green, Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Griffith, Andrew
 Grundy, James
 Gullis, Jonathan
 Halfon, rh Robert
 Hall, Luke
 Hammond, Stephen

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
Heapey, rh James
Heaton-Harris, rh Chris
Henderson, Gordon
Henry, Darren
Higginbotham, Antony
Hinds, rh Damian
Hoare, Simon
Holden, rh Mr Richard
Hollinrake, Kevin
Hollobone, Mr Philip
Holmes, Paul
Howell, John (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
Howell, Paul
Huddleston, Nigel
Hudson, Dr Neil
Hughes, Eddie
Hunt, Jane
Hunt, rh Jeremy
Hunt, Tom
Jack, rh Mr Alister
Javid, rh Sir Sajid
Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
Jenkin, Sir Bernard
Johnson, Dr Caroline
Johnson, Gareth
Johnston, David
Jones, Andrew
Jones, rh Mr David
Jones, Fay
Jones, rh Mr Marcus
Jupp, Simon
Kawczynski, Daniel
Keegan, rh Gillian
Knight, rh Sir Greg
Kruger, Danny
Lamont, John
Largan, Robert
Latham, Mrs Pauline
Leadsom, rh Dame Andrea
Leigh, rh Sir Edward
Levy, Ian
Lewer, Andrew
Lewis, rh Sir Julian
Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
Loder, Chris
Logan, Mark
Longhi, Marco
Lopez, Julia
Lopresti, Jack
Lord, Mr Jonathan
Loughton, Tim
Mackinlay, Craig (*Proxy vote cast by John Redwood*)
Mackrory, Cherilyn
Maclean, Rachel
Mak, Alan
Malthouse, rh Kit
Mangnall, Anthony
Mann, Scott
Marson, Julie
Mayhew, Jerome
Maynard, Paul
McCartney, Jason
McCartney, Karl
McPartland, rh Stephen
McVey, rh Esther
Menzies, Mark
Mercer, rh Johnny
Metcalf, Stephen
Millar, Robin
Miller, rh Dame Maria
Milling, rh Dame Amanda
Mills, Nigel
Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
Mohindra, Mr Gagan
Moore, Damien
Moore, Robbie
Mordaunt, rh Penny
Morris, Anne Marie
Morris, David
Morris, James
Mortimer, Jill
Morton, rh Wendy
Mullan, Dr Kieran
Mumby-Croft, Holly
Mundell, rh David
Murray, Mrs Sheryll
Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
Nici, Lia
O'Brien, Neil
Offord, Dr Matthew
Opperman, Guy
Patel, rh Priti
Pawsey, Mark
Penning, rh Sir Mike
Penrose, John
Percy, Andrew
Philp, rh Chris
Pow, Rebecca
Prentis, rh Victoria
Pritchard, rh Mark
Pursglove, Tom
Quin, rh Sir Jeremy
Quince, Will
Randall, Tom
Redwood, rh John
Rees-Mogg, rh Sir Jacob
Richards, Nicola
Richardson, Angela
Roberts, Mr Rob
Robertson, Mr Laurence
Robinson, Gavin
Robinson, Mary
Rosindell, Andrew
Ross, Douglas
Rowley, Lee
Russell, Dean
Rutley, David
Saxby, Selaine
Scully, Paul
Seely, Bob
Selous, Andrew
Shannon, Jim
Shapps, rh Grant
Shelbrooke, rh Sir Alec
Simmonds, David
Smith, rh Chloe
Smith, Greg
Smith, Henry
Smith, rh Julian
Smith, Royston
Solloway, Amanda
Spencer, Dr Ben
Spencer, rh Mark
Stafford, Alexander

Stephenson, rh Andrew
Stevenson, Jane
Stevenson, John
Stewart, Iain
Streeter, Sir Gary
Stride, rh Mel
Stuart, rh Graham
Sturdy, Julian
Sunderland, James
Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
Syms, Sir Robert
Thomas, Derek
Throup, Maggie
Timpson, Edward
Tolhurst, rh Kelly
Tomlinson, Justin
Tomlinson, rh Michael
Tracey, Craig
Trevelyan, rh Anne-Marie
Trott, rh Laura
Tuckwell, Steve
Tugendhat, rh Tom
Vara, rh Shailesh
Vickers, Martin
Vickers, Matt
Villiers, rh Theresa
Walker, Sir Charles
Walker, Mr Robin
Wallace, rh Mr Ben
Wallis, Dr Jamie
Warman, Matt
Watling, Giles
Webb, Suzanne
Whately, Helen
Wheeler, Mrs Heather
Whittaker, rh Craig (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
Whittingdale, rh Sir John
Wiggin, Sir Bill
Wild, James
Williams, rh Craig
Williamson, rh Sir Gavin
Wood, Mike
Wragg, Mr William
Wright, rh Sir Jeremy
Young, Jacob
Tellers for the Ayes:
Joy Morrissey and
Mark Jenkinson

NOES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane (*Proxy vote cast by Bell Ribeiro-Addy*)
Abrahams, Debbie
Ali, Rushanara
Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
Amesbury, Mike
Anderson, Fleur
Antoniazzi, Tonia
Ashworth, rh Jonathan
Bardell, Hannah
Barker, Paula
Beckett, rh Dame Margaret
Benn, rh Hilary
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
Bryant, Sir Chris
Buck, Ms Karen
Burgon, Richard
Butler, Dawn
Byrne, Ian
Byrne, rh Liam
Cadbury, Ruth
Callaghan, Amy (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Campbell, rh Sir Alan
Carden, Dan
Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
Chamberlain, Wendy
Champion, Sarah
Chapman, Douglas
Cherry, Joanna
Clark, Feryal
Cooper, Daisy
Cooper, rh Yvette
Corbyn, rh Jeremy
Cowan, Ronnie
Coyle, Neil
Creasy, Stella
Cruddas, Jon
Cryer, John
Cummins, Judith
Cunningham, Alex
Daby, Janet
Dalton, Ashley
Davey, rh Ed
David, Wayne
Davies-Jones, Alex
Day, Martyn
De Cordova, Marsha
Debbonaire, Thangam
Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
Dixon, Samantha
Docherty-Hughes, Martin
Dods, Anneliese
Doogan, Dave
Dorans, Allan (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Doughty, Stephen
Dowd, Peter
Duffield, Rosie
Dyke, Sarah
Eagle, Dame Angela
Eagle, rh Maria
Eastwood, Colum
Edwards, Jonathan
Edwards, Sarah
Efford, Clive
Egan, Damien
Elliott, Julie
Elmore, Chris
Eshalomi, Florence
Esterson, Bill
Evans, Chris
Farron, Tim
Farry, Stephen
Fellows, Marion
Fletcher, Colleen
Flynn, Stephen
Foord, Richard

Foxcroft, Vicky
 Furniss, Gill
 Gardiner, Barry
 Gibson, Patricia
 Gill, Preet Kaur
 Grady, Patrick
 Grant, Peter
 Green, Sarah
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Dame Nia
 Gwynne, Andrew
 Haigh, Louise
 Hamilton, Fabian
 Hamilton, Mrs Paulette
 Hanna, Claire
 Hanvey, Neale
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet
 Harris, Carolyn
 Hayes, Helen
 Healey, rh John
 Hendry, Drew
 Hillier, Dame Meg
 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
 Kitchen, Gen
 Lake, Ben
 Lavery, Ian
 Law, Chris
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
 Lewis, Clive
 Lightwood, Simon
 Linden, David (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lynch, Holly
 MacNeil, Angus Brendan
 Madders, Justin
 Mahmood, Mr Khalid
 Mahmood, Shabana
 Malhotra, Seema
 Maskell, Rachael
 Mather, Keir
 Mc Nally, John
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonagh, Dame Siobhain
 McDonald, Andy
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
 McDonald, Stuart C.
 McDonnell, rh John
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat
 McGovern, Alison
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McLaughlin, Anne (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
 McMahon, Jim
 McMorris, Anna
 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 (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
 Norris, Alex
 O'Hara, Brendan
 Olney, Sarah
 Onwurah, Chi
 Oppong-Asare, Abena
 Osborne, Kate
 Oswald, Kirsten
 Owatemi, Taiwo (*Proxy vote cast by Chris Elmore*)
 Owen, Sarah
 Peacock, Stephanie
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Mr Toby
 Phillips, Jess
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Pollard, Luke
 Powell, Lucy
 Qaisar, Ms Anum
 Qureshi, Yasmin
 Rayner, rh Angela
 Reed, Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reeves, Ellie
 Reeves, rh Rachel
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
 Rodda, Matt
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Saville Roberts, rh Liz
 Shah, Naz (*Proxy vote cast by Dawn Butler*)
 Shanks, Michael
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr Barry
 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
 Strathern, Alistair
 Stringer, Graham
 Sultana, Sarah

Tami, rh Mark
 Tarry, Sam
 Thewliss, Alison
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thomson, Richard
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Sir Stephen
 Trickett, Jon (*Proxy vote cast by Ian Lavery*)
 Twist, Liz
 Vaz, rh Valerie
 Wakeford, Christian
 Webbe, Claudia
 West, Catherine
 Western, Andrew

Western, Matt
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whitford, Dr Philippa (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
 Whittome, Nadia
 Williams, Hywel
 Wilson, Munira
 Winter, Beth
 Wishart, Pete
 Yasin, Mohammad
 Zeichner, Daniel
Tellers for the Noes:
 Mary Glindon and
 Kim Leadbeater

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 6 disagreed to.

After clause 4

SECTION 57 OF THE ILLEGAL MIGRATION ACT 2023

Motion made, and Question put, That this House disagrees with Lords amendment 7.

The House divided: Ayes 320, Noes 250.

Division No. 104]

[9.11 pm

AYES

Afolami, Bim
 Afriyie, Adam
 Aiken, Nickie
 Aldous, Peter
 Anderson, Stuart
 Andrew, rh Stuart
 Ansell, Caroline
 Argar, rh Edward
 Atherton, Sarah
 Atkins, rh Victoria
 Bacon, Gareth
 Bacon, Mr Richard
 Badenoch, rh Kemi
 Bailey, Shaun
 Baker, Duncan
 Baker, rh Mr Steve
 Baldwin, Harriett
 Barclay, rh Steve
 Baron, Mr John
 Baynes, Simon
 Bell, Aaron
 Beresford, Sir Paul
 Bhatti, Saqib
 Blackman, Bob
 Bottomley, Sir Peter
 Bowie, Andrew
 Bradley, Ben
 Bradley, rh Dame Karen
 Brady, rh Sir Graham
 Brereton, Jack
 Brine, Steve
 Bristow, Paul
 Britcliffe, Sara
 Browne, Anthony
 Bruce, Fiona
 Buchan, Felicity
 Buckland, rh Sir Robert
 Burghart, Alex
 Burns, rh Sir Conor
 Butler, Rob
 Cairns, rh Alun
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Campbell, Mr Gregory
 Carter, Andy
 Cartledge, James
 Cash, Sir William
 Cates, Miriam
 Caulfield, Maria
 Chalk, rh Alex
 Chishti, Rehman
 Chope, Sir Christopher
 Churchill, Jo
 Clark, rh Greg
 Clarke, rh Sir 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, rh Claire
 Crabb, rh Stephen
 Crosbie, Virginia
 Crouch, Tracey
 Daly, James
 Davies, rh David T. C.
 Davies, Gareth
 Davies, Dr James
 Davies, Mims
 Davies, Philip
 Davison, Dehenna
 Dinanage, Dame Caroline
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Docherty, Leo
 Double, Steve
 Doyle-Price, Dame Jackie

Drax, Richard
 Drummond, Mrs Flick
 Duddridge, Sir James (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Francois*)
 Duguid, David
 Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
 Dunne, rh Philip
 Eastwood, Mark
 Edwards, Ruth
 Ellis, rh Sir Michael
 Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
 Eustice, rh George
 Evans, Dr Luke
 Evennett, rh Sir David
 Everitt, Ben
 Fabricant, Michael
 Farris, Laura
 Fell, Simon
 Firth, Anna
 Fletcher, Katherine
 Fletcher, Mark
 Fletcher, Nick
 Ford, rh Vicky
 Foster, Kevin
 Fox, rh Sir Liam
 Francois, rh Mr Mark
 Frazer, rh Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 French, Mr Louie
 Fuller, Richard
 Garnier, Mark
 Ghani, Ms Nusrat
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gibson, Peter
 Gideon, Jo
 Girvan, Paul
 Glen, rh John
 Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Mrs Helen
 Gray, James
 Grayling, rh Chris
 Green, Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Griffith, Andrew
 Grundy, James
 Gullis, Jonathan
 Halfon, rh Robert
 Hall, Luke
 Hammond, Stephen
 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, rh James
 Heaton-Harris, rh Chris
 Henderson, Gordon
 Henry, Darren
 Higginbotham, Antony
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Holden, rh Mr Richard
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Holmes, Paul
 Howell, John (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)

Howell, Paul
 Huddleston, Nigel
 Hudson, Dr Neil
 Hughes, Eddie
 Hunt, Jane
 Hunt, rh Jeremy
 Hunt, Tom
 Jack, rh Mr Alister
 Javid, rh Sir Sajid
 Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard
 Johnson, Dr Caroline
 Johnson, Gareth
 Johnston, David
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Fay
 Jones, rh Mr Marcus
 Jupp, Simon
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Keegan, rh Gillian
 Knight, rh Sir Greg
 Kruger, Danny
 Lamont, John
 Largan, Robert
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Leadsom, rh Dame Andrea
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Levy, Ian
 Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Sir Julian
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Loder, Chris
 Logan, Mark
 Longhi, Marco
 Lopez, Julia
 Lopresti, Jack
 Lord, Mr Jonathan
 Loughton, Tim
 Mackinlay, Craig (*Proxy vote cast by John Redwood*)
 Mackrory, Cherilyn
 Maclean, Rachel
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, rh Kit
 Mangnall, Anthony
 Mann, Scott
 Marson, Julie
 Mayhew, Jerome
 Maynard, Paul
 McCartney, Jason
 McCartney, Karl
 McPartland, rh Stephen
 McVey, rh Esther
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, rh Johnny
 Merriman, Huw
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Millar, Robin
 Miller, rh Dame Maria
 Milling, rh Dame Amanda
 Mills, Nigel
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
 Mohindra, Mr Gagan
 Moore, Damien
 Moore, Robbie
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, James
 Mortimer, Jill
 Morton, rh Wendy

Mullan, Dr Kieran
 Mumby-Croft, Holly
 Mundell, rh David
 Murray, Mrs Sheryll
 Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
 Nici, Lia
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Patel, rh Priti
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Philp, rh Chris
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, rh Victoria
 Pritchard, rh Mark
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quin, rh Sir Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Randall, Tom
 Redwood, rh John
 Rees-Mogg, rh Sir Jacob
 Richards, Nicola
 Richardson, Angela
 Roberts, Mr Rob
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Robinson, Gavin
 Robinson, Mary
 Rosindell, Andrew
 Ross, Douglas
 Rowley, Lee
 Russell, Dean
 Rutley, David
 Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Bob
 Selous, Andrew
 Shannon, Jim
 Shapps, rh Grant
 Shelbrooke, rh Sir Alec
 Simmonds, David
 Smith, rh Chloe
 Smith, Greg
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, rh Julian
 Smith, Royston
 Solloway, Amanda
 Spencer, Dr Ben
 Spencer, rh Mark

Stafford, Alexander
 Stephenson, rh Andrew
 Stevenson, Jane
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, Iain
 Streeter, Sir Gary
 Stride, rh Mel
 Stuart, rh Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunderland, James
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Syme, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Throup, Maggie
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, rh Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, rh Michael
 Tracey, Craig
 Trevelyan, rh Anne-Marie
 Trott, rh Laura
 Tuckwell, Steve
 Tugendhat, rh Tom
 Vara, rh Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Vickers, Matt
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Walker, Sir Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Wallace, rh Mr Ben
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Webb, Suzanne
 Whately, Helen
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, rh Craig (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Whittingdale, rh Sir John
 Wiggin, Sir Bill
 Wild, James
 Williamson, rh Sir Gavin
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Wood, Mike
 Wragg, Mr William
 Wright, rh Sir Jeremy
 Young, Jacob

Tellers for the Ayes:
Joy Morrissey and
Mark Jenkinson

NOES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane (*Proxy vote cast by Bell Ribeiro-Addy*)
 Abrahams, Debbie
 Ali, Rushanara
 Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
 Amesbury, Mike
 Anderson, Fleur
 Antoniazzi, Tonia
 Ashworth, rh Jonathan
 Bardell, Hannah
 Barker, Paula
 Beckett, rh Dame Margaret
 Benn, rh Hilary
 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
 Bryant, Sir Chris
 Buck, Ms Karen
 Burgon, Richard
 Butler, Dawn
 Byrne, Ian
 Byrne, rh Liam
 Cadbury, Ruth
 Callaghan, Amy (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Carden, Dan
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair

Chamberlain, Wendy
 Champion, Sarah
 Chapman, Douglas
 Cherry, Joanna
 Clark, Feryal
 Cooper, Daisy
 Cooper, rh Yvette
 Corbyn, rh Jeremy
 Cowan, Ronnie
 Coyle, Neil
 Crawley, Angela (*Proxy vote cast by Owen Thompson*)
 Creasy, Stella
 Cruddas, Jon
 Cryer, John
 Cummins, Judith
 Cunningham, Alex
 Daby, Janet
 Dalton, Ashley
 Davey, rh Ed
 David, Wayne
 Davies-Jones, Alex
 Day, Martyn
 De Cordova, Marsha
 Debbonaire, Thangam
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Dixon, Samantha
 Docherty-Hughes, Martin
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Doogan, Dave
 Dorans, Allan (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Duffield, Rosie
 Dyke, Sarah
 Eagle, Dame Angela
 Eagle, rh Maria
 Eastwood, Colum
 Edwards, Jonathan
 Edwards, Sarah
 Efford, Clive
 Egan, Damien
 Elliott, Julie
 Elmore, Chris
 Eshalomi, Florence
 Esterson, Bill
 Evans, Chris
 Farron, Tim
 Farry, Stephen
 Fellows, Marion
 Fletcher, Colleen
 Flynn, Stephen
 Foord, Richard
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Furniss, Gill
 Gardiner, Barry
 Gibson, Patricia
 Gill, Preet Kaur
 Grady, Patrick
 Grant, Peter
 Green, Sarah
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Dame Nia
 Gwynne, Andrew
 Haigh, Louise
 Hamilton, Fabian
 Hamilton, Mrs Paulette
 Hanna, Claire
 Hanvey, Neale
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet
 Harris, Carolyn
 Hayes, Helen
 Healey, rh John
 Hendry, Drew
 Hillier, Dame Meg
 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
 Kitchen, Gen
 Lake, Ben
 Lavery, Ian
 Law, Chris
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
 Lewis, Clive
 Lightwood, Simon
 Linden, David (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lynch, Holly
 MacNeil, Angus Brendan
 Madders, Justin
 Mahmood, Mr Khalid
 Mahmood, Shabana
 Malhotra, Seema
 Maskell, Rachael
 Mather, Keir
 Mc Nally, John
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonagh, Dame Siobhain
 McDonald, Andy
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
 McDonald, Stuart C.
 McDonnell, rh John
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat
 McGovern, Alison
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McLaughlin, Anne (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
 McMahon, Jim
 McMorris, Anna
 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 (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
 Norris, Alex
 O'Hara, Brendan
 Olney, Sarah
 Onwurah, Chi
 Oppong-Asare, Abena
 Osborne, Kate
 Oswald, Kirsten
 Owatemi, Taiwo (*Proxy vote cast by Chris Elmore*)
 Owen, Sarah
 Peacock, Stephanie
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Mr Toby
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Pollard, Luke
 Powell, Lucy
 Qaisar, Ms Anum
 Qureshi, Yasmin
 Rayner, rh Angela
 Reed, Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reeves, Ellie
 Reeves, rh Rachel
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
 Rodda, Matt
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Saville Roberts, rh Liz
 Shah, Naz (*Proxy vote cast by Dawn Butler*)
 Shanks, Michael
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr Barry
 Sheppard, Tommy (*Proxy vote cast by Owen Thompson*)
 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
 Strathern, Alistair
 Stringer, Graham
 Sultana, Zarah
 Tami, rh Mark
 Tarry, Sam
 Thewliss, Alison
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thompson, Owen
 Thomson, Richard
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Sir Stephen
 Trickett, Jon (*Proxy vote cast by Ian Lavery*)
 Twist, Liz
 Vaz, rh Valerie
 Wakeford, Christian
 Webbe, Claudia
 West, Catherine
 Western, Andrew
 Western, Matt
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whitford, Dr Philippa (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
 Whittome, Nadia
 Williams, Hywel
 Wilson, Munira
 Winter, Beth
 Wishart, Pete
 Yasin, Mohammad
 Zeichner, Daniel
Tellers for the Noes:
 Mary Glindon and
 Kim Leadbeater

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 7 disagreed to.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Sir Roger Gale): Order. Before we proceed, I am informed that a Member swore at one of the Doorkeepers this evening, who on my instruction locked the doors. If that person is identified, the consequences will be very severe. We now come to Lords amendment 8.

After Clause 5

REMOVALS TO RWANDA UNDER THE ILLEGAL MIGRATION ACT 2023

Motion made, and Question put, That this House disagrees with Lords amendment 8.—(Michael Tomlinson.)

The House divided: Ayes 318, Noes 255.

Division No. 105]

[9.23 pm

AYES

Afolami, Bim
 Afriyie, Adam
 Aiken, Nickie
 Aldous, Peter
 Anderson, Stuart
 Andrew, rh Stuart
 Ansell, Caroline
 Argar, rh Edward
 Atherton, Sarah
 Atkins, rh Victoria
 Bacon, Gareth
 Bacon, Mr Richard

Badenoch, rh Kemi
Bailey, Shaun
Baillie, Siobhan
Baker, Duncan
Baker, rh Mr Steve
Baldwin, Harriett
Barclay, rh Steve
Baron, Mr John
Baynes, Simon
Bell, Aaron
Beresford, Sir Paul
Bhatti, Saqib
Blackman, Bob
Bottomley, Sir Peter
Bowie, Andrew
Bradley, Ben
Bradley, rh Dame Karen
Brady, rh Sir Graham
Brereton, Jack
Bridgen, Andrew
Brine, Steve
Bristow, Paul
Britcliffe, Sara
Browne, Anthony
Bruce, Fiona
Buchan, Felicity
Buckland, rh Sir Robert
Burghart, Alex
Burns, rh Sir Conor
Butler, Rob
Cairns, rh Alun
Cameron, Dr Lisa
Carter, Andy
Cartlidge, James
Cash, Sir William
Cates, Miriam
Caulfield, Maria
Chalk, rh Alex
Chishti, Rehman
Chope, Sir Christopher
Churchill, Jo
Clark, rh Greg
Clarke, rh Sir 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, rh Claire
Crabb, rh Stephen
Crosbie, Virginia
Crouch, Tracey
Daly, James
Davies, rh David T. C.
Davies, Gareth
Davies, Dr James
Davies, Mims
Davies, Philip
Davis, rh Sir David
Davison, Dehenna
Dinenage, Dame Caroline
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
Docherty, Leo
Double, Steve
Doyle-Price, Dame Jackie
Drax, Richard
Drummond, Mrs Flick
Duddridge, Sir James (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Mark Francois*)
Duguid, David
Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
Dunne, rh Philip
Eastwood, Mark
Edwards, Ruth
Ellis, rh Sir Michael
Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
Eustice, rh George
Evans, Dr Luke
Evennett, rh Sir David
Everitt, Ben
Fabricant, Michael
Farris, Laura
Fell, Simon
Firth, Anna
Fletcher, Katherine
Fletcher, Mark
Fletcher, Nick
Ford, rh Vicky
Foster, Kevin
Fox, rh Sir Liam
Francois, rh Mr Mark
Frazer, rh Lucy
Freeman, George
Freer, Mike
French, Mr Louie
Fuller, Richard
Garnier, Mark
Ghani, Ms Nusrat
Gibb, rh Nick
Gibson, Peter
Gideon, Jo
Glen, rh John
Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
Graham, Richard
Grant, Mrs Helen
Gray, James
Grayling, rh Chris
Green, Chris
Green, rh Damian
Griffith, Andrew
Grundy, James
Gullis, Jonathan
Halfon, rh Robert
Hall, Luke
Hammond, Stephen
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, rh James
Heaton-Harris, rh Chris
Henderson, Gordon
Henry, Darren
Higginbotham, Antony
Hinds, rh Damian
Hoare, Simon
Holden, rh Mr Richard
Hollinrake, Kevin
Hollobone, Mr Philip
Holmes, Paul
Howell, John (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
Howell, Paul
Huddleston, Nigel

Hudson, Dr Neil
Hughes, Eddie
Hunt, Jane
Hunt, rh Jeremy
Hunt, Tom
Jack, rh Mr Alister
Javid, rh Sir Sajid
Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
Jenkin, Sir Bernard
Johnson, Dr Caroline
Johnson, Gareth
Johnston, David
Jones, Andrew
Jones, rh Mr David
Jones, Fay
Jones, rh Mr Marcus
Jupp, Simon
Kawczynski, Daniel
Keegan, rh Gillian
Knight, rh Sir Greg
Kruger, Danny
Lamont, John
Largan, Robert
Latham, Mrs Pauline
Leadsom, rh Dame Andrea
Leigh, rh Sir Edward
Levy, Ian
Lewer, Andrew
Lewis, rh Sir Julian
Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
Loder, Chris
Logan, Mark
Longhi, Marco
Lopez, Julia
Lopresti, Jack
Lord, Mr Jonathan
Loughton, Tim
Mackinlay, Craig (*Proxy vote cast by John Redwood*)
Mackrory, Cheryl
Macleay, Rachel
Mak, Alan
Malthouse, rh Kit
Mangnall, Anthony
Mann, Scott
Marson, Julie
Mayhew, Jerome
Maynard, Paul
McCartney, Jason
McCartney, Karl
McPartland, rh Stephen
McVey, rh Esther
Menzies, Mark
Mercer, rh Johnny
Merriman, Huw
Metcalfe, Stephen
Millar, Robin
Miller, rh Dame Maria
Milling, rh Dame Amanda
Mills, Nigel
Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
Mohindra, Mr Gagan
Moore, Damien
Moore, Robbie
Mordaunt, rh Penny
Morris, Anne Marie
Morris, James
Mortimer, Jill
Morton, rh Wendy
Mullan, Dr Kieran
Mumby-Croft, Holly
Mundell, rh David

Murray, Mrs Sheryll
Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
Nici, Lia
O'Brien, Neil
Offord, Dr Matthew
Opperman, Guy
Patel, rh Priti
Pawsey, Mark
Penning, rh Sir Mike
Penrose, John
Percy, Andrew
Philp, rh Chris
Pow, Rebecca
Prentis, rh Victoria
Pritchard, rh Mark
Pursglove, Tom
Quin, rh Sir Jeremy
Quince, Will
Randall, Tom
Redwood, rh John
Rees-Mogg, rh Sir Jacob
Richards, Nicola
Richardson, Angela
Roberts, Mr Rob
Robertson, Mr Laurence
Robinson, Mary
Rosindell, Andrew
Ross, Douglas
Rowley, Lee
Russell, Dean
Rutley, David
Saxby, Selaine
Scully, Paul
Seely, Bob
Selous, Andrew
Shapps, rh Grant
Shelbrooke, rh Sir Alec
Simmonds, David
Smith, rh Chloe
Smith, Greg
Smith, Henry
Smith, rh Julian
Smith, Royston
Solloway, Amanda
Spencer, Dr Ben
Spencer, rh Mark
Stafford, Alexander
Stephenson, rh Andrew
Stevenson, Jane
Stevenson, John
Stewart, Iain
Streeter, Sir Gary
Stride, rh Mel
Stuart, rh Graham
Sturdy, Julian
Sunderland, James
Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
Syms, Sir Robert
Thomas, Derek
Throup, Maggie
Timpson, Edward
Tolhurst, rh Kelly
Tomlinson, Justin
Tomlinson, rh Michael
Tracey, Craig
Trevelyan, rh Anne-Marie
Trott, rh Laura
Tuckwell, Steve
Tugendhat, rh Tom
Vara, rh Shailesh
Vickers, Martin
Vickers, Matt

Villiers, rh Theresa
Walker, Sir Charles
Walker, Mr Robin
Wallace, rh Mr Ben
Warman, Matt
Watling, Giles
Webb, Suzanne
Whately, Helen
Wheeler, Mrs Heather
Whittaker, rh Craig (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)

Whittingdale, rh Sir John
Wiggin, Sir Bill
Wild, James
Williams, rh Craig
Williamson, rh Sir Gavin
Wood, Mike
Wragg, Mr William
Wright, rh Sir Jeremy
Young, Jacob

Tellers for the Ayes:
Joy Morrissey and
Mark Jenkinson

NOES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane (*Proxy vote cast by Bell Ribeiro-Addy*)
Abrahams, Debbie
Ali, Rushanara
Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
Amesbury, Mike
Anderson, Fleur
Antoniazzi, Tonia
Ashworth, rh Jonathan
Bardell, Hannah
Barker, Paula
Beckett, rh Dame Margaret
Benn, rh Hilary
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
Bryant, Sir Chris
Buck, Ms Karen
Burgon, Richard
Butler, Dawn
Byrne, Ian
Byrne, rh Liam
Cadbury, Ruth
Callaghan, Amy (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Campbell, rh Sir Alan
Campbell, Mr Gregory
Carden, Dan
Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
Chamberlain, Wendy
Champion, Sarah
Chapman, Douglas
Cherry, Joanna
Clark, Feryal
Cooper, Daisy
Cooper, rh Yvette
Corbyn, rh Jeremy
Cowan, Ronnie
Coyle, Neil
Crawley, Angela (*Proxy vote cast by Owen Thompson*)
Creasy, Stella
Cruddas, Jon
Cryer, John
Cummins, Judith
Cunningham, Alex
Daby, Janet
Dalton, Ashley
Davey, rh Ed

David, Wayne
Davies-Jones, Alex
Day, Martyn
De Cordova, Marsha
Debonnaire, Thangam
Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
Dixon, Samantha
Docherty-Hughes, Martin
Dodds, Anneliese
Doogan, Dave
Dorans, Allan (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Doughty, Stephen
Dowd, Peter
Duffield, Rosie
Dyke, Sarah
Eagle, Dame Angela
Eagle, rh Maria
Eastwood, Colum
Edwards, Jonathan
Edwards, Sarah
Efford, Clive
Egan, Damien
Elliott, Julie
Elmore, Chris
Eshalomi, Florence
Esterson, Bill
Evans, Chris
Farron, Tim
Farry, Stephen
Fellows, Marion
Fletcher, Colleen
Flynn, Stephen
Foord, Richard
Foxcroft, Vicky
Furniss, Gill
Gardiner, Barry
Gibson, Patricia
Gill, Preet Kaur
Girvan, Paul
Grady, Patrick
Grant, Peter
Green, Sarah
Greenwood, Lilian
Greenwood, Margaret
Griffith, Dame Nia
Gwynne, Andrew
Haigh, Louise
Hamilton, Fabian
Hamilton, Mrs Paulette
Hanvey, Neale
Hardy, Emma
Harman, rh Ms Harriet
Harris, Carolyn
Hayes, Helen
Healey, rh John
Hendry, Drew

Hillier, Dame Meg
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
Kitchen, Gen
Lake, Ben
Lavery, Ian
Law, Chris
Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
Lewis, Clive
Lightwood, Simon
Linden, David (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Long Bailey, Rebecca
Lucas, Caroline
Lynch, Holly
MacNeil, Angus Brendan
Madders, Justin
Mahmood, Mr Khalid
Mahmood, Shabana
Malhotra, Seema
Maskell, Rachael
Mather, Keir
Mc Nally, John
McCabe, Steve
McCarthy, Kerry
McDonagh, Dame Siobhain
McDonald, Andy
McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
McDonald, Stuart C.
McDonnell, rh John
McFadden, rh Mr Pat
McGovern, Alison
McKinnell, Catherine
McLaughlin, Anne (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
McMahon, Jim
McMorrin, Anna
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 (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Norris, Alex

O'Hara, Brendan
Olney, Sarah
Onwurah, Chi
Oppong-Asare, Abena
Osborne, Kate
Oswald, Kirsten
Owatemi, Taiwo (*Proxy vote cast by Chris Elmore*)
Owen, Sarah
Peacock, Stephanie
Pennycook, Matthew
Perkins, Mr Toby
Phillips, Jess
Phillipson, Bridget
Pollard, Luke
Powell, Lucy
Qaisar, Ms Anum
Qureshi, Yasmin
Rayner, rh Angela
Reed, Steve
Rees, Christina
Reeves, Ellie
Reeves, rh Rachel
Reynolds, Jonathan
Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
Robinson, Gavin
Rodda, Matt
Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
Saville Roberts, rh Liz
Shah, Naz (*Proxy vote cast by Dawn Butler*)
Shanks, Michael
Shannon, Jim
Sharma, Mr Virendra
Sheerman, Mr Barry
Sheppard, Tommy (*Proxy vote cast by Owen Thompson*)
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
Strathern, Alistair
Stringer, Graham
Sultana, Sarah
Tami, rh Mark
Tarry, Sam
Thewliss, Alison
Thomas, Gareth
Thompson, Owen
Thomson, Richard
Thornberry, rh Emily
Timms, rh Sir Stephen
Trickett, Jon (*Proxy vote cast by Ian Lavery*)
Twist, Liz
Vaz, rh Valerie
Wakeford, Christian
Webbe, Claudia
West, Catherine
Western, Andrew
Western, Matt
Whitehead, Dr Alan

Whitford, Dr Philippa (*Proxy*
vote cast by Marion
Fellows)
Whittome, Nadia
Williams, Hywel
Wilson, Munira
Wilson, rh Sammy

Winter, Beth
Wishart, Pete
Yasin, Mohammad
Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:
Mary Glindon and
Kim Leadbeater

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 8 disagreed to.

Motion made, and Question put, That this House
disagrees with Lords amendment 9.—(Michael Tomlinson.)

The House divided: Ayes 320, Noes 251.

Division No. 106]

[9.35 pm

AYES

Afolami, Bim
Afriyie, Adam
Aiken, Nickie
Aldous, Peter
Anderson, Stuart
Andrew, rh Stuart
Ansell, Caroline
Argar, rh Edward
Atherton, Sarah
Atkins, rh Victoria
Bacon, Gareth
Bacon, Mr Richard
Badenoch, rh Kemi
Bailey, Shaun
Baillie, Siobhan
Baker, Duncan
Baker, rh Mr Steve
Baldwin, Harriett
Barclay, rh Steve
Baron, Mr John
Baynes, Simon
Bell, Aaron
Beresford, Sir Paul
Bhatti, Saqib
Blackman, Bob
Bottomley, Sir Peter
Bowie, Andrew
Bradley, Ben
Bradley, rh Dame Karen
Brady, rh Sir Graham
Brereton, Jack
Bridgen, Andrew
Brine, Steve
Bristow, Paul
Britcliffe, Sara
Browne, Anthony
Bruce, Fiona
Buchan, Felicity
Burghart, Alex
Burns, rh Sir Conor
Butler, Rob
Cairns, rh Alun
Cameron, Dr Lisa
Campbell, Mr Gregory
Carter, Andy
Cartledge, James
Cash, Sir William
Cates, Miriam
Caulfield, Maria
Chalk, rh Alex
Chishti, Rehman
Chope, Sir Christopher
Churchill, Jo

Clark, rh Greg
Clarke, rh Sir 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, rh Claire
Crabb, rh Stephen
Crosbie, Virginia
Crouch, Tracey
Daly, James
Davies, rh David T. C.
Davies, Gareth
Davies, Dr James
Davies, Mims
Davies, Philip
Davis, rh Sir David
Davison, Dehenna
Dinenage, Dame Caroline
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
Docherty, Leo
Double, Steve
Doyle-Price, Dame Jackie
Drax, Richard
Duddridge, Sir James (*Proxy*
vote cast by Mr Francois)
Duguid, David
Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
Dunne, rh Philip
Eastwood, Mark
Edwards, Ruth
Ellis, rh Sir Michael
Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
Eustice, rh George
Evans, Dr Luke
Evennett, rh Sir David
Everitt, Ben
Fabricant, Michael
Farris, Laura
Fell, Simon
Firth, Anna
Fletcher, Katherine
Fletcher, Mark
Fletcher, Nick
Ford, rh Vicky
Foster, Kevin
Fox, rh Sir Liam

Francois, rh Mr Mark
Frazer, rh Lucy
Freeman, George
Freer, Mike
French, Mr Louie
Fuller, Richard
Garnier, Mark
Ghani, Ms Nusrat
Gibb, rh Nick
Gibson, Peter
Gideon, Jo
Girvan, Paul
Glen, rh John
Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
Graham, Richard
Grant, Mrs Helen
Gray, James
Grayling, rh Chris
Green, Chris
Green, rh Damian
Griffith, Andrew
Grundy, James
Gullis, Jonathan
Halfon, rh Robert
Hall, Luke
Hammond, Stephen
Hands, rh Greg
Harper, rh Mr Mark
Harris, Rebecca
Harrison, Trudy
Hart, Sally-Ann
Hayes, rh Sir John
Heald, rh Sir Oliver
Heappey, rh James
Heaton-Harris, rh Chris
Henderson, Gordon
Henry, Darren
Higginbotham, Antony
Hinds, rh Damian
Hoare, Simon
Holden, rh Mr Richard
Hollinrake, Kevin
Hollobone, Mr Philip
Holmes, Paul
Howell, John (*Proxy vote cast*
by Mr Marcus Jones)
Howell, Paul
Huddleston, Nigel
Hudson, Dr Neil
Hughes, Eddie
Hunt, Jane
Hunt, rh Jeremy
Hunt, Tom
Jack, rh Mr Alister
Javid, rh Sir Sajid
Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
Jenkin, Sir Bernard
Johnson, Dr Caroline
Johnson, Gareth
Johnston, David
Jones, Andrew
Jones, rh Mr David
Jones, Fay
Jones, rh Mr Marcus
Jupp, Simon
Kawczynski, Daniel
Keegan, rh Gillian
Knight, rh Sir Greg
Kruger, Danny
Lamont, John
Largan, Robert
Latham, Mrs Pauline

Leadsom, rh Dame Andrea
Leigh, rh Sir Edward
Levy, Ian
Lewer, Andrew
Lewis, rh Sir Julian
Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
Loder, Chris
Logan, Mark
Longhi, Marco
Lopez, Julia
Lopresti, Jack
Lord, Mr Jonathan
Loughton, Tim
Mackinlay, Craig (*Proxy vote*
cast by John Redwood)
Mackrory, Cherilyn
Maclean, Rachel
Mak, Alan
Malthouse, rh Kit
Mangnall, Anthony
Mann, Scott
Marson, Julie
Mayhew, Jerome
Maynard, Paul
McCartney, Jason
McCartney, Karl
McPartland, rh Stephen
McVey, rh Esther
Menzies, Mark
Mercer, rh Johnny
Merriman, Huw
Metcalfe, Stephen
Millar, Robin
Miller, rh Dame Maria
Milling, rh Dame Amanda
Mills, Nigel
Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
Mohindra, Mr Gagan
Moore, Damien
Moore, Robbie
Mordaunt, rh Penny
Morris, Anne Marie
Morris, David
Morris, James
Mortimer, Jill
Morton, rh Wendy
Mullan, Dr Kieran
Mumby-Croft, Holly
Mundell, rh David
Murray, Mrs Sheryll
Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
Nici, Lia
O'Brien, Neil
Offord, Dr Matthew
Opperman, Guy
Patel, rh Priti
Pawsey, Mark
Penning, rh Sir Mike
Penrose, John
Percy, Andrew
Philp, rh Chris
Pow, Rebecca
Prentis, rh Victoria
Pritchard, rh Mark
Pursglove, Tom
Quin, rh Sir Jeremy
Quince, Will
Randall, Tom
Redwood, rh John
Rees-Mogg, rh Sir Jacob
Richards, Nicola
Richardson, Angela

Roberts, Mr Rob
Robertson, Mr Laurence
Robinson, Gavin
Robinson, Mary
Rosindell, Andrew
Ross, Douglas
Rowley, Lee
Russell, Dean
Rutley, David
Saxby, Selaine
Scully, Paul
Seely, Bob
Selous, Andrew
Shannon, Jim
Shapps, rh Grant
Shelbrooke, rh Sir Alec
Simmonds, David
Smith, rh Chloe
Smith, Greg
Smith, Henry
Smith, Royston
Solloway, Amanda
Spencer, Dr Ben
Spencer, rh Mark
Stafford, Alexander
Stephenson, rh Andrew
Stevenson, Jane
Stevenson, John
Stewart, Iain
Streeter, Sir Gary
Stride, rh Mel
Stuart, rh Graham
Sturdy, Julian
Sunderland, James
Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
Syms, Sir Robert
Thomas, Derek
Throup, Maggie

Timpson, Edward
Tolhurst, rh Kelly
Tomlinson, Justin
Tomlinson, rh Michael
Tracey, Craig
Trevelyan, rh Anne-Marie
Trott, rh Laura
Tuckwell, Steve
Tugendhat, rh Tom
Vara, rh Shailesh
Vickers, Martin
Vickers, Matt
Villiers, rh Theresa
Walker, Sir Charles
Walker, Mr Robin
Wallace, rh Mr Ben
Warman, Matt
Watling, Giles
Webb, Suzanne
Whately, Helen
Wheeler, Mrs Heather
Whittaker, rh Craig (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
Whittingdale, rh Sir John
Wiggin, Sir Bill
Wild, James
Williams, rh Craig
Williamson, rh Sir Gavin
Wilson, rh Sammy
Wood, Mike
Wragg, Mr William
Wright, rh Sir Jeremy
Young, Jacob

Tellers for the Ayes:
Joy Morrissey and
Mark Jenkinson

NOES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane (*Proxy vote cast by Bell Ribeiro-Addy*)
Abrahams, Debbie
Ali, Rushanara
Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
Amesbury, Mike
Anderson, Fleur
Antoniazzi, Tonia
Ashworth, rh Jonathan
Bardell, Hannah
Barker, Paula
Beckett, rh Dame Margaret
Benn, rh Hilary
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
Bryant, Sir Chris
Buck, Ms Karen
Buckland, rh Sir Robert
Burgon, Richard
Butler, Dawn
Byrne, Ian
Byrne, rh Liam

Cadbury, Ruth
Callaghan, Amy (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Campbell, rh Sir Alan
Carden, Dan
Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
Chamberlain, Wendy
Champion, Sarah
Chapman, Douglas
Cherry, Joanna
Clark, Feryal
Cooper, Daisy
Cooper, rh Yvette
Corbyn, rh Jeremy
Cowan, Ronnie
Coyle, Neil
Crawley, Angela (*Proxy vote cast by Owen Thompson*)
Creasy, Stella
Cruddas, Jon
Cryer, John
Cummins, Judith
Cunningham, Alex
Daby, Janet
Dalton, Ashley
Davey, rh Ed
David, Wayne
Davies-Jones, Alex
Day, Martyn
De Cordova, Marsha
Debbonaire, Thangam

Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
Dixon, Samantha
Docherty-Hughes, Martin
Dodds, Anneliese
Doogan, Dave
Dorans, Allan (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Doughty, Stephen
Dowd, Peter
Duffield, Rosie
Dyke, Sarah
Eagle, Dame Angela
Eagle, rh Maria
Eastwood, Colum
Edwards, Jonathan
Edwards, Sarah
Efford, Clive
Egan, Damien
Elliott, Julie
Elmore, Chris
Eshalomi, Florence
Esterson, Bill
Evans, Chris
Farron, Tim
Farry, Stephen
Fellows, Marion
Fletcher, Colleen
Flynn, Stephen
Ford, Richard
Foxcroft, Vicky
Furniss, Gill
Gardiner, Barry
Gibson, Patricia
Gill, Preet Kaur
Grady, Patrick
Grant, Peter
Green, Sarah
Greenwood, Lilian
Greenwood, Margaret
Griffith, Dame Nia
Gwynne, Andrew
Haigh, Louise
Hamilton, Fabian
Hamilton, Mrs Paulette
Hanna, Claire
Hanvey, Neale
Hardy, Emma
Harman, rh Ms Harriet
Harris, Carolyn
Hayes, Helen
Healey, rh John
Hendry, Drew
Hillier, Dame Meg
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
Kitchen, Gen
Lake, Ben
Lavery, Ian
Law, Chris
Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
Lewis, Clive
Lightwood, Simon
Linden, David (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Long Bailey, Rebecca
Lucas, Caroline
Lynch, Holly
MacNeil, Angus Brendan
Madders, Justin
Mahmood, Mr Khalid
Mahmood, Shabana
Malhotra, Seema
Maskell, Rachael
Mather, Keir
Mc Nally, John
McCabe, Steve
McCarthy, Kerry
McDonagh, Dame Siobhain
McDonald, Andy
McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
McDonald, Stuart C.
McDonnell, rh John
McFadden, rh Mr Pat
McGovern, Alison
McKinnell, Catherine
McLaughlin, Anne (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
McMahon, Jim
McMorris, Anna
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 (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Norris, Alex
O'Hara, Brendan
Olney, Sarah
Onwurah, Chi
Oppong-Asare, Abena
Osborne, Kate
Oswald, Kirsten
Owatemi, Taiwo (*Proxy vote cast by Chris Elmore*)
Owen, Sarah
Peacock, Stephanie
Pennycook, Matthew
Perkins, Mr Toby
Phillips, Jess
Phillipson, Bridget
Pollard, Luke
Powell, Lucy
Qaisar, Ms Anum
Qureshi, Yasmin
Rayner, rh Angela
Reed, Steve

Rees, Christina
Reeves, Ellie
Reeves, rh Rachel
Reynolds, Jonathan
Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
Rodda, Matt
Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
Saville Roberts, rh Liz
Shah, Naz (*Proxy vote cast by Dawn Butler*)
Shanks, Michael
Sharma, Mr Virendra
Sheerman, Mr Barry
Sheppard, Tommy (*Proxy vote cast by Owen Thompson*)
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
Strathern, Alistair
Stringer, Graham
Sultana, Zarah

Tami, rh Mark
Tarry, Sam
Thewliss, Alison
Thomas, Gareth
Thompson, Owen
Thomson, Richard
Thornberry, rh Emily
Timms, rh Sir Stephen
Trickett, Jon (*Proxy vote cast by Ian Lavery*)
Twist, Liz
Vaz, rh Valerie
Wakeford, Christian
Webbe, Claudia
West, Catherine
Western, Andrew
Western, Matt
Whitehead, Dr Alan
Whitford, Dr Philippa (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
Whittome, Nadia
Williams, Hywel
Wilson, Munira
Winter, Beth
Wishart, Pete
Yasin, Mohammad
Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:
Mary Glindon and
Kim Leadbeater

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 9 disagreed to.

Motion made, and Question put, That this House disagrees with Lords amendment 10.—(Michael Tomlinson.)

The House divided: Ayes 312, Noes 255.

Division No. 107]

[9.46 pm

AYES

Afolami, Bim
Afriyie, Adam
Aiken, Nickie
Aldous, Peter
Anderson, Stuart
Andrew, rh Stuart
Ansell, Caroline
Argar, rh Edward
Atherton, Sarah
Atkins, rh Victoria
Bacon, Gareth
Bacon, Mr Richard
Badenoch, rh Kemi
Bailey, Shaun
Baillie, Siobhan
Baker, Duncan
Baker, rh Mr Steve
Baldwin, Harriett
Barclay, rh Steve
Baron, Mr John
Baynes, Simon
Bell, Aaron
Beresford, Sir Paul
Bhatti, Saqib
Blackman, Bob
Bottomley, Sir Peter
Bowie, Andrew
Bradley, Ben
Bradley, rh Dame Karen
Brady, rh Sir Graham

Brereton, Jack
Bridgen, Andrew
Brine, Steve
Bristow, Paul
Britcliffe, Sara
Browne, Anthony
Bruce, Fiona
Buchan, Felicity
Burghart, Alex
Burns, rh Sir Conor
Butler, Rob
Cairns, rh Alun
Cameron, Dr Lisa
Carter, Andy
Cartlidge, James
Cash, Sir William
Cates, Miriam
Caulfield, Maria
Chalk, rh Alex
Chishty, Rehman
Chope, Sir Christopher
Churchill, Jo
Clark, rh Greg
Clarke, rh Sir 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, rh Claire
Crabb, rh Stephen
Crosbie, Virginia
Crouch, Tracey
Daly, James
Davies, rh David T. C.
Davies, Gareth
Davies, Dr James
Davies, Mims
Davies, Philip
Davis, rh Sir David
Davison, Dehenna
Dinenage, Dame Caroline
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
Docherty, Leo
Double, Steve
Doyle-Price, Dame Jackie
Drax, Richard
Duguid, David
Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
Dunne, rh Philip
Eastwood, Mark
Edwards, Ruth
Ellis, rh Sir Michael
Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
Eustice, rh George
Evans, Dr Luke
Evennett, rh Sir David
Everitt, Ben
Fabricant, Michael
Farris, Laura
Fell, Simon
Firth, Anna
Fletcher, Katherine
Fletcher, Mark
Fletcher, Nick
Ford, rh Vicky
Foster, Kevin
Fox, rh Sir Liam
Frazer, rh Lucy
Freeman, George
Freer, Mike
French, Mr Louie
Fuller, Richard
Garnier, Mark
Ghani, Ms Nusrat
Gibb, rh Nick
Gibson, Peter
Gideon, Jo
Glen, rh John
Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
Graham, Richard
Grant, Mrs Helen
Gray, James
Grayling, rh Chris
Green, Chris
Green, rh Damian
Griffith, Andrew
Grundy, James
Gullis, Jonathan
Halfon, rh Robert
Hall, Luke
Hammond, Stephen
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, rh James
Heaton-Harris, rh Chris
Henderson, Gordon
Henry, Darren
Higginbotham, Antony
Hinds, rh Damian
Hoare, Simon
Holden, rh Mr Richard
Hollinrake, Kevin
Hollobone, Mr Philip
Holmes, Paul
Howell, John (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
Howell, Paul
Huddleston, Nigel
Hudson, Dr Neil
Hughes, Eddie
Hunt, Jane
Hunt, rh Jeremy
Hunt, Tom
Jack, rh Mr Alister
Javid, rh Sir Sajid
Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
Jenkin, Sir Bernard
Johnson, Gareth
Johnston, David
Jones, Andrew
Jones, rh Mr David
Jones, Fay
Jones, rh Mr Marcus
Jupp, Simon
Kawczynski, Daniel
Keegan, rh Gillian
Knight, rh Sir Greg
Kruger, Danny
Lamont, John
Largan, Robert
Latham, Mrs Pauline
Leadsom, rh Dame Andrea
Leigh, rh Sir Edward
Levy, Ian
Lewer, Andrew
Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
Loder, Chris
Logan, Mark
Longhi, Marco
Lopez, Julia
Lopresti, Jack
Lord, Mr Jonathan
Loughton, Tim
Mackinlay, Craig (*Proxy vote cast by John Redwood*)
Mackrory, Cherylyn
Maclean, Rachel
Mak, Alan
Malthouse, rh Kit
Mangnall, Anthony
Mann, Scott
Marson, Julie
Mayhew, Jerome
Maynard, Paul
McCartney, Jason
McCartney, Karl
McPartland, rh Stephen
McVey, rh Esther
Menzies, Mark
Mercer, rh Johnny
Merriman, Huw
Metcalfe, Stephen

Millar, Robin	Smith, Greg
Miller, rh Dame Maria	Smith, Henry
Milling, rh Dame Amanda	Smith, Royston
Mills, Nigel	Solloway, Amanda
Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew	Spencer, Dr Ben
Mohindra, Mr Gagan	Spencer, rh Mark
Moore, Damien	Stafford, Alexander
Moore, Robbie	Stephenson, rh Andrew
Mordaunt, rh Penny	Stevenson, Jane
Morris, Anne Marie	Stevenson, John
Morris, David	Stewart, Iain
Morris, James	Streeter, Sir Gary
Mortimer, Jill	Stride, rh Mel
Morton, rh Wendy	Stuart, rh Graham
Mullan, Dr Kieran	Sturdy, Julian
Mumby-Croft, Holly	Sunderland, James
Mundell, rh David	Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
Murray, Mrs Sheryll	Syms, Sir Robert
Murrison, rh Dr Andrew	Thomas, Derek
Nici, Lia	Throup, Maggie
O'Brien, Neil	Timpson, Edward
Offord, Dr Matthew	Tolhurst, rh Kelly
Opperman, Guy	Tomlinson, Justin
Patel, rh Priti	Tomlinson, rh Michael
Pawsey, Mark	Tracey, Craig
Penning, rh Sir Mike	Trevelyan, rh Anne-Marie
Penrose, John	Trott, rh Laura
Percy, Andrew	Tuckwell, Steve
Philp, rh Chris	Tugendhat, rh Tom
Pow, Rebecca	Vara, rh Shailesh
Prentis, rh Victoria	Vickers, Martin
Pritchard, rh Mark	Vickers, Matt
Pursglove, Tom	Villiers, rh Theresa
Quin, rh Sir Jeremy	Walker, Sir Charles
Quince, Will	Walker, Mr Robin
Randall, Tom	Wallace, rh Mr Ben
Redwood, rh John	Warman, Matt
Rees-Mogg, rh Sir Jacob	Watling, Giles
Richards, Nicola	Webb, Suzanne
Richardson, Angela	Whately, Helen
Roberts, Mr Rob	Wheeler, Mrs Heather
Robertson, Mr Laurence	Whittaker, rh Craig (<i>Proxy vote</i> <i>cast by Mr Marcus Jones</i>)
Robinson, Mary	Whittingdale, rh Sir John
Rosindell, Andrew	Wiggin, Sir Bill
Ross, Douglas	Wild, James
Rowley, Lee	Williams, rh Craig
Russell, Dean	Williamson, rh Sir Gavin
Rutley, David	Wood, Mike
Saxby, Selaine	Wragg, Mr William
Scully, Paul	Wright, rh Sir Jeremy
Seely, Bob	Young, Jacob
Selous, Andrew	
Shapps, rh Grant	
Shelbrooke, rh Sir Alec	
Simmonds, David	
Smith, rh Chloe	

Tellers for the Ayes:
Joy Morrissey and
Mark Jenkinson

NOES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane (<i>Proxy vote</i> <i>cast by Bell Ribeiro-Addy</i>)	Black, Mhairi
Abrahams, Debbie	Blackford, rh Ian
Ali, Rushanara	Blackman, Kirsty
Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena	Blake, Olivia
Amesbury, Mike	Blomfield, Paul
Anderson, Fleur	Bonnar, Steven
Antoniazzi, Tonia	Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
Ashworth, rh Jonathan	Brennan, Kevin
Bardell, Hannah	Brock, Deidre
Barker, Paula	Brown, Alan
Beckett, rh Dame Margaret	Brown, Ms Lyn
Benn, rh Hilary	Bryant, Sir Chris
	Buck, Ms Karen

Buckland, rh Sir Robert	Grady, Patrick
Burgon, Richard	Grant, Peter
Butler, Dawn	Green, Sarah
Byrne, Ian	Greenwood, Lilian
Byrne, rh Liam	Greenwood, Margaret
Cadbury, Ruth	Griffith, Dame Nia
Callaghan, Amy (<i>Proxy vote</i> <i>cast by Marion Fellows</i>)	Gwynne, Andrew
Campbell, rh Sir Alan	Haigh, Louise
Campbell, Mr Gregory	Hamilton, Fabian
Carden, Dan	Hamilton, Mrs Paulette
Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair	Hanna, Claire
Chamberlain, Wendy	Harvey, Neale
Champion, Sarah	Hardy, Emma
Chapman, Douglas	Harman, rh Ms Harriet
Cherry, Joanna	Harris, Carolyn
Clark, Feryal	Hayes, Helen
Cooper, Daisy	Healey, rh John
Cooper, rh Yvette	Hendry, Drew
Corbyn, rh Jeremy	Hillier, Dame Meg
Cowan, Ronnie	Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
Coyle, Neil	Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
Crawley, Angela (<i>Proxy vote</i> <i>cast by Owen Thompson</i>)	Hollern, Kate
Creasy, Stella	Hopkins, Rachel
Cruddas, Jon	Hosie, rh Stewart
Cryer, John	Howarth, rh Sir George
Cummins, Judith	Huq, Dr Rupa
Cunningham, Alex	Hussain, Imran
Daby, Janet	Jardine, Christine
Dalton, Ashley	Jarvis, Dan
Davey, rh Ed	Johnson, rh Dame Diana
David, Wayne	Johnson, Kim
Davies-Jones, Alex	Jones, Darren
Day, Martyn	Jones, Gerald
De Cordova, Marsha	Jones, rh Mr Kevan
Debbonaire, Thangam	Jones, Ruth
Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh	Jones, Sarah
Dixon, Samantha	Kane, Mike
Docherty-Hughes, Martin	Keeley, Barbara
Dodds, Anneliese	Kendall, Liz
Doogan, Dave	Khan, Afzal
Dorans, Allan (<i>Proxy vote cast</i> <i>by Marion Fellows</i>)	Kinnock, Stephen
Doughty, Stephen	Kitchen, Gen
Dowd, Peter	Lake, Ben
Duffield, Rosie	Lavery, Ian
Dyke, Sarah	Law, Chris
Eagle, Dame Angela	Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
Eagle, rh Maria	Lewis, Clive
Eastwood, Colum	Lightwood, Simon
Edwards, Jonathan	Linden, David (<i>Proxy vote cast</i> <i>by Marion Fellows</i>)
Edwards, Sarah	Long Bailey, Rebecca
Efford, Clive	Lucas, Caroline
Egan, Damien	Lynch, Holly
Elliott, Julie	MacNeil, Angus Brendan
Elmore, Chris	Madders, Justin
Eshalomi, Florence	Mahmood, Mr Khalid
Esterson, Bill	Mahmood, Shabana
Evans, Chris	Malhotra, Seema
Farron, Tim	Maskell, Rachael
Farry, Stephen	Mather, Keir
Fellows, Marion	Mc Nally, John
Fletcher, Colleen	McCabe, Steve
Flynn, Stephen	McCarthy, Kerry
Foord, Richard	McDonagh, Dame Siobhain
Foxcroft, Vicky	McDonald, Andy
Furniss, Gill	McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
Gardiner, Barry	McDonald, Stuart C.
Gibson, Patricia	McDonnell, rh John
Gill, Preet Kaur	McFadden, rh Mr Pat
Girvan, Paul	McGovern, Alison
	McKinnell, Catherine

McLaughlin, Anne (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
 McMahon, Jim
 McMorris, Anna
 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 (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
 Norris, Alex
 O'Hara, Brendan
 Olney, Sarah
 Onwurah, Chi
 Oppong-Asare, Abena
 Osborne, Kate
 Oswald, Kirsten
 Owatemi, Taiwo (*Proxy vote cast by Chris Elmore*)
 Owen, Sarah
 Peacock, Stephanie
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Mr Toby
 Phillips, Jess
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Pollard, Luke
 Powell, Lucy
 Qaisar, Ms Anum
 Qureshi, Yasmin
 Rayner, rh Angela
 Reed, Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reeves, Ellie
 Reeves, rh Rachel
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
 Robinson, Gavin
 Rodda, Matt
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Saville Roberts, rh Liz
 Shah, Naz (*Proxy vote cast by Dawn Butler*)
 Shanks, Michael
 Shannon, Jim
 Sharma, Mr Virendra

Sheerman, Mr Barry
 Sheppard, Tommy (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
 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
 Strathern, Alistair
 Stringer, Graham
 Sultana, Zarah
 Tami, rh Mark
 Tarry, Sam
 Thewliss, Alison
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thompson, Owen
 Thomson, Richard
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Sir Stephen
 Trickett, Jon (*Proxy vote cast by Ian Lavery*)
 Twist, Liz
 Vaz, rh Valerie
 Wakeford, Christian
 Webbe, Claudia
 West, Catherine
 Western, Andrew
 Western, Matt
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whitford, Dr Philippa (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
 Whittome, Nadia
 Williams, Hywel
 Wilson, Munira
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Winter, Beth
 Wishart, Pete
 Yasin, Mohammad
 Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:

**Mary Glindon and
Kim Leadbeater**

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 10 disagreed to.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 83H(2)), That a Committee be appointed to draw up Reasons to be assigned to the Lords for disagreeing to their amendments 1 to 10;

That Michael Tomlinson, Scott Mann, Dr Kieran Mullan, Anna Firth, Stephen Kinnock, Colleen Fletcher and Alison Thewliss be members of the Committee;

That Michael Tomlinson be the Chair of the Committee;

That three be the quorum of the Committee.

That the Committee do withdraw immediately.—(*Suzanne Webb.*)

Question agreed to.

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

Clive Lewis (Norwich South) (Lab): On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I put on record my apologies to the Chair, to Members, and to members of staff for an earlier outburst that I had. Let me very quickly explain. I received a message that caused me some consternation and surprise, to which I made an outburst in general at no one specifically. If I could do it again, I probably would have said something like, “My giddy aunt!” rather than what did come out of my mouth, and for that I apologise. To clear the air, I put on record the fact that it was directed at no one in particular.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Sir Roger Gale): I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's candour in identifying himself and the fullness of his apology, which is accepted.

Business without Debate

Mr Deputy Speaker (Sir Roger Gale): Before I come to motions 4 to 13 on the Order Paper, I should draw the attention of the House to an error under item 11 in the printed version—it has been corrected online. The version of the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 (Consequential, Supplementary and Incidental Provisions) Regulations 2024 that is before us today and that was considered by the Delegated Legislation Committee is the draft laid on 1 February 2024, not the draft laid on 10 January 2024, which has been withdrawn and replaced.

DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

That the draft Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) (Amendment) Regulations 2024, which were laid before this House on 19 February, be approved.—(*Suzanne Webb.*)

Question agreed to.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),

EDUCATION

That the draft Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022 (Consequential Amendments) Order 2024, which was laid before this House on 22 January, be approved.—(*Suzanne Webb.*)

Question agreed to.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),

PENSIONS

That the draft Occupational Pension Schemes (Funding and Investment Strategy and Amendment) Regulations 2024, which were laid before this House on 26 February, be approved.—(*Suzanne Webb.*)

Question agreed to.

ELECTRICITY

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),

That the draft Electricity Supplier Obligations (Excluded Electricity) (Amendment) Regulations 2024, which were laid before this House on 22 January, be approved.—(*Suzanne Webb.*)

Question agreed to.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),

That the draft Renewables Obligation (Amendment) (Energy Intensive Industries) Order 2024, which was laid before this House on 23 January, be approved.—(*Suzanne Webb.*)

Question agreed to.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),

That the draft Electricity Capacity (Supplier Payment etc.) (Amendment and Excluded Electricity) Regulations 2024, which were laid before this House on 22 January, be approved.—(*Suzanne Webb.*)

Question agreed to.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),

That the draft Energy-Intensive Industry Electricity Support Payments and Levy Regulations 2024, which were laid before this House on 22 January, be approved.—(*Suzanne Webb.*)

Question agreed to.

COMPANIES

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),

That the draft Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 (Consequential, Supplementary and Incidental Provisions) Regulations 2024, which were laid before this House on 1 February, be approved.—(*Suzanne Webb.*)

Question agreed to.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),

That the draft Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 (Financial Penalty) Regulations 2024, which were laid before this House on 19 February, be approved.—(*Suzanne Webb.*)

Question agreed to.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),

SANCTIONS

That the Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 (SI, 2024, No. 218), dated 26 February, a copy of which was laid before this House on 28 February, be approved.—(*Suzanne Webb.*)

Question agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Ordered,

That Sir Jeremy Quin be discharged from the Committee of Public Accounts and Matt Warman be added. —(*Sir Bill Wiggin, on behalf of the Committee of Selection.*)

PETITION

Recommendations of the Infected Blood Inquiry

10.6 pm

Cat Smith (Lancaster and Fleetwood) (Lab): I rise to present a petition on behalf of my constituents, who are shocked and upset by the infected blood scandal. They recognise that justice delayed is justice denied. For that reason, the petitioners request

“that the House of Commons urges the Government to implement the recommendations in the Second Interim Report of the Infected Blood Inquiry without delay.”

Following is the full text of the petition:

[The petition of residents of the constituency of Lancaster and Fleetwood

Declares that people who received infected blood and who have suffered as a consequence have, along with their families, waited far too long for redress.

The petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urges the Government to implement the recommendations in the Second Interim Report of the Infected Blood Inquiry without delay.

And the petitioners remain etc.]

[P002927]

Cadet Expansion Programme

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—(Suzanne Webb.)

10.7 pm

James Sunderland (Bracknell) (Con): It is a huge privilege to lead tonight's Adjournment debate on the cadet expansion programme, and I am grateful to the Minister for responding to it.

Almost exactly 40 years ago, when I was a young Army cadet in Guildford, the combined cadet force at my school deployed to Okehampton for its Easter camp. During that week, cadets participated in a night navigation exercise across the notorious Dartmoor. Given the cold weather and awful terrain, that would have been a challenge at any time, but we had barely left Okehampton when thick fog engulfed us, to the point that you could not see your hand in front of your face. Sensing the danger, the three of us in my group used all the training that we had been given not just to get off the moor, but to complete the exercise together.

The young cadets alongside me were Hamish Walker and Graham Atkinson. I will never forget the experience. Anyone who is familiar with military service will know that heightened sense of vigilance and excitement when travelling cross-country at night. Totally confident in what the map and compass were telling us, and meticulously counting our paces, we worked together to double-check our navigation and agree every decision we made—this was long before sat-nav. We were utterly blind because of the fog, but we trusted our instincts, training and the compass needle, and that potent combination of teamwork, resilience, informed judgement, competitive spirit and confidence that one gets with military service saw us succeed against the odds, even as 13-year-old kids.

This, however, was typical of what cadets still do. Whether abseiling down dams, building shelters, learning to ski or shoot, escaping from a capsized canoe, preparing an ambush or cooking in the field, the skills I acquired as an Army cadet, for five years at school and for a further three years in the university officer training corps, were pivotal to everything I am today. While the cadet movement does not exist to recruit people for a military career, it was so formative for me that it gave me the skills to thrive at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, which I now represent as the local MP, and throughout a 27-year military career. My response to almost everything that has been asked of me since leaving the cadets probably has its foundation in my time with the cadets, so it has made a huge difference to me personally.

What of the cadet forces themselves? The Ministry of Defence sponsors five different types of cadet forces. The sea cadet corps, the volunteer cadet corps, the Army cadet force and the air training corps are single service in nature, not tied to schools, but the fifth, the combined cadet force, offers more tri-service balance and is hosted in schools, with adult volunteers often coming from the teaching staff. All these units are voluntary organisations that offer challenging and enjoyable activities for young people, and prepare them to play an active role in their community while developing life skills. While they do model their traditions and ethos on their parent service, they are not actually part of HM forces and do not of course have any formal military role.

The sea cadets consist of over 14,000 young people and 5,000 adult volunteers in 400 units across towns, cities and ports, undertaking activities such as sailing, boating and coastal navigation. The volunteer cadet corps offers something very similar, but is more tightly connected to naval families. It consists of around 460 cadets and 150 volunteers, located in eight naval bases across southern England and Scotland. The Army cadet force has over 37,000 cadets and 9,000 adult volunteers, and it celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2010. The fourth of the non-school units is the air training corps, which consists of over 44,000 cadets and volunteer staff in over 900 squadrons across the UK, encouraging participants to take an active interest in aviation and the Royal Air Force.

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP): I commend the hon. Gentleman for bringing forward the debate; we spoke beforehand. The schools cadet expansion programme in Northern Ireland has gone from success to success, with Kilkeel High School in the constituency neighbouring my Strangford constituency becoming the newest cadet force. This week, 139 pupils from schools across Northern Ireland entered the cyber-skills challenge competition, which is fantastic. Does the hon. Gentleman agree that Northern Ireland is very much setting the targets for other cadet forces across the United Kingdom to try to match up to? Does he also welcome the fact that almost as many Roman Catholics are now joining the cadet forces in Northern Ireland as Protestants?

James Sunderland: I thank the hon. Member for his intervention, and I completely agree. What is happening in Northern Ireland is an exemplar for the cadet movement. It is quite something that we have a balance between Catholic and Protestant children in these units. This is about cohesion and community, and what is happening over there is commendable.

As for the combined cadet force, units exist in over 260 schools across the UK. Traditionally, they are the preserve of independent schools, with over 200 of them hosting detachments, but there are now at least 60 units in state schools too. They offer young students a broad range of exciting, adventurous and educational activities that complement the normal school curriculum during the evening, at weekends and during the holidays. Like the other cadets units, they help to develop personal responsibility, leadership, teamwork and self-discipline. In my view, it is no coincidence that many young cadets emerge to be highly successful in their chosen career fields.

In Berkshire, I am proud that we have a strong pedigree with the military presence there. I could again mention the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, the headquarters of 77 Brigade at Hermitage, the Household Cavalry Regiment and the 1st Battalion of the Coldstream Guards in Windsor, 7 Rifles in Reading and so much more, but I really want to highlight the Royal County of Berkshire Army cadet force. This currently supports over 600 cadets and 120 adult volunteers in 18 detachments, many of which I see on Remembrance Sunday and at special events alongside the lord lieutenant. I give a big shout-out for 7 Platoon in Bracknell, which does so much locally, trains and plays hard in equal measure, and always looks so smart.

While we do not, sadly, have a sea cadets unit in my constituency, Bracknell is home to 2211 Squadron of the Air Training Corps. I met several of the cadets recently,

[James Sunderland]

and it never ceases to amaze me just how much is on offer. It is even possible for cadets to go flying and set themselves up to gain pilot licences. To anyone watching from Bracknell Forest I say: please do consider joining the Army Cadet Force or Air Training Corps locally; it is a real opportunity.

As for the Combined Cadet Force, there are two detachments in my constituency. Wellington College has an established military presence and a proud history of service. While I have not yet been invited to visit, it is a good one by reputation. At Brakenhale School in Bracknell, I have watched with wonder as a fledgling detachment has evolved under the superb leadership and vision of both Second Lieutenant Bury and Second Lieutenant Gildersleve. Getting that off the ground from virtually nothing is quite an achievement, and the detachment serves as an exemplar for the cadet expansion programme, with over 100 pupils in Bracknell now being given the opportunity to wear uniform, train with the British Army, get adventure training and learn life skills that they may otherwise not have done. I cannot commend Brakenhale School enough for everything that it is doing, and I am looking forward to the annual inspection later this year.

So what of the cadet expansion programme itself? It was first launched on Armed Forces Day in June 2012 by the then Prime Minister David Cameron, with the aim of delivering 100 new cadet units in English state-funded schools by September 2015. This target was reached six months early, in March 2015, and following that achievement, the Government committed an extra £50 million from LIBOR fines to further increase the number of cadet units in schools across the UK, bringing the total to 500 by 2020. Phase 3 is now under way, and the Minister is sure to provide a progress report later.

The cadet expansion programme is part of the Government's aim of promoting the military ethos in schools; instilling values in young people that will help them to get the most out of their life and contribute to their community; and fostering those essential qualities of resilience, independence and teamwork that will assist young people on their chosen career path. Mirroring what has already been achieved in the private sector, state schools that have set up cadet units are offering significant benefits to their young people; there are also benefits to the school and the local community. Headteachers report that they have seen significant improvement in attendance and behaviour, attainment, commitment, self-confidence and discipline, and that relationships between staff and students have improved. The sense of pride that some students feel is also palpable, and given that the Government are a champion of aspiration, opportunity, ambition and enterprise, I want to see this programme developed further and faster, so that all pupils, irrespective of their background, can have better access to these superb opportunities.

Before I close, I want to highlight a number of areas where I feel that we can do better. First and foremost, it would be massively positive for all our adult volunteers to be given a financial incentive for their time. Not only would that be positive for recruitment and retention, but it would send a clear signal that the Ministry of Defence is taking the broader benefits more seriously. Our volunteers are the lifeblood of the cadet movement,

and it would be remiss of me not to formally thank and pay tribute to everyone who runs our detachments for their huge contribution.

We should invest more in our cadet infrastructure, repair our older halls, build new ones and provide better facilities such as ranges and accommodation. It goes without saying that higher operating costs should be mitigated, that more transport should be made available, that more opportunities should be provided to train alongside our regular forces, and that better adventure training and more updated equipment should be made available. While it is a considerable outlay for the Ministry of Defence to provide uniforms, weapons and personal kit, it should be possible for serviceable ex-military equipment that would otherwise be disposed of to be provided to cadet units. Closer tie-ups with regular and reserve units through the affiliation process should help to ensure that greater localised support is available for those detachments that need it.

Lastly, as someone who got so much out of the Combined Cadet Force and Officers' Training Corps, I was always hugely privileged to visit and inspect local cadet units in Berkshire, Surrey and Hampshire, particularly when serving as a commanding officer in Aldershot and at Sandhurst. Our cadets are our future, and whether they choose to join His Majesty's forces or not, their service in uniform will leave a lasting legacy throughout their lifetime, and their personal skills will be called upon, as were mine.

I also wish to thank the many organisations that continue to enable the cadet movement, not least: our single-service branches, such as the cadets branch at Army Headquarters Regional Command in Aldershot, which forms part of home command; the national cadet training centre at Frimley Park, which does so much to train our adult volunteers; and our reserve forces and cadet associations, or RFCAs, which support our cadet forces so well behind the scenes. Indeed, today I am wearing the distinctive tie of the South East Reserve Forces and Cadet Association, which I have worked alongside for many years; I ask them to please keep up the great work locally.

I conclude by paying tribute to the other youth movements across the UK that do so much to promote the essential values that we have commended this evening. They are far too numerous to list, so I hope that I can be forgiven for not doing so, but we have the police cadets, St John Ambulance cadets, the scout and guide movement, venture scouts, youth sports clubs, young Crusaders, religious clubs, breakfast and after-school clubs, environmental groups, online networks, voluntary organisations and at least 8,000 more established groups than can easily be found with a quick search online.

I am often told by parents and teachers in my constituency that there is nothing for young people to do locally, that the Government are not doing enough, that that is a key reason for antisocial behaviour, and that many are bored. My answer is usually the same—"Really?"—but while there is always more that we can and must do locally and nationally, we should also be proud of what we have, not least in our cadet forces. Extending such opportunities more broadly across our society is a complete no-brainer for so many reasons, and I hope that the Minister will not disappoint us.

10.21 pm

The Minister for Defence People and Families (Dr Andrew Murrison): What a pleasure it is to respond to the contribution of my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Bracknell (James Sunderland) this evening. I hope that we will be able to reflect on a huge success in our country. It is a wonderful thing for our communities to have cadets. I have seen them in my constituency, and they are an important part of the local fabric, supporting occasions from Remembrance Sunday to Armed Forces Day and beyond. We are lucky to have them.

I pay particular tribute to the volunteers who make that possible. So many of our institutions have, I am afraid, suffered as a result of the pandemic, and it has been extremely difficult for them to get going again, yet cadets seem to have bounced back and be flourishing, and the reason is that there are people who are prepared to give up their time and shoulder a fair amount of inconvenience to serve their communities in that way. We all owe them a great deal.

The benefits that our cadet programmes offer to young people and society as a whole are well known and well rehearsed. I agree wholeheartedly that the MOD-sponsored cadet forces provide brilliant opportunities for our young people. They have been catalogued by academics from the University of Northampton, to whom I am grateful for their rigorous appraisal, which gives scientific objectivity to what we all understand instinctively to be the case, namely that cadets are a force for good.

Participation in cadets has been shown to build character, self-discipline and self-reliance. It improves teamworking, problem solving, leadership and social skills. It provides a boost for physical and mental health—benefits that I am sure my hon. Friend will know about from his time as a cadet, which he described so well. I have to say that my time was not quite as happy as his. I remember joining the air cadets briefly. I was told I was going to fly aircraft. After about two months, it dawned on me that that was not going to happen; it would be marching up and down for as long as I could put up with it, which was not very long. I have to say that I parted company from the cadets much sooner than my hon. Friend, but there it is. I am sure it benefited me on some level.

Headteachers of schools that have established cadet units report that their cadets have improved attendance and academic attainment, as well as behaviour and self-confidence. Some headteachers use cadets as a central part of their strategy to reduce exclusions. Cadet programmes are also a gateway to new skills, new qualifications, and even employment. They are also a valuable way of making young people aware of the further opportunities available in defence and defence-related industries, although, as my hon. Friend made clear, cadet forces are not meant to be recruiting tools. As our military footprint has shrunk, however, cadets have assumed an even more important role in at least providing some sort of presence in many communities where otherwise there would be none. They benefit the whole of society by building links between different communities, boosting social mobility, and strengthening young people's resilience to becoming involved in antisocial behaviour, criminality and even extremism. In short, joining the cadets is a springboard to success, as well as being a powerful engine for social mobility and levelling up.

The cadet expansion programme is a joint Ministry of Defence and Department for Education initiative to expand cadet participation in schools. It has been a fantastic success since its launch by the then Prime Minister 12 years ago. By March 2015, ahead of schedule, the Government reached their target of establishing 100 new combined cadet force units in state secondary schools in England. In November 2019, again ahead of schedule, we reached our further target of establishing 500 new cadet units across the United Kingdom.¹ Funded with £50 million from LIBOR fines, the expansion programme benefits many schools in less affluent areas.

To give renewed impetus to the programme, the Government had by this time outlined a further aspiration to increase the number of cadets in school units to 60,000 by April 2024. However, cadet units require a significant amount of personal commitment from school leaders and volunteers, and in spite of successes, about 50 of the units established since 2012 have failed, often as a result of changes to a school's leadership or priorities. That is a pity, but it in no way detracts from the leadership and drive of school teams that have advanced the cadet programme, to whom I pay tribute. As we approach April 2024, although cadet numbers in schools have increased by 15% since April 2020 to more than 54,000, it is clear that covid has had an impact on this as on so much of our national life, and that we will not reach our 60,000 aspiration within the challenging timeframe that we set.

However, it is not only the direct impact of the pandemic that has slowed progress. In addition to cadet activities being halted or limited by covid restrictions, participation has been affected by the resulting change in school priorities, with many understandably reorientating themselves from extra-curricular activities to prioritise catching up on lost learning. Given this context, the fact that we have already achieved 90% of our ambition to have 60,000 cadets in schools is a great credit to every individual and school involved in our expansion programme.

We have also made progress on a number of other fronts to provide the greatest support for school cadet units that we can. In the last year, we have developed a Combined Cadet Force engagement and communication framework. We have worked with the single-service cadet forces to improve the delivery model, and have extended funding for regional school cadet expansion officers. According to a report produced by academics at the University of Northampton, more than 91% of headteachers surveyed considered their cadet units to be a good investment for their schools, and a whopping 98.9% reported an improvement in the resilience of participants. Most recent estimates have calculated the cost of participation at £836 per cadet, and I call that a fantastic value-for-money investment in their future, our future, and the future of our country. However, Members do not have to take my word for it: the academics who conducted the study concluded that

“school based cadet units are delivering excellent value for money”—as well they should, given that the estimate of the Institute for Public Policy Research is that the cost of just one school exclusion is £392,000.

Jim Shannon: One impressive thing about the cadet force in my constituency is that there are as many young girls there as young boys, whether we are talking about the Army, sea or Air Force cadets. It is encouraging to

1. [Official Report, 21 March 2024, Vol. 747, c. 10MC.] (Correction)

[Jim Shannon]

see that, and I know that the Minister would like that, too. Are the Government and the Minister trying to promote that?

Dr Murrison: I absolutely do. As the proud father of five daughters, each of whom has been involved at some level in the cadets, I can certainly endorse the hon. Gentleman's remarks. I am impressed all the time by the number of young women engaged in the cadets and looking to a future in defence. Although of course this is not a recruiting exercise, the cadet force is increasingly female in its composition, and that has to be a positive thing.

I remain determined to do all I can to ensure that we continue to grow the number of cadets in our schools; as we recover from the pandemic, we must meet our 60,000 aspiration as soon as possible, so that schools such as Brakenhale School in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Bracknell can continue to flourish. The schools programme is, of course, complementary to the very successful community cadet forces, to which he referred. I pay tribute to the very active units in my constituency, and to the volunteers who sustain them. These community cadet forces are as popular as ever with our young people; the numbers mirror the growth in our school programme. The most recent figures show that we have more than 83,000 community cadets, which represents a 14% increase on the previous year.

Of course, none of this can happen without the selfless and invaluable contribution that adult volunteers make. The good news is that they can indeed receive some remuneration for their efforts, depending on the activities that they are engaged in. Historically, cadet units have had to put up with some fairly basic accommodation, and my hon. Friend touched on that. However, we continue to make considerable efforts to improve facilities for cadets, not least through the ongoing reserve estates optimisation programme.

School cadet units have been transforming the lives of our young people for more than 160 years. Once the preserve of independent schools, 65% of units are now in the state sector, which is a reversal of the previous situation, in which 75% of cadet units were in independent schools. Like the rest of our modern cadet forces, school cadet units embody the ethos of the armed forces, and are laser-focused on helping young people to develop and reach their full potential, in whatever walk of life they choose. Covid has slowed our ambitions somewhat, but thanks to our cadet force 2030 strategy, the Government have plans in place, as well as the commitment, to deliver their continued growth, ensuring that our cadet units, in schools and communities, will continue to transform the lives of more and more of our young people for many years to come.

Question put and agreed to.

10.32 pm

House adjourned.

Westminster Hall

Monday 18 March 2024

[PETER DOWD *in the Chair*]

Relationships Education: LGBT Content

4.30 pm

Peter Dowd (in the Chair): I would like to inform Members that the parliamentary digital communications team will be conducting secondary filming during today's debate for its series of procedural explainers—welcome.

Elliot Colburn (Carshalton and Wallington) (Con): I beg to move,

That this House has considered e-petitions 630932 and 631529 relating to LGBT content in relationships education.

It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Dowd. Let me begin as usual by reading out the prayers in the petitions. The prayer in e-petition 630932 reads:

“We believe kids shouldn't learn about this at an early age. I am sure there are many parents who do not want their or other children taught about LGBT in primary school.”

The petition closed on 12 July 2023 with 249,594 signatures, including 490 from Carshalton and Wallington. It did receive some attention because of the person who started it, so I want to clarify that they were a UK resident and that the Petitions Committee therefore felt it was appropriate to schedule this debate on the petition.

The prayer in e-petition 631529 reads:

“We believe kids should learn about this at an early age. I am sure there are many parents who want their and other children taught about LGBT issues...There is a petition to remove this content, which we believe is discriminatory. LGBT people exist, they have the same rights as the rest of us and kids should know them...without judgement or issue. Despite what their parents might believe.”

The petition closed on 20 July 2023 with 104,920 signatures, including 151 from my constituency.

In their replies to the two petitions, the Government stated that they had no intention of revising their guidelines, but they have since commissioned a review of relationships and sex education, or RSE, as I will refer to it throughout the rest of the debate. Today I want to make the case for why we should not go backwards and allow a return to the days of section 28, and to make the positive case for an inclusive, age-appropriate RSE curriculum. This is a policy the Government should be proud of rather than backing away from.

First, I want to share a little of my own story. I was at school before mandatory RSE and certainly before LGBT+ inclusive RSE. I came out very early in my secondary school career at Carshalton Boys Sports College to a few select peers and staff who I trusted. If that had happened in the days of section 28, I would of course have had to be turned away by my teachers and told to shut up about it. Instead, I was part of a school that was well ahead of its time and that not only taught us about healthy relationships and safe sex, but made sure that that teaching was inclusive of all identities, including LGBT+ people like me. I want to be clear: it was not some graphic exposure of how to have sex or the various things that people might want to do with each other behind closed doors; it was simply about the

fact that LGBT+ people exist and can form loving relationships with each other just like any other person and about the precautions they should take, but it was also about how to access specific advice and support if we needed it. That was it.

I now want to set out the current framework for RSE in England, and I want to thank the House of Commons Library, Brook, the Sex Education Forum and others for their helpful briefings in advance of today's debate. The Government's RSE guidance of 2019 advises schools to plan a developmental and age-appropriate curriculum. Relationships education is therefore approached in ways that are relevant to the age and maturity of the pupils. For example, teaching about “Families and people who care for me” in primary school can be an opportunity to talk about the fact that some people have two dads and some have two mums.

Key messages taught throughout relationships education include that people do not have to conform to narrow stereotypes and that discrimination, bullying and prejudice are harmful and wrong. Indeed, that principle is woven throughout the British values element of school teaching, the aim of which is to encourage and foster respect, kindness, equality and inclusion. Those are British values: they are intrinsic to the ethos of most schools, and families are supportive of them.

Primary schools are not required to teach sex education or explicitly teach about LGBT+ issues; it is more about families and relationships. Parents also have the right to withdraw their child from the sex education part of RSE up to the age of 16.

The Government ask for a whole-school approach from our schools as a vehicle to deliver strategies to tackle violence against women and girls, sexual harassment—which, as we know from Ofsted reports, is rife—peer-on-peer abuse, bullying, forms of hatred such as racism and religious abuse, and much more. My concern is that removing LGBT+ content from relationships education would conflict with the existing obligation on schools under the public sector equality duty and the community cohesion duty and undermine the Government's strategies to deliver on both.

Paul Blomfield (Sheffield Central) (Lab): I thank the hon. Member for the way in which he has introduced the debate, which was made more powerful by his sharing his own experience. Some 512 of my constituents signed the second petition, and I am sorry I cannot stay for the whole debate, but I want to pick up on the point the hon. Member just made. Does he recognise the significant academic research demonstrating that, where we have LGBTQ+ inclusive curricula, there are higher levels of safety for individuals, lower levels of bullying in school and lower levels of adverse mental health reporting?

Elliot Colburn: I am grateful to the hon. Member for that intervention, and I absolutely agree with him; in fact, that is the part of my speech I am moving on to, so I am grateful to him for giving me an opening. It is true that research has found that LGBT+ inclusive curricula are associated with reports of greater safety for individuals, lower levels of bullying at school and fewer reports of adverse mental health among all young people, irrespective of their gender identity or sexual orientation. That was set out in a report by Goldfarb and Lieberman in 2021.

[Elliot Colburn]

High-quality, inclusive RSE is vital for children and young people to live safe, healthy and happy lives, and that can be demonstrated by young people themselves. Young people who took part in the Sex Education Forum's research told us that their relationships education is not sufficiently inclusive of LGBT+ people, with 38% reporting that their RSE failed to provide any or adequate information about sexual orientation, and 44% reporting that it failed to provide any or adequate coverage of gender identity and information relevant to trans people.

I will share a couple of quotes from some of those young people. One of them said:

"We need to be told more about LGBT...I am a lesbian and growing up I never knew you could have sexual diseases"

from same-sex activities

"until the age of 15 when I started myself".

Another said:

"Educate children on the LGBTQ community and same sex relationships. There will be someone in each class that it'll be relevant to and children"

should learn

"to be more accepting. Queer people have and always will exist and children"

should be taught.

In addition to learning at school, children learn about relationships from their families, communities and wider media. The Sex Education Forum surveyed more than 1,000 young people between the ages of 16 and 17 and found that they were more likely to have learned about LGBT+ identities from social media, at around 30%, than in school, at just 25%. Parents were identified as the main source of learning for just 4% of respondents.

That leads me on to a key point that I want to make. Rather than going after LGBT+ identities as part of their review into RSE, I urge the Government to focus on the quality of the content, the resources available to schools and the training available to teachers to provide RSE in a safe and age-appropriate way. Again, research back in 2018 demonstrated that only 20% of teachers said they felt extremely confident in delivering inclusive RSE, with 10% reporting that they were not confident at all. A later survey, conducted in 2019 by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and the National Education Union, found that almost half of teachers said they did not feel confident delivering statutory RSE.

Since RSE became statutory, the Government have invested about £3.2 million of their planned £6 million in implementing the statutory RSE curriculum. However, that is only a fraction of what schools say they need to be able to do so safely, which sits at a best estimate at around £29 million. The voices of those children and teachers are clear: they need the tools to be able to deliver this effectively and appropriately, and I hope that that is what the Government's review will focus on.

I want to address some of the criticisms surrounding an inclusive RSE policy, especially in the area of parental oversight and engagement and the appropriateness of materials used in the classroom. A number of the statements the Government have made recently about parents' right to see RSE materials suggest that the issue is somehow new, but that is not the case. Schools have always been encouraged to share RSE resources with parents and carers.

Dame Andrea Jenkyns (Morley and Outwood) (Con):

I have a constituent whose school will not show the materials. It will show a summary, but not the actual materials, so she has taken her child out of that school. I agree that we need complete transparency and that parents have a right to that. Does my hon. Friend agree?

Elliot Colburn: That is absolutely appropriate. If the school has done that, it is contrary to current Government guidelines. I do not disagree with my hon. Friend at all.

The Government's own statutory RSE guidance outlines obligations for parents and carers to be consulted on the development and review of schools' RSE policies. It explicitly states that, as part of that process, parents and carers should be able to see "examples of the resources" that schools will use. Many schools should ask parents and carers to come in, view the materials and have a chat about the context in which they will be used. That is there in black and white, so if that is not happening, it absolutely should be called out. I do not think anyone would disagree that parents have a right to know.

With regard to the accusations of extreme, inappropriate, highly sexual material or similar, there simply is not the data to back up many of those claims, and that includes a lack of statistical data on complaints that have been escalated to the Department for Education. Many teaching organisations and people representing education unions, for example, have said that they have struggled to find any evidence of a widespread problem.

Stephen Doughty (Cardiff South and Penarth) (Lab/Co-op) *rose*—

Nick Fletcher (Don Valley) (Con) *rose*—

Elliot Colburn: I suspect that I will come on to both Members' points. I will finish this point, and if they still want to intervene, I will gladly give way.

Many of the examples that have been used come from other jurisdictions—one is from the Isle of Man, and many are from the United States of America—and others are anecdotal claims that have not been backed up with any evidence. Indeed, in the case of the protests outside schools in Birmingham, a High Court judge ruled that what was being taught in schools was being grossly misrepresented.

That is not to say that sometimes things do not go wrong, and I will come to that, but the research suggests that the opposite is often the case: schools are not teaching young people key aspects of the curriculum, rather than going to the other extreme. The Sex Education Forum's polling of young people aged 16 and 17 found that basic mandatory aspects of the curriculum, such as healthy relationships and how to access sexual health services, are frequently missed, with close to three in 10 young people saying they had not learned how to tell, for example, whether a relationship is healthy.

When providing a universal service such as education, it is naive to think that things sometimes do not go wrong, and I acknowledge the comments from the chief inspector of Ofsted that that has happened on occasion. There may well have been occasions where inappropriate things have been said or brought into classrooms, which is not acceptable, but there is a framework in place to deal with that, and we do not have to jump to erasing LGBT people entirely.

Stephen Doughty: The hon. Member is giving a characteristically powerful and important speech. I, too, have seen myths going around in my own constituency, in Wales, about what is allegedly being taught in schools, and they are simply not borne out by the facts. Does he agree that the important thing is for parents, or indeed anybody else, to speak with schools? My schools have been working with families and across school clusters to ensure that parents are involved and understand what is going on. Of course, parents can also often access the information online—for example, the Welsh Government's curriculum is there for everybody to read online. It is important to base discussions on the facts, not on the myths that are circulating.

Elliot Colburn: The hon. Member is absolutely right. It comes back to the point I have been trying to make throughout: there may well have been occasions where things have gone wrong, but that is where we need to ensure that schools engage with parents and carers, fulfilling the statutory guidelines and allowing parents and carers to see the curriculum and help develop it. We also need to have these discussions based on fact.

Nick Fletcher: I thank my hon. Friend for what he has said so far. He has said that there is not enough evidence of this material. Will he meet me later this week so that I can set out all the evidence we have? I have also shared it with the Department for Education, because to say it is not out there is completely and utterly wrong. It is out there, and in my speech I will be mentioning all the different companies that are sharing it. I am afraid some it is completely abhorrent.

Elliot Colburn: I am always happy to meet my hon. Friend. We sit on the Petitions Committee together and I am sure we can happily have that chat. To clarify, I am not saying that the material is not out there. I think I have made that clear in my speech so far, but I apologise if I have not. I want to be crystal clear that with a universal service that everybody gets, such as education or health, it is inevitable that sometimes things go wrong. What I am saying is that there is no statistical data to back up the idea that this is a widespread problem, so rather than trying to erase LGBT people from existence in schools, we need to look at why teachers do not feel confident delivering such material and why, on occasion, people sometimes invite inappropriate stuff into the classroom. I agree with my hon. Friend that if material is not age-appropriate, it should absolutely not be in our classrooms. The point I was trying to make was about ensuring that schools feel confident delivering the information and that parents feel empowered, but I am always happy to meet my hon. Friend.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle (Brighton, Kemptown) (Lab/Co-op): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that there is often a conflation between all the material an organisation might produce and the material that is used in schools? Disney produces adult movies as well as children's movies; the children's movies have children's content and the adult movies have adult content. An organisation might produce adult materials and children's materials. Just because an organisation produces a range of materials does not mean that is evidence they are being used in schools. The evidence is what teachers are doing and what children are reporting, which is broadly positive.

Elliot Colburn: I absolutely agree with the hon. Member, who makes a good point. Many people who produce children's content might also produce adult content. For example, many authors write books that are aimed at adults and books that are aimed at children; that it is not unusual. Any assessment needs to reflect what is going on inside the classroom. We need the DFE to be well equipped so it has the expertise needed to ensure that any complaints that come forward can be thoroughly investigated, and that it has adequate resources in place to deal with issues when things go wrong, which is inevitable in a universal service. I would like to hear more from the Minister about that.

I will bring my remarks to an end by focusing on the societal change from the days of section 28 to where we are now. Section 28 was the ban on the teaching or "promotion", as it was called, of LGBT+ issues. Since those days, we have been allowed to marry, to obtain a gender recognition certificate and to adopt, and we have gained many other hard-won rights. What does that mean in practice? It means there will be LGBT+ people at the school gates dropping off their much-loved children. Are we seriously suggesting to the Government that a child will have no ability to discuss why someone has been dropped off by two mums or two dads at the school gate? Of course not. Are we seriously suggesting in a digital age, when LGBT+ people are allowed to go about their lives out of the closet and in the knowledge that the state has protections against discrimination in place, that there is a way of preventing children from finding out that LGBT+ people exist? As we saw in the data, more children find out from social media than they do from schools or their parents.

It would be next to impossible to hide from children the fact that LGBT+ people exist. The Government think so, too. Their guidance for gender-questioning pupils explicitly said that it was not appropriate to continue to ask schools to hide a student who was questioning their gender from a parent because it would be next to impossible for that parent not to find out anyway in the digital age. If the Government agree with that when it comes to gender-questioning pupils, they have to be consistent and agree with that when it comes to LGBT content in the RSE curriculum.

When such content is done right, it has benefits for all. It tackles discrimination, promotes healthy relationships and reduces poor mental health. In his reply, I hope the Minister will offer a categorical assurance that the review will be focused on materials and training, and not on erasing LGBT+ people from existence. I can tell the Minister and the House quite clearly, as I am sure many others will, that no matter how hard some people might try, we are not going back in the closet. We exist, and there is nothing extreme about knowing we exist. In the RSE review, the Government should commit to examining why teachers lack the confidence to teach the subject, invest in materials to support the teaching of the subject, and not try to erase LGBT+ people from existence in the eyes of the students that teachers are there to look after.

Peter Dowd (in the Chair): I remind Members to bob if they wish to be called. I also ask Members to address the Chair.

4.50 pm

Sarah Champion (Rotherham) (Lab): It is always a pleasure to serve under your guidance, Mr Dowd. I thank the hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington (Elliot Colburn) for his very reasoned speech and for sharing his own experiences; it was a very powerful way to open the debate.

When I was first elected, I was focused on trying to prevent child abuse and putting child protections in place. I set up a campaign called “Dare2Care” with about 40 organisations, charities and survivors of abuse. We looked at how we could keep children safe. The one thing we all felt to be the most powerful was relationship education from primary school age. I was incredibly proud—I think it will probably be my biggest achievement—that in June 2017, we got cross-party support for making relationship education mandatory from primary school and for making sex and relationship education mandatory from secondary school. I know that that is already empowering children.

What we are talking about with RSE, particularly in primary school, is teaching children to respect themselves and respect others. That is what we are discussing today, because relationship education is about equipping all children to be safe, to recognise abuse and exploitation, and to know how to report it and seek help.

LGBTQ+ people, children particularly, must be recognised and included in the same way as heterosexual people are in relationship education, quite simply because LGBTQ people exist. They will experience relationships, sex and emotional connections good and bad in the same way as everyone else, and they have the right to be educated on the joys and dangers that come alongside those things. Avoiding mentioning the very existence of LGBTQ people in front of pupils and denying them the access to relationship education that their peers will get does nothing to safeguard them. It also does nothing to protect them from the hatred that, appallingly, seems to be getting worse and worse in this country.

I want a UK—a world—that is tolerant and respectful, and that appreciates and celebrates difference. To exclude that leads us to a very dark place. We know that from our recent history, because there are distressing echoes of section 28. Section 28 was repealed in 2003, because parliamentarians understood the great harms caused by the legislation and the chilling effect and discriminatory culture that rippled out from it. Those lessons from section 28 have informed successive Governments’ policies ever since, and they inform the cross-party support for LGBTQ+ inclusivity in guidance on relationships, health and sex education. They informed a generation of teachers who want to do better by their pupils and a generation of parents who want their children to access LGBTQ+ education.

Those who seek to exclude LGBT content will argue that it is not appropriate or necessary to teach it to primary-aged children, but I wonder what they actually think is being taught. Why is it so scary to them? Why do they not trust teachers in this respect? In key stage 1, being LGBTQ+ inclusive is as simple as acknowledging different families, parents, carers and other family members who may be lesbian, gay or trans. Those people and families exist, and children in our school communities need to know that any family that provides love, security and care is a valid family.

If children already know that they are gay, as many adult LGBTQ+ people say they did right back in the early days of primary, they need to know that all the safeguarding messages in school are for them, too. No child should be excluded, made invisible, or made to feel that they are “other” or not deserving of support from a trusted adult, because that opens the door for exploitation and their abuse.

By key stage 2, when children are going through puberty and studying it, they will have their own questions about the relationship between their bodies and sex. Opponents of inclusive LGBT+ education claim that it sexualises children, but that reflects a very narrow view of LGBTQ+ people. We cannot read through a briefing from the anti lobby without hearing about particular sex acts, as though being LGBT+ and being highly sexualised are synonymous—the total of someone’s identity.

That also reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of inclusive relationship education. The lessons that I have campaigned for have always been about helping children to understand the core values that underpin healthy relationships: mutual respect, self-respect, kindness and trust. It is also about knowing how, where and when to seek help with safeguarding and mental and physical health. The lessons are not pushing an evil agenda to corrupt young minds. They are preparing all children for the world as it is, where LGBTQ+ people exist and relationships happen, and also the world where it is dark, with some pretty awful haters out there.

It would be a travesty in this place if we were to unlearn all that we saw during the horror of section 28 and go back to a place of suspicion and hatred, which would leave our LGBTQ+ young children feeling alone and fearful once again. We must ensure that the current generation of young people leaving school—all young children leaving school—have the tools, skills and support that they need to be safe, happy and respectful, not to tolerate hate and extremism, and to engage in healthy relationships that enable them to thrive in our society.

4.57 pm

Adam Holloway (Gravesham) (Con): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Dowd. There are impassioned calls for the Government to remove LGBT content from the primary school curriculum and equally impassioned calls that children of 11 and under should be taught about LGBT relationships—the two petitions we are debating today. They reflect real anxiety over this hugely sensitive issue. Feelings run very high, and understandably so. Some worry about exposing young children to age-inappropriate material and foisting adult preoccupations on them, while others feel strongly that some children will not be able to make informed decisions about health, wellbeing and relationships without developing an understanding of LGBT issues at a fairly young age. I will make a few brief points on the issue, which chiefly relate to the teaching of transgender ideology.

My points are informed by a very unhappy experience in my constituency, where an academy trust developed a syllabus designed for primary school children promoting transgender ideology. The ideas at the heart of the teaching materials that were proposed and the manner in which the matter was handled caused massive upset among the parent body and a catastrophic breakdown in trust. We all have loads of WhatsApp groups, and the

busiest WhatsApp group that I have is the group in my constituency, which the parents have entitled “protect our children”.

Thankfully, there has now been a resolution of sorts, with parents rightly being put back in control of what their primary-age children are taught, but the episode has impressed on me the need to remember that our understanding of transgender theory is by no means settled and that there is not a consensus of opinion.

Dame Andrea Jenkyns: As the mother of a primary-age schoolchild, I do not want him or other children, straight or gay, to learn about sex full stop. I also do not want young children in primary school to be taught about changing gender. I have no problem with whatever people want to do when they are older—life is short; be happy—but does my hon. Friend agree that we need to protect the innocence of children and their childhood, especially at primary school age?

Adam Holloway: Indeed, as well as respect parents. Because the long-term emotional consequences of transition are not properly understood, we should be careful about teaching contested concepts to young, impressionable children. We would not be doing right by the majority of parents if we failed to acknowledge that the idea that sex is assigned at birth is not a universally held view, but the complexities of explaining that to children aged 11 or under are pretty obvious. I also struggle to see how that issue could be taught honestly and objectively without explaining that there may be other reasons why a person feels uncomfortable about themselves or their body. Teaching that to primary-aged children is clearly hugely problematic. Instinctively, for those reasons, I feel that the complex issue of transgender ideology has no real place on the primary school curriculum.

It is, however, unrealistic to think that issues relating to gender will not crop up—of course they will. Some children will question their gender, and many will meet transgender adults. Where primary schools feel that such education does need to be included—which will not be everywhere—we need to support teachers in navigating the sensitivities, and to ensure that schools are safe places for everybody. Therefore, the Government need urgently to issue clear and prescriptive guidance on content, and as anticipated in the current review, take a firm grip on the materials that schools use.

I would prefer that what was taught reflected the fact that there is a divergence of views on the issue of transgender. However, at primary school level, what is taught about that need not go much further than emphasising that the choices people make should never be the subject of unkindness. The emphasis on parental engagement with the curriculum is welcome. Communication and trust between parents and schools is important, but while it is sensible to let parents see what their children will be taught before lessons are delivered, and while a parental opt-out may be useful, children are bound to discuss the topics among themselves. The focus must be on teachers getting it right and ensuring that the message primary-aged children receive is not confusing, age inappropriate or sexualised.

5.2 pm

Lloyd Russell-Moyle (Brighton, Kemptown) (Lab/Co-op): I rise to support the second petition, but it is important that we recognise the concerns of those who signed the first petition. I hope those concerns can be allayed.

Let us remember what we are really talking about: age-appropriate education for children. It is not the first time that people have deliberately used age-appropriate education to try to ban wider education; in fact, that is one of the ways that section 28 was introduced. People will remember “Jenny Lives with Eric and Martin”, a rather dull and boring book about a little girl who goes and has ice cream and walks through a park with her two daddies. That was one of the books that caused the furore when it was stocked by the Inner London Education Authority and it was suggested that it should be in schools. I do not think anyone in the Chamber would now suggest anything other than that the book is appropriate for children aged three to five, as it was designated at the time.

The book was rather dull and boring, as these things should be in many respects. People’s boring and dull lives in all their different aspects and orientations need to be explained to children, and we can see that if we look through children’s libraries in schools at the moment. There is the fantastic “And Tango Makes Three”, where two father penguins are raising a penguin child, which is actually a true story based in a zoo. There is “What Does a Princess Really Look Like?”, which is for nought to three-year-olds, and is about how anyone can be a princess if they want and how everyone is flawed. The book ends with the father and the child realising that we are all flawed, but we are all striving to be good people. “Love Makes a Family” contains pictures of loving families in all their diversity—mixed race families, where the grandparents are raising the children, and so on. From “’Twas the Night Before Pride”, which is four to eight-year-old appropriate, children can learn about why people of all different backgrounds celebrate Pride. There are other books for older age groups.

Those books are in school libraries. Would I give “’Twas the Night Before Pride” to a two-year-old? No, because it is stated quite clearly on the book’s cover that it is appropriate for four to eight-year-olds. The same is true of teaching materials; we use different materials and different levels of education for different ages. However, I am afraid that there is no starting point where children need to start to realise that there are lots of different families, or to realise that gender and sex are important dividing points in society.

I think that children in lower primary school—infant school—generally should not be divided very much by sex at all. At that age, they should be taught, “Actually, you can be anything you want. You can play with any of the toys you want. You can do all of the sports activities that you want.” We should have almost no gender-specific activities or separation at that age, and I think that it is a great shame that we now see adverts for Lego that are gendered, whereas only 30 years ago they would have no gender attached to them. I think that we have gone backwards in many respects for infant and lower-primary-school age groups.

That does not mean that we should be blind to differences. It does not mean that we should not say, “When you get older, sometimes, girls and boys do separate off and do different activities,” but that that should be dealt with in an age-appropriate way. Of course, when we talk about bits of the body, as well—children of a very young age are curious—that should be described in an age-appropriate manner.

[Lloyd Russell-Moyle]

To ignore differences in that sense is actually to raise our children to be oblivious to what is appropriate—to what parts of their or others' bodies are appropriate to show or to touch. If we do not get that across, we create children who are less safe, because when people then do have inappropriate relationships with them, they have not been taught that that is wrong. If we just talk about it in the sense of "mummy and daddy," then we also set up a relationship danger, where we are not explaining to children that, "As you get older, your older brother and sister, and your older aunts and uncles, might also have different forms of relationship that are healthy and that are safe." Therefore I do think it is important that that is done.

Where I think we have gone wrong, particularly in this area, is in the lack of proper guidelines when relationships education was rolled out initially. When some of the Birmingham protests were happening, we expected teachers to engage with the community without proper, clear guidelines from the Department for Education about what was and was not appropriate. Teachers had to go to bat for what were often very sensible policies without the defence of, "We are following the national guidelines." Those guidelines have now been out for a little while, and it is perfectly sensible for those guidelines to be reviewed from time to time to make sure that they are still working.

I also think that that parents should be encouraged to see the text of the work in all aspects of education. In maths and in English, we should not have secret education, where we say to parents, "Oh, well, you want to know what literature your children are studying at the moment? No, I am afraid you can't do that." We should be open about it: "Here's the book that we are studying, and here are the resources." That is partly because we want to encourage parents to go on a learning journey with their children. We know that children perform best in schools when the parents are working at the same pace with the children. That sometimes means the parents learning as well. When I have taught nieces and nephews or worked with other younger children, and I have tried to help them with maths, sometimes, I learn as much as them. They do long arithmetic nowadays very differently to how I did it. It is perfectly acceptable to say that, as a minimum, we expect parents to see the resources. I do not think that is unusual. We should not be targeting LGBT specific RSHE in that discussion, but talking about it as a wider school community.

There is also a case for schools to ask parents to come in to learn about the RSHE the school is providing. I actually think we should encourage schools to offer those activities for wider parts of the curriculum as well. We know that children from highly educated backgrounds often have an advantage because their parents are able to engage easily in the curriculum, while parents who do not have that same academic background might not be able to do so. Schools inviting people in to engage with that is therefore something that we should encourage.

Stephen Doughty: My hon. Friend is making some important points. Does he agree that additional safeguards can be put in place? In Wales, the curriculum specifically says that material has to be "developmentally appropriate" for young people. We have to take into account not only

age but knowledge, maturity, additional learning needs and physiological and emotional development to ensure that materials are provided at the right stage for every young person.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: I totally agree. We also need to be clear that these considerations should apply not only if there is a trans child at the school; they are of wider importance. I remember this issue at my primary school, not with relationship education but with education around different religions. My year group was almost exclusively of a white and Christian background, but we learned about Buddhism and Hinduism, with all the different festivals. There is a danger of thinking that we should teach these things only if there happens to be somebody in the class with a gay family member, or an older sibling who is transgender. I benefited hugely from the school trips we took to the synagogue, even though I think I am right in saying that there were no Jewish children at my school. It was really important for me to understand the different backgrounds that different families have, and then, when I went to secondary school and mixed with a bigger group of people who were from different groups and had different backgrounds, I understood where they were coming from.

I want to touch briefly on a point I made in an intervention earlier. I think we have got waylaid in this conversation by condemning organisations that produce different age-specific materials. It is quite right that sex and relationship-based organisations that specialise in the subject will produce materials for adults and materials for children, and on their website they will publish all those materials. It is totally right that they will do that. It is, of course, totally wrong for a teacher to pick adult material and use it for activities with younger people. When we had this debate last time, I remember several Members on the opposing side of the argument reading out a number of rather adult activities, but when we got to the bottom of it there was no evidence that those activities had been run in any primary school in this country. To this day I have seen no evidence that schools have run those activities.

I am sure the exception will prove the rule in the sense that the outrage of one example out of the 100,000 schools across our country will be one where it needs to be age-specific, but that is why we need a better system for the Department to share the books, educational resources and organisations that it recommends. Diversity Role Models is one organisation that does great work. It recently released a set of great cartoons that touch on all these different issues, which it launched only a few weeks ago at the Disney headquarters here in London. That is the kind of thing the Department should be signposting. It would ensure that teachers and parents have that reassurance, but most importantly that children can learn about the glorious diversity of the world they are growing up in, and that when they get to the right age, they are equipped and prepared to keep themselves safe and to have a happy and wonderful life.

5.14 pm

Peter Gibson (Darlington) (Con): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Dowd. I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Carshalton and Wallington (Elliot Colburn) on leading this debate on behalf of the Petitions Committee in his usual exemplary manner. Both the petitions that prompted the debate were clearly

very popular. On the one hand, there are those who want to see LGBT content on school curriculums, and on the other, those who do not. In Darlington, one petition was signed by 211 people, and the other by 293 people.

I know how alone I felt as a gay teenager growing up—like I was the only one. I was scared of people knowing and of what exactly it would mean for me if they did. LGBT issues were not discussed at school and sex education, such as it was, was largely confined to some lessons in the biology lab. Thankfully, that has improved and, although not perfect and still somewhat controversial, sex, relationships and LGBT issues are taught in the context of a range of issues. These issues should be taught at an appropriate age. The material used should be appropriate, too, and subject to the inspection and approval of parents.

I welcome this debate, which in my view is timely, coming so soon after the debate on the private Member's Bill proposed by the hon. Member for Brighton, Kemptown (Lloyd Russell-Moyle), and the debate that we sadly did not have on Friday on the Bill proposed by my right hon. Friend the Member for South West Norfolk (Elizabeth Truss). I have spoken openly many times about my support for lesbian and gay people and those with gender dysphoria. This debate is an important opportunity to set out, in the context of what it is appropriate for children to know, my views on these issues. I passionately believe that children should not be subjected to conversion practices, just as I do not believe that children should be medicalised. However, particularly while we are discussing what it is appropriate to tell young people, those who are experiencing gender dysphoria should be able to access appropriate counselling, challenging conversations and support, free from legislation preventing them from having such care.

While I am putting these matters on the record, on a topic that to my mind should not be a political football, I believe it is possible to stand up for the protection of safe spaces for women so that they are safe and comfortable, at the same time as having respect for those with gender dysphoria. I also believe that women should be entitled to compete in sports with other women. For the record, I respect trans people and want them to be free from discrimination, but I respect women, too, and they are entitled to have their spaces in which they are safe and comfortable.

The language of respect, tolerance and understanding is so important for young people to hear. If we do not teach our young people that people in society are LGBT, how will they have the understanding and knowledge to navigate these issues for themselves in society? Surely we want our young people to be tolerant and understanding and to have respect for everyone—core British values. We are unlikely to achieve that by keeping them in the dark.

Our children live in our communities, where families come in all forms, shapes and sizes. But the one thing that ensures that young people have the best upbringing is that they grow up with love. People in our communities, and indeed in our children's families, are LGBT, and to my mind it is right that children learn about the society in which they will grow up and live, in an age-appropriate way. The point made by the hon. Member for Cardiff South and Penarth (Stephen Doughty) about that being developmentally appropriate is entirely right too.

It is a fact that young people have sex and experiment. We should not ignore this, but address it head on. We must ensure that schools have the resources needed to educate young people about how to have sex safely, so that we are more likely to be able to deal with the worrying rise we have seen in sexually transmitted diseases. If we had taken that approach in the 1990s, we might not have seen the extent of issues that we did with HIV. Although I commend the Government for all they are doing to bring about zero transmissions of HIV by 2030, improving and extending safer sex education is a key part of fulfilling that objective.

We have sadly seen increases in hate crimes and discrimination towards LGBT people. Hate and discrimination come from ignorance and intolerance. If we tackle those issues with education and understanding, we set the groundwork for reductions in those problems in the future.

Stephen Doughty: The hon. Gentleman is making a characteristically powerful speech. Of course, it is not just hate crime in society that matters; does he agree that it is also about what is happening in schools for young LGBT+ people? A 2021 study by Just Like Us found that 91% of LGBT+ young people would have heard negative language about being LGBT+, and that they were twice as likely to have been bullied. Inclusive education is a critical way of tackling that.

Peter Gibson: I could not agree more. Tackling homophobia, transphobia and bullying in our schools is absolutely key, and educating people about those they will meet in society is absolutely key to that.

Teaching our kids that LGBT people exist does not and will not make them so, but it may help those young people who are questioning who they are, and who they are going to be, not to feel so isolated and excluded. To my mind, it will also increase the understanding, tolerance and acceptance of those around them. I have spent a great deal of my time in schools in my constituency, and some schools in Darlington are doing some fantastic work in this subject area, for which I commend them. I particularly highlight the work of Wyvern Academy with its alliance group, which provides mutual support under the guidance of teaching staff.

In conclusion, I believe it is right that we teach our children about the world that they will become citizens of—as is appropriate to their age—free from conversion practices, free from medicalisation, and underpinned by appropriate and robust counselling. We will help to improve tolerance, understanding and acceptance; we will help to reduce hate and discrimination; we will help to reduce sexually transmitted diseases; and we will underpin British values of individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of others.

5.22 pm

Mr Ben Bradshaw (Exeter) (Lab): I left school just over 10 years after homosexuality was decriminalised, and there was certainly nothing like LGBT affirming or inclusive sex and relationships education. Consequently, I did not know anyone at school who was openly gay. I certainly did not come out as gay until after I left school and found the relatively safe space of the University of Sussex, and I was fortunate enough to have a very supportive family and group of friends. I was therefore

[Mr Ben Bradshaw]

very moved when I visited one of my local schools in Exeter a few weeks ago. I was invited by a group of LGBTQ+ students for their weekly safe-space hour, when they get together and talk about their lives, feelings and so forth. It was an extremely moving experience for me because I thought of all the people of my generation who had been through experiences at school and who would have benefitted from living in a more enlightened age.

Of course, section 28, to which a number of colleagues have referred, was very much a backlash against the increasing visibility of lesbian and gay people after decriminalisation at the end of the 1960s. What is happening now, with the backlashes we are seeing against LGBT inclusive and affirming education in schools, is something rather similar—that visibility has continued, particularly when it comes to trans and non-binary young people. I just hope that we will resist the backlash, because some of the arguments that I am hearing now are very similar to ones that I heard back then—that we can make somebody gay or lesbian.

Now, people are saying that we can make somebody trans, and that it is an ideology. That phrase has been bandied around in this debate a number of times already, and it puzzles and upsets me. Being trans is not an ideology; it is who they are. It is something innate. Gender dysphoria is a condition that has been recognised for decades, if not hundreds of years, in human society. I worry that we are going back to pathologising and demonising people who simply want to be themselves, and young people in particular deserve the right to be respected and supported.

Although I am delighted to say that these days the vast majority of families are supportive and affirming of their children and other young LGBT people in general, we know that sadly some still are not. I do some work with an LGBTQI charity that works with young homeless people. Thirty per cent of young homeless people in this country are LGBTQ+, having been rejected by their families for being open about their sexual orientation or gender identity. Those young people need a safe space in school, and what schools have so brilliantly provided in recent years is that safe space. I have to say that whenever I pick up feedback or criticism about SRE in schools, particularly from young people themselves, it is that it is not affirming or inclusive, is not of good enough quality or is lacking altogether. The criticism I hear from young people shows that we need to build on what we have achieved and treat everyone with respect.

As I prepare to leave this House after 27 years, having come in at a time of moral panic about gay people and having myself been part of some of the fantastic progress made in this country in becoming a more tolerant, accepting and humane place, it saddens me that the consensus has somewhat broken down in recent years. I hope that the election this year will help to draw a line in the sand and that we can move on to a more hopeful and optimistic future in which not only all our young people, but everybody in this country—whatever their sexual orientation or gender identity—is supported and treated with respect.

5.26 pm

Nick Fletcher (Don Valley) (Con): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Dowd. I thank my colleague on the Petitions Committee, my hon. Friend the Member for Carshalton and Wallington (Elliot Colburn), for his opening remarks.

Currently, up and down the country, we have schools teaching our children that girls can be boys and boys can be girls. It is hard to believe, and that is the issue that I will specifically focus on today. Let me start with an analogy. If we told our children that two plus two equals five enough times throughout their education, would we be surprised if some—not all but some—started to believe it?

Sarah Champion: We do trust teachers to teach that two plus two equals four, so if we trust them in that respect, why do we not trust their judgment in all respects?

Nick Fletcher: I thank the hon. Member for her contribution. I will come back to my speech—I do not want to spoil the flow of it, as it were. From what I have heard, the consensus here is that what we are teaching children should be transparent and age-appropriate. I believe it should also be grounded in truth. There have been remarks from lots of people here saying that the literature being shown to our children is not there and that there is no real evidence of it. Members are literally burying their heads in the sand on this issue. If they did not and they actually worked with myself and maybe the Department for Education and looked at all the evidence I have, maybe we would not have to go on social media and say, “Look what our kids are being taught. This is abhorrent,” and then somebody jumps on my page and so on and so forth. If all the adults in the room sat down with the Minister and said, “Look, this is what is happening”—I have examples in my folder, but we cannot show pictures in debates.

Adam Holloway: I will give an example. One primary school in my constituency was using a book that included a picture of a grandfather in a gimp suit.

Nick Fletcher: I thank my hon. Friend. There is so much evidence out there of bad actors in this field, and I will come on to them.

I thank the hon. Member for Rotherham (Sarah Champion) for her earlier intervention. Would we be surprised if some—not all but some—children started to believe that two plus two equals five, especially when told by one of the main influences in their life, their teacher? We could put that together with many on social media also saying that two plus two equals five. Then, let us say, that people start wearing lanyards saying that two plus two equals five. Perhaps they do not really believe it, but they think it is a kind thing to do in order to make people who believe that two plus two equals five feel included. Then, let us say that the same people start putting two plus two equals five on their email footers for similar reasons. That thought gets compounded further when perhaps an irresponsible broadcaster through one of their main soaps has a storyline where an adult tells a 12-year-old that it is okay to think two plus two equals five. Then, let us say, that private businesses start putting posters up, again saying that two plus two equals five, and that there are flags flying down the high street saying two plus two equals five.

Then, let us say, some people start to stand up and say, “No, it doesn’t. Two plus two equals four. Let’s tell the truth.” Let us say that those individuals are called bigots and are silenced by venomous individuals on social media. If that scenario took place, would we be surprised that we would have thousands of young children believing that two plus two equals five? That is exactly where we have got to through teaching gender identity in our schools. Should our children be exposed to material that states they can be a boy or a girl depending on how they feel? No, they should not.

I agree 100% with the petitioners who want to remove such content from our schools. Children should not be subject, under any circumstances, to unscientific ideological material that leads to harm. I believe there is nothing more abhorrent than misleading the young, and it must stop.

Stephen Doughty: I seek a point of clarification. The hon. Gentleman says that he agrees with the petitioners, but the petition explicitly calls for the removal of LGBT+ content. Is it just the T that the hon. Gentleman wants to remove, or does he want to remove all LGB content as well?

Nick Fletcher: It is the T that I am discussing today, but I believe that the sexualisation of our children should stop within schools—all of it. I do not think there is any need for it, especially in primary schools. I genuinely do believe that there is absolutely no need for it.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: I am very interested in the hon. Gentleman’s analogy, but it is a bit unclear. Is he saying that we should not teach what two plus two equals at all? In other words, is he saying that we should not teach anything around relationships, including straight relationships and that there are parents, mothers and fathers? Or is he saying that he wants that to be taught, but that the only outcome he wants is that people have to be straight? That is what is not clear.

Every book, whether it be Enid Blyton, Harry Potter or whatever, mentions relationships and we talk about them when we teach literature to children. In primary schools, children are taught about how a hen lays an egg, and the egg hatches—

Peter Dowd (in the Chair): Order.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: It would be great to know what the hon. Gentleman wants: only straight, or nothing?

Nick Fletcher: I thank the hon. Member for his speech. I said right at the beginning that I would be speaking specifically about trans, and what I was trying to say is that I believe there is an untruth there. Two plus two equals four, but we seem to be teaching that two plus two equals five when it comes to gender. I believe that boys are boys and girls are girls, and that they cannot change sex.

Stonewall, Mermaids and other bad actors in this field have lobbied schools into subscribing to their ideologies, which are not grounded in anything factual. We have mainstream publishers such as HarperCollins publishing school textbooks that tell children:

“Myth 1—the world is divided into men and women.”

HarperCollins actually teaches children:

“Trans women are women and trans men are men.”

If that were so, that would be the end of female-only sports.

We have Stonewall teaching children:

“Everyone has a gender identity.”

I do not, so that cannot be true. We are lying to children. We have Brook teaching that a man who identifies as a woman is

“A woman of trans history”,

or even simply, “A woman.” If that were so, that would be the end of female-only spaces. We have some teachers, who have written to me, who are too scared not to teach those lessons, when they know that what they are teaching is wrong. That cannot and should not continue.

The Department for Education has quite rightly written a letter to schools telling them to let all parents see what their children are being taught. However, we have evidence that some schools are ignoring that and continuing regardless. Parents who have been shown what is being taught have sometimes seen only part of the material, or they have had to go into schools to see it and are then told they cannot photograph or copy it. Copyright issues have trumped our children’s safety. Be under no illusion—this is happening across the country. Swindon Borough Council produced its own material for use across local schools and it is quite clearly abhorrent. A staff member from Pop’n’Olly who explains to primary school children that he is trans and non-binary claims to have spoken to 100,000 children. Jigsaw says it has worked in 7,000 schools.

In 1994, we had 12 children suffering with confusion about their body and attending gender clinics. Now, we have 5,000 on a waiting list and we ask: why? I will tell you why: it is because our schools have been captured by bad actors in despicable business making huge sums of money out of feeding our children this ideology. We should not have to put legislation in place to deal with this. We as a nation should be playing no part in this. However, if individuals are too weak or too scared to stand up and say no to this ideology, I am afraid we must legislate. We must put legislation in place to deal with this with immediate effect. In 10 to 20 years’ time, this will be the next contaminated blood scandal or Post Office scandal. I hope all who have been pushing this will be dealt with accordingly.

Peter Gibson: Will my hon. Friend clarify something for me? His views on this particular subject are well documented and well circulated. Does he believe that the diagnosis of gender dysphoria in somebody who is identifying as trans simply does not exist?

Nick Fletcher: My hon. Friend and I are on opposite sides of this argument. I know he does not agree with me. We have, however, both been able to speak to each other on this with respect, which I really do hope continues. I do genuinely believe that there are people out there who are struggling with gender dysphoria—

Peter Dowd (in the Chair): Order. Could the hon. Gentleman speak through the Chair?

Nick Fletcher: Sorry, Mr Dowd. I do genuinely believe that there are people out there who are struggling with gender dysphoria, and I think we should treat all these people with respect and kindness. As long as we do not have biological males in single-sex spaces, as long as we do not have biological males in women’s sport, and as long as we are not indoctrinating our children with this,

[Nick Fletcher]

I have not got an issue. I genuinely believe there are people out there who are confused with this. They should be able to go to people and seek help, but I do not think they should be going to people for it to be affirmed; they should be able to have an open and free conversation about this. But there is a time and a place for it, and our schools are not the time or the place.

I and several colleagues have recently written to the Department for Education to request that parents can withdraw their child from RSHE lessons. At present, children can only be withdrawn from sex education. However, we have an industry that seems set on teaching our children that they can be the opposite sex to what they were born. They have published this material in the relationships part of their textbooks, and therefore children cannot be removed from these lessons. Parents must be able to protect their children from this ideology. They must be able to do it now, before more children are affected by this teaching. At present, we have absenteeism levels not seen before within our schools. This material is not helping.

I ask the Minister, why are we allowing this in our schools? It is a false idea with no basis in science, leading some vulnerable children to seek puberty blockers, then cross-sex hormones, then invasive, risky surgery. Those practices impact bone and brain development. They chemically castrate children. They leave vulnerable children, vulnerable young people, living with lifelong, irreversible complications.

I can see why parents would choose not to send their child to a school that is teaching this—I would not either—so what is the answer? I believe this teaching has to stop in our schools. We need to take this literature out of our schools completely, change the RSHE guidance and allow parents, as a safety net, to withdraw their children from RSHE. As a society, we should call out every organisation that is taking part in this. Individuals who are joining in with this rhetoric should stop and think, “Where does this end?” They should stop and think with regard to trans-progressive flags, the lanyards and the pronoun email footers, because where does it end for our young children when they see this? They should stop and think about fuelling confusion in society and especially in the minds of our children.

If we encounter any person who is personally struggling with this, we just need to be kind. We should not have to legislate for kindness; we should all just be decent and treat people with respect. But sometimes we also have to be cruel to be kind. Sometimes we just have to say no. Parents, teachers, every adult just needs to be strong and say no to children—no, they are not born in the wrong body.

Let me say this one more time. There are few things more dishonourable than misleading the young, and I for one will play no part in it. I hope this Department will really step up now. The Department of Health and Social Care is beginning to see the light. The Home Office is, too. I hope the Department for Education can as well.

5.41 pm

Catherine McKinnell (Newcastle upon Tyne North) (Lab): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Dowd. I thank the hon. Member for Carshalton

and Wallington (Elliot Colburn) for bringing this debate forward on behalf of the Petitions Committee. As a former Chair of the Petitions Committee, I appreciate how important it is for people to have their say on the issues that they care most about, and I am glad that we are having this discussion today. It is good to be in this debate with so many of my former fellow Petitions Committee members.

I pay tribute to my hon. Friends the Members for Rotherham (Sarah Champion) and for Brighton, Kemptown (Lloyd Russell-Moyle) and my right hon. Friend the Member for Exeter (Mr Bradshaw), who have spoken about their views. As hon. Members have set out, it has been a legal requirement for all primary schools in England to teach relationships education and for all secondary schools to teach relationships and sex education since September 2020, although schools were able to delay that for a year because of the pandemic. Under the legislation, primary schools can choose to teach age-appropriate sex education in addition to relationships education. Many primary schools choose to teach sex education tailored to the age and physical and emotional maturity of their pupils, but the main focus is on ensuring that children have the building blocks for positive and safe relationships, starting with family and friends, how to treat one another with kindness and recognising the difference between online and offline friendships.

The legislation provides for the right of parents to withdraw their children from sex education, while providing children approaching 16 with rights to opt in, and gives schools, including faith schools, flexibility on their approach. Schools are required to consult parents when developing and reviewing their policies on relationships education and RSE, but when and how that content is taught is a decision for schools. Importantly, the regulations provide that a school's policy must be published online and must be available to an individual free of charge, so that parents can be confident about what is being taught. That is also important so that parents can be available to their child at home to talk about what might be being taught in school, and be prepared for any questions or discussion points that might arise with their child.

Labour has put great focus on the relationship between schools and families, and open and transparent communication on these issues forms an important part of that. Of course, these positive relationships in our education system begin with how the Government approach these things. We have too often seen a combative approach with schools, which can filter down to a combative approach between schools and families. Labour wants to see a much more positive and constructive approach to the education of our children and young people.

On LGBT specific content, the guidance states:

“At the point at which schools consider it appropriate to teach their pupils about LGBT, they should ensure that this content is fully integrated into their programmes of study for this area of the curriculum rather than delivered as a standalone unit or lesson.”

Labour agrees it is important that LGBT issues are taught as part of sex and relationships education in a way that is inclusive and respectful to all.

The Department for Education announced a review of the statutory guidance last year in the context of a variety of developing concerns, including a worrying increase in sexual harassment, violence against women

and girls, developments in activities online, and a worrying deterioration in young people's mental health. A consultation on guidance for schools and colleges on gender-questioning children also closed last week, with the Government response due later this year.

There are strong and sometimes conflicting views on these issues, as we have heard in the debate today. Teachers and school leaders have therefore been very clear on their need for guidance from Government on the approach to take when teaching young people about relationships and sex. Teachers are not clinicians, mental health professionals or campaigners. They are educators who are required to educate within a clear framework that complies with equalities legislation and ensures that all teachers feel confident and well informed about the content which they are to teach.

It is therefore right that the issue went out to consultation. I know that organisations and people with a range of opinions will have fed back to the Government. I look forward to seeing how the diversity of opinion is reflected in the final guidance. I hope to hear more detail from the Minister on the timetable for the publication of consultation responses and the final guidance.

Labour is the party of equality. The last Labour Government did more to advance LGBT equality than any other in British history, making it illegal to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation, allowing lesbian and gay couples to adopt and making homophobia and transphobia hate crimes. In that spirit, we must redouble our efforts to ensure that conversations are held with the utmost respect and compassion and careful consideration for those potentially affected by our deliberations and decisions. The issues should not be used as a political football in our politics, which we have unfortunately seen too much of in recent years.

Labour is keen to ensure that the school curriculum ensures every child feels represented and receives a high-quality and enriching education. Our expert-led curriculum and assessment review will look at how we will deliver a broad and balanced curriculum that reflects the whole of our society. We will learn from international best practice and expert research in doing so. That is all part of Labour's mission to break down the barriers to opportunity for everyone.

Once again, I thank the hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington for securing this debate and the constructive way in which he set out his arguments. I look forward to hearing the next steps from the Minister.

5.48 pm

The Minister for Schools (Damian Hinds): It is a great pleasure to see you in the Chair, Mr Dowd—in my case, for the first time—and a pleasure to be here for this well-attended debate in Westminster Hall. I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Carshalton and Wallington (Elliot Colburn) for opening the petition debate on whether lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender content should be included in relationships education in primary schools. I also thank the petitioners involved in the two petitions.

The subjects are, as my hon. Friend the Member for Gravesham (Adam Holloway) said, sensitive. We have heard different perspectives and had a passionate but respectful and reflective debate informed by constituency experiences and, in multiple cases, colleagues' own personal experiences, which they have shared today. I thank everyone who has taken part: my hon. Friends the Members for

Carshalton and Wallington, for Gravesham, for Darlington (Peter Gibson), and for Don Valley (Nick Fletcher); the hon. Members for Rotherham (Sarah Champion), and for Brighton, Kemptown (Lloyd Russell-Moyle); the right hon. Member for Exeter (Mr Bradshaw); and the Opposition spokesperson, the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne North (Catherine McKinnell). I also thank those who took part through interventions.

When we brought in the relationships, sex and health education statutory guidance from September 2020, it was the first update to that guidance for 19 years. In the intervening period, a lot had changed. A lot had changed in our society, and the law had changed in important ways. Technology and new media had changed, and continues to change, both what happens in our society and what our children are exposed to in ways that continue to develop.

It is essential to support all pupils to have the knowledge they need to lead happy, safe and healthy lives, and that they are able to understand and respect difference in others. That is not just my view. It also comes from extensive engagement with teachers, parents and others: we issued a call for evidence and a consultation on RSHE back in 2018. Colleagues across the House have repeated it, including my hon. Friend the Member for Darlington who did so rather powerfully.

High-quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate teaching of RSHE can help to achieve exactly what I have just set out. It can prepare pupils for the opportunities and the responsibilities of adult life, and it can promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development. In that context, we want all children to understand the importance of respect for relationships and the different types of loving and healthy relationships that exist in our society.

In primary schools, age-appropriate relationships education involves supporting children to learn about what healthy relationships are; about mutual respect, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, and generosity; as well as, crucially, keeping safe both online and offline. That then provides the basis for relationships and sex education at secondary school, where pupils are taught the facts around sex, sexual health and sexuality, set firmly within the context of relationships.

We do need to strike the right balance. We do not want teaching inadvertently to fast-track children into engaging in, or exploring, adult activities, rather than enjoying childhood and being children. To teach young people about same-sex relationships does not mean teaching children in primary schools about sex.

It should focus on teaching children that society consists of a diverse range of people, that families come in many shapes and sizes, and that it is all right to be different. Some children in the classroom may, of course, have lesbian, gay or transgender family members and will rightly want to feel included in lessons about positive, healthy and trusting relationships.

Crucially, if this content is not covered in the classroom, it does not mean that children are not going to come into contact with it. Most frequently, they will either turn to their peers—in fact, they do not even have to turn to their peers; they will get it from them anyway—or to the internet. My hon. Friend the Member for Carshalton and Wallington reiterated the fact that, as we all know, that can be a dangerous and distorted place. The RSHE

[*Damian Hinds*]

statutory guidance is clear that it is for schools to decide at what point in their pupils' education it is appropriate to cover content related to LGBT—

Dame Andrea Jenkyns: Eighteen months ago, when I was very briefly in the DFE, I raised with civil servants my concern over constituents not being able to see the actual materials and being shown a summary only. I was reassured then that all schools would be emailed to say that materials must be shown to parents if requested. It was not done while I was there. Can the Minister confirm whether it has been done since?

Damian Hinds: It has, and later in my remarks I will come on to this very matter. As I was saying, the statutory guidance is clear that it is for schools to decide the point in their pupils' education at which it is appropriate to cover matters related to LGBT.

Sarah Champion: I thank the Minister for his speech, and for all the work that he has done in this area. However, there is something that I have found increasingly frustrating. All schools were meant to have the necessary training by September 2021. I think that what we are hearing today are concerns that some teachers are not equipped, so they may be drawing on their personal experiences. Without giving every teacher the training, the Minister is leaving them somewhat exposed.

Damian Hinds: I recognise that there are questions around training. In truth, it is also the case that we cannot just say, "If only there was more training then none of these issues would arise." That is just not the case. It is something that one looks at, and I recognise the issue, and the related issues around materials and their quality. I will touch on both of those later.

The RHSE statutory guidance is clear that it is for schools to decide the point in their pupils' education at which it is appropriate to cover matters related to LGBT. That means that primary schools have discretion over whether to discuss sexual orientation or families that have same-sex parents. Earlier, the hon. Member for Rotherham outlined what the statutory guidance says. When we talk about LGBT in primary schools it is in the context of relationships and, in particular, families. The statutory guidance says:

"Families of many forms provide a nurturing environment for children. (Families can include for example, single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures.)"

There is no statutory content on LGBT in the primary curriculum tables.

Similarly, it is for primary schools to decide whether to teach any sex education. The RHSE guidance does not provide a definition of what relationships and sex education should include, but it is clear that it should be "tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils. It should ensure that both boys and girls are prepared for the changes that adolescence brings".

Primary schools that do teach sex education must set out the details of what they will teach in their relationships and sex education policy, on which they must consult in advance with parents.

Secondary schools should provide an equal opportunity to explore the features of stable and healthy same-sex relationships, and ensure the content is integrated

throughout the relationships and sex education curriculum. We trust our teachers to deliver this content in a suitable and age-appropriate way, respecting the beliefs and values of all pupils in the school. Our guidance says that schools are free to determine how they cover LGBT-related content, and

"we expect all pupils to have been taught LGBT content at a timely point as part of this area of the curriculum."

The majority of teachers do that well, and adapt to the circumstances of their pupils.

Some people may feel that covering LGBT matters contradicts tenets of their faith. I am conscious that religious faith is itself a protected characteristic. However, schools with a religious character can teach the distinctive faith perspective on relationships, and pupils should be able to have a balanced debate about issues that are contentious. A good understanding of pupils' faith backgrounds and positive relationships between the school and local faith communities help to create a constructive context for the teaching of those subjects. Religions teach tolerance and respect, and those subjects are designed to help children from all backgrounds and faiths build positive and safe relationships.

We worked closely with the Catholic Education Service, the Church of England, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, and the Association of Muslim Schools on the support for implementing the curriculum. I know that some of those organisations develop their own materials that align the new curriculum with their faith prospectus. There is no reason why teaching children about the society that we live in, and the different types of loving, healthy relationships that exist, cannot be done in a way that respects everyone.

I also know that some parents are frustrated that they cannot withdraw their children from relationships education, as opposed to sex education; that came up earlier in a contribution from my hon. Friend the Member for Don Valley. They believe that the boundaries can be blurred with sex education, from which there is a right for a child to be withdrawn, and I recognise those sensitivities.

I also recognise that parents are the first educators of their children and may want to withdraw their child from lessons so that they can first discuss some topics with them outside school. All pupils should be taught about caring friendships and respectful relationships, and they need to understand how to keep themselves and others safe and what to do when they feel unsafe. It is important that parents know what their child will be taught in advance of it being delivered in the classroom, which is why there is a requirement on schools to publish their relationships, or relationships and sex, education policy. Schools must consult parents as they develop and renew that policy.

There has been concern, which has come up again today, over the materials that some organisations have prepared to teach relationships and sex education in schools. It is for schools to make decisions about what materials to use, and it is their responsibility to ensure that what is taught is safe and age-appropriate. For clarity, it is worth reiterating that it has long been the case in our school system that schools decide what materials they use for everything. We do not have a top-down system where some mandarin decides, "This is the textbook for such and such a subject," and everybody learns from that. There has always been diversity, which sometimes

creates challenges, but having it is a strength of our system. However, parents must have confidence that what is taught is safe and age-appropriate. We believe that transparency is the best—indeed, the only—way to be absolutely sure of that, so it is essential that parents know what is being taught in the classroom and what resources are being used.

My hon. Friend the Member for Carshalton and Wallington was absolutely correct when he said that those requirements are already set out and clear. However, following concerns about things such as barriers because of copyrights, the Secretary of State has now written—twice—to all schools to remind them of the responsibility to make available materials, including relationships education materials, where parents want to see them, and that copyright law does not prevent them from doing that. We will ensure that the content of those letters is reflected in the revised RSHE statutory guidance when it comes out.

Nick Fletcher: The Department has written to schools, but I have evidence that they are ignoring the guidance. Will the Department write to the producers of this literature and tell them their responsibilities? There are fewer of them than there are schools, so that is probably the best way forward until we completely review what we are teaching our children and, hopefully, get in place a full right to withdraw from RSHE materials.

Damian Hinds: We think it is a good thing that there is a diversity of material to support all subjects. I mentioned that some religious organisations, for example, produce materials to support RSHE, as do many other organisations, such as commercial organisations and so on. Oak National Academy has committed to produce materials to support the teaching of RSHE in the future. Oak has had significant investment from Government, not so that it can replace other sources, but so that it can be a trusted and—from a teacher's point of view—time-saving producer of those materials. However, we do not get involved in the production, or as a gatekeeper, of materials, and we will not do that with Oak either; it will do that independently. Our relationship is with the 22,000 schools that we have in this country and with the trusts and local authorities that they are part of; they make the decisions about what to teach with. Again, however, we think that the surest guarantee in this area is absolute transparency. That is the most important thing for everybody's confidence in the system. As I said, the Secretary of State has already written to schools, and that will be reflected in the new guidance when it comes out.

Peter Gibson: Could the Minister provide a bit of clarity? If a school seeks to share with parents the information it will use in its classes, but the provider of that information refuses it permission to do so, could it legitimately terminate the contract with that provider, and should it do so?

Damian Hinds: I am not a lawyer; I will not start commenting on commercial contracts. However, in any circumstances, if a parent wants to see what their child is seeing in relationships and sex education, they should absolutely be able to do so.

Nick Fletcher: I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Darlington (Peter Gibson) for his comment. As I say, we agree on certain things, and it is important that

we come together. I have a similar question: if parents see material they are not happy with—I have a folder full of material here that thousands have seen and are not happy with—what redress do they have? What can they do from that point forward, and what if the school will not listen?

Damian Hinds: In my experience, schools do listen. They want to listen, and they want to be in communion with their community and the parents at the school. I am not in the business of trying to create or encourage conflict; we want people to talk. We cannot legislate for everything; we cannot say that there is no circumstance in which an unsatisfactory outcome will pertain, but it is my firm belief that, when people talk to each other and try to understand each another, as a general rule, sensible ways forward can be found. Again, transparency is the key thing underpinning that. If we do not have transparency, we risk not having trust in what is actually happening.

To further strengthen the content in the RSHE statutory guidance, the Secretary of State brought forward a review of the guidance and appointed an independent expert panel to advise on the ages at which sensitive topics should be taught in the curriculum. We have also invited parents into the Department to share their experiences of school engagement and access to RSHE materials.

We are currently working through recommendations and expect to have the revised statutory guidance out for public consultation at the earliest opportunity. We are looking at how to be clearer about the distinctions between the subjects, and about the content taught in each of them, to support decisions about whether to withdraw children, including from relationships education. We will consult on those changes, and parents and other interested parties will have the opportunity to present their thoughts on the curriculum when the revised RSHE statutory guidance is published for consultation.

We know that young LGBT people are more likely to be bullied and discriminated against, and to suffer with mental ill health. The Department's school omnibus survey of 2017 showed that after gender, being or being perceived to be LGBT is one of the main reasons why pupils face bullying. "Keeping children safe in education" is the statutory guidance that all schools and colleges must have regard to when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Among other things, the guidance sets out how schools should protect children from harm and what to do if they have concerns about a child. In addition, all schools have to comply with the relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and to ensure that topics in RSHE are taught in a way that does not discriminate against pupils or amount to harassment.

Over three years, the Department provided £3 million to fund five anti-bullying organisations to support schools to tackle bullying. That included projects targeting bullying of particular groups and projects supporting victims of hate-related or homophobic bullying. Anne Frank Trust UK has developed a "Different But The Same" project and supported nearly 80,000 young people and their teachers and schools to tackle bullying focused on protected characteristics.

Colleagues including the hon. Member for Sheffield Central (Paul Blomfield) and my hon. Friend the Member for Carshalton and Wallington raised the important

[Damian Hinds]

topic of young people's mental health. To support the mental health of pupils, the Government have committed to offer all state schools and colleges a grant to train a senior mental health lead by 2025, enabling them to introduce effective whole-school approaches to mental health and wellbeing. As at December 2023, 15,000 settings had claimed a grant, including more than seven in 10 state-funded secondary schools. The Department is also expanding mental health and wellbeing support for school and college leaders, and from April will begin funding a three-year mental health and wellbeing support package.

Our consultation on the different but related subject of gender questioning and related guidance has recently closed, and we will publish the Government response to the consultation alongside the guidance itself in the coming months. I want to reiterate today that the safety and wellbeing of children will always be our primary concern, which is why it is at the heart of that guidance. The new RSHE curriculum has been taught in schools for less than four years. We want to know what parents, teachers and, of course, pupils think, and our public consultation will give everyone the opportunity to tell us. In addition, we have sought the views of school leaders, teachers and pupils through an independent research project that has undertaken quantitative and qualitative research to look at how useful the statutory guidance is, the challenges in implementing it, pupils' engagement, and teachers' confidence in delivering it. The final report will be published shortly and support the review process.

The Government understand that parents are the primary educators of their children and that all will want to preserve the innocence of childhood until they feel the time is right to teach them about the society in which they are growing up. These children are our future business owners, doctors, dentists and politicians, and they need to understand and respect the diverse

population of the country in which we live. The RSHE curriculum is there partly to help them to do just that.

6.12 pm

Elliot Colburn: I thank you, Mr Dowd, the petitioners and, of course, every colleague who has contributed today. You will be happy to hear that I will not take us through to 7.30 pm. I thank the Minister for his considered response and all colleagues for the calm way in which we have held this debate. I just want to reiterate, as the hon. Member for Brighton, Kemptown (Lloyd Russell-Moyle) said, that it is important that we know about healthy but boring, although "boring" is not an adjective I would ever use to describe the hon. Member, despite the many other things we may have called each other. There is nothing extreme about knowing that different people and different kinds of healthy relationships exist.

I look forward to the Government engaging with all stakeholder groups as part of the RSE review, because it is clear from the pupils, teachers and parents who have engaged so far, in the short time mandatory RSE has been on the statute book, that there is a need to review these policies. It is good to review them and to keep them up to date, but it is clear from teachers, pupils and parents that there is dissatisfaction about how they are being implemented or not implemented. There is clearly still a lot to work through, as we would expect with any new guidance going through a teething process. I look forward to that, and to engaging with the Government on it. I will not detain us any longer, Mr Dowd.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House has considered e-petitions 630932 and 631529 relating to LGBT content in relationships education.

6.14 pm

Sitting adjourned.

Written Statements

Monday 18 March 2024

CABINET OFFICE

Tackling Intimidation in Public Life

The Deputy Prime Minister (Oliver Dowden): Vigorous and robust debate is at the heart of British democracy and is essential to its health.

However, in recent years, elected representatives and other public figures have been subject to increasing levels of intimidation and abuse, aimed at them and their families. As the Prime Minister set out on 1 March, council meetings and local events have been stormed, and MPs do not feel safe in their own homes. On 21 February, protesters threatened to force this House to have to “lock the doors of Parliament” and highly divisive slogans were projected on to the walls outside. The Government remain committed to ensuring that those who commit acts of evil or promote mob rule over democratic rule will never triumph.

It is important to distinguish between strongly felt political debate on the one hand, and unacceptable acts of abuse, intimidation and violence on the other. British democracy has always been robust and oppositional, but there can never be an excuse to try to shout down democratic process or deliver social change through force, rather than force of argument.

Free speech within the law can sometimes involve the expression of political views that some may find offensive. But a line is crossed when disagreement mutates into intimidation, which refuses to tolerate other opinions and seeks to deprive others from exercising their free speech and freedom of association.

Three years ago, my right hon. Friend, the Member for Norwich North (Chloe Smith) set out the steps that the Government are taking to tackle intimidation in public life—9 March 2021, HCWS833. This followed the then Prime Minister’s 2017 commission of the Committee on Standards in Public Life to undertake a review into abuse and intimidation in elections and the subsequent Government response.

With scheduled elections in the UK on 2 May, I wish to update hon. Members on the Government’s wider programme of work in this area.

Attachments can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2024-03-18/HCWS348/>

[HCWS348]

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Delivering Rural Opportunity: Report

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Robbie Moore): Today, the Government will publish their third annual rural proofing report on www.gov.uk. The report, titled

“Delivering Rural Opportunity” examines the progress made in addressing the specific needs of rural communities and businesses.

In June 2023, the Department for Environment published “Unleashing Rural Opportunity”, a comprehensive plan comprising 25 key actions aimed at supporting a thriving rural England. This year’s rural proofing report will reflect on the progress made in delivering these commitments within the four priority areas outlined below.

Growing the rural economy will unlock the countryside’s rich human and natural capital, providing skills, jobs and opportunities to local communities. Since the publication of the URO, many commitments have already been achieved. In December 2023, as promised in the report, the smaller abattoir fund was launched, providing £4 million to boost competition and sustainability in the sector. Planning processes were reviewed in the consultation on permitted development rights and a Government response will be made in due course. DEFRA has also streamlined customer interactions with DEFRA’s agencies, and the services they offer, to make it easier for rural communities to engage with them.

Improving connectivity will expand the possibilities for rural businesses to grow and the opportunities that people in rural areas have. The Government committed to delivering the shared rural network, which has increased 4G coverage across Great Britain to 93%. Project Gigabit continues to make good progress, with gigabit coverage in England rising by 1.5% since September 2023. The rural connectivity accelerator, which will provide £7.3 million to test new ways to provide access to fast, reliable connectivity in remote areas for the first time by bringing together satellite, wireless and fixed-line internet connectivity is currently in the discovery phase. The Government also wants to improve connectivity between communities through improving public transport. In October, the Department of Transport published “Future of Transport”, highlighting how innovation in transport technologies and services has the potential to enhance rural transport and support a higher quality of life for people in rural areas.

It is also important that we build homes in rural areas where communities want them and provide those homes with affordable energy. That is why the commitment to include a rural exception site policy in the new national planning policy framework, published in December 2023, is so important. The “Connections Action Plan” outlines how the Government plan for transmission connection dates for viable, net zero-aligned projects to be on average no more than six months beyond the date requested by the customer, and the Government consulted last year on providing community benefits for those near transmission infrastructure. That consultation has closed, and guidance will be provided this year. Improving energy efficiency is also key to reducing costs in rural areas, and under the home upgrade grant 64% of measures installed by the scheme have been delivered by local authorities classified as rural. The second phase of the grant has allocated up to £378 million in grants ringfenced for rural local authorities.

The Government continue to support thriving rural communities. In January, it was confirmed that the rural services delivery grant will see its largest cash increase since 2018-19, and the second successive year of above inflation increases, to ensure that local authorities can deliver needs that are typically more expensive in rural

areas. In February 2024, the platinum jubilee village halls fund began offering grants from £2,000 to £5,000, fulfilling our commitment in unleashing rural opportunity to make the fund accessible to smaller scale projects. The Government have also committed to preventing rural communities from becoming littered with illegal waste, laying regulations in January 2024 to ringfence the use of income from litter and fly-tipping penalties, which councils keep, for enforcement and clean up only. The regulations are due to come into force on 1 April 2024, and funding councils across the country to directly intervene at fly-tipping hotspots.

The rural proofing report goes into detail about how these commitments were achieved, and how close we are to completion of other promises. The report also examines other commitments made in recent years.

[HCWS353]

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

British Council Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (David Rutley): The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. It supports peace and prosperity by building connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and countries worldwide. It does this by uniquely combining the UK's deep expertise in arts and culture, education and the English language, its global presence and relationships in over 100 countries and its unparalleled access to young people and influencers around the world.

In 2022-23 the British Council received £165 million grant-in-aid from the FCDO.

With a total reach of 600 million people in 2022-23, the British Council creates mutually beneficial relationships between the people of all four nations of the UK and other countries. Such connections, based on an understanding of each other's strengths and shared values, build an enduring trust. This helps strengthen the UK's global reputation and influence, encouraging people from around the world to visit, study, trade and make alliances with the UK.

Copies of the British Council's annual report and accounts for the 2022-23 financial year have been placed in the Library of both Houses. The annual report can also be found at the British Council's website:

www.britishcouncil.org/about-us/how-we-work/corporate-reports

[HCWS352]

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Dame Andrea Leadsom): Between 5 and 10 February, the Deputy Chief Medical Officer (DCMO) led the UK delegation at the 10th conference of the parties (COP10) of the World Health Organisation (WHO) framework convention on tobacco control (FCTC) held in Panama City, Panama.

International leadership on tobacco control

This was an opportunity to showcase our international leadership on tobacco control following the Prime Minister's smoke-free generation announcement, which has the potential to be one of the most significant health policies in a generation. The DCMO made a key intervention to confirm that we will shortly be introducing legislation to:

Create the first smoke-free generation, so that children turning 15 this year or younger can never legally be sold tobacco;

Further crack down on youth vaping by providing powers to restrict flavours, point of sale and packaging for vapes and other consumer nicotine products; and

Ban the sale and supply of disposable vapes.

During the conference, the DCMO also clarified the UK's position on heated tobacco products. She confirmed that the health advice is clear: we do not recommend their use and the Government encourage users to quit all forms of tobacco. There is no safe level of tobacco consumption, and all tobacco products are harmful. There is also clear evidence of toxicity from heated tobacco in laboratory studies. The aerosol generated by heated tobacco also contains carcinogens, and there will be a risk to the health of anyone using these products. In the UK, heated tobacco products are regulated as a tobacco product and are covered by our strict tobacco advertising and promotions ban—and they will be included in the new smoke-free generation policy.

Outcomes of COP10

COP10 committed to protect the environment from the harms of tobacco and to address cross-border tobacco advertising. COP10 also adopted decisions related to the promotion of human rights through the WHO FCTC.

COP10 also adopted the Panama declaration, which highlights the significant conflict between the tobacco industry's interests and the interests of public health. The declaration stresses the need for policy coherence within Governments to comply with the requirements of article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC, which aims to protect public health policies from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry. At the conference, the delegation made clear the UK's commitment to this article.

The COP has been a helpful way of keeping strong tobacco controls at the top of the global health agenda. It is also a very useful forum for sharing best practice. As a world leader in tobacco control, the UK remains committed to seeing the FCTC implemented worldwide. At the same time, we are clear that the UK's sovereignty is of paramount importance, and we will continue to take policy decisions that serve the UK's national interests.

[HCWS349]

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

London Housing Delivery

The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (Michael Gove): Today, I am using my powers in the Greater London Authority Act 1999 to direct the Mayor to review the London plan. I have also announced planning support to boost housing delivery in the capital.

On 12 February, I set out changes Government are consulting on making in national policy to unlock more brownfield development, alongside a number of other major interventions in London. I am confident these reforms will help reverse the chronic under-delivery that has occurred in London, but they will not on their own be sufficient to provide the homes that London desperately needs.

The Greater London Authority is consistently underdelivering on housing: to tackle the backlog of housing delivery and meet the targets set out within the London plan, the rate of delivery would need to increase from an average of 37,200 to more than 62,300 homes per year. The Greater London Authority's data also shows a steep reduction in the number of residential units being approved between 2018-19 and 2022-23. I have repeatedly warned the Greater London Authority that its London plan, which sets out how and where homes will be built, is holding back housebuilding due to its complexity.

That is why I am using powers under section 340 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 to direct a review of the policies specified below in the London plan that I fear are holding delivery back and require urgent action.

Industrial Land

The Mayor reported last year that there is an estimated 6,800 hectares of land in industrial use in London and 736 hectares of land in industrial and related uses in the planning pipeline that could potentially change to non-industrial use. Keeping our capital running of course requires the right industrial land in the right places, supporting and servicing residents and businesses across the city—and some of these activities need to take place within London. Stakeholders have, however, told us that the Mayor's policies on designation are too inflexible, which in effect is discouraging developers from bringing forward other measures such as industrial intensification, co-location and substitution—all of which could enable additional residential development without compromising the capital's industrial needs. To illustrate, every 1% of SIL/LSIS land released for housing could have a capacity for 5,000 new homes for London if we assume 80% of each plot is developable with a density of 150 homes per hectare.

I am therefore directing the Mayor to review whether policies E4—land for industry, logistics and services to support London's economic function, E5—strategic industrial locations, E6—locally significant industrial sites, and E7—industrial intensification, co-location and substitution—remain fit for purpose, and are making the most efficient use of land in light of London's acute housing needs. This should include consideration of the opportunities to strengthen support for increased delivery of housing on industrial land, particularly in areas well-served by public transport.

Opportunity areas

The Mayor identified 47 opportunity areas in the London plan, which he deemed as having the potential to each deliver at least 2,500 homes or 5,000 new jobs, or a combination of the two. While there is clear merit in focusing effort on those areas with the greatest potential, too many have made almost no progress and others appear to have plateaued. This suggests that the opportunity areas policy (SD1) is not doing enough to unlock

growth and regeneration potential in all these areas, with some areas having made almost no progress. The 2017 strategic housing land availability assessment (SHLAA) stated that there was the potential for over 460,000 homes to be built by 2041 in opportunity areas, but at the current annual rate of completions of 13,275 in 2022-2023 this target will be missed—unless delivery is significantly ramped up in later years. I am therefore directing a review of how this policy can be amended to maximise the scale of ambition and accelerate housing delivery, particularly in areas such as Euston, which are well connected and hold the potential for thousands of homes. The review of SD1 should also consider whether the current list of opportunity areas is correctly targeted, how other policies in the plan that constrain capacity or delivery might be appropriately adjusted where they are applied in opportunity areas, and whether there is a role for a single planning framework to accelerate housing.

Planning Super Squad

In London, we want to ensure that our capital has the housing it needs. Today, I can confirm that following discussions with Greenwich and Newham, I am prioritising these boroughs for assistance from my Department's new planning super squad. This team, which will comprise leading planners and specialists whose talents will be used to unblock major developments, will provide Greenwich and Newham with £500,000 worth of specialist support in 2024-25, helping to unlock over 7,000 homes.

Recognising that more needs to be done to enable boroughs across the capital to overcome specific issues that are holding back delivery, I have also asked the super squad to focus some of its early efforts on working strategically across London on complex blocked sites and strategic issues.

[HCWS351]

TRANSPORT

Motoring Improvement Measures

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr Mark Harper): In October 2023, this Government announced “The plan for drivers”, setting out 30 measures that will improve the experience of driving by: smoother journeys; stopping unfair enforcement; easier parking; cracking down on inconsiderate driving; and helping the transition to zero-emission driving. We continue to implement these measures, taking action to ensure that drivers are treated fairly. Today we are publishing the latest series of guidance, consultation and research findings, which will help motorists and other road users to benefit from smoother journeys and reduced congestion, with local people getting a stronger voice on road schemes that affect them, thanks to:

New guidance on low-traffic neighbourhoods—following the recent LTN review, this sets out the requirements on local authorities, including particularly that, via engagement and consultations, an authority should be confident that a scheme is capable of carrying the support of a majority of the community before introducing it;

The 20 mph speed limit guidance—strengthened guidance restricting 20 mph limits to where they are sensible and appropriate, not on all roads indiscriminately, and with safety and local support at the heart of the decision. Other factors we would expect traffic authorities to consider include journey time, the needs of all road users, and impacts on the local economy;

A call for evidence on restricting a local authority's ability to profit from enforcing traffic restrictions—seeking evidence on the way local authorities carry out enforcement and how any surpluses generated should be used;

Bus lane guidance—ensuring they operate only when it makes sense, for example when traffic is heavy enough to delay buses;

Consultation on allowing motorcycles to use bus lanes by default—so journeys are quicker for those who choose two wheels, a further initiative to reduce congestion and speed up journey times;

Lane rental schemes guidance—making it easier for councils to charge utility companies that slow drivers when conducting street works, and allowing the funds generated to be used to repair potholes;

The £50 million investment to upgrade traffic signals—£30 million to replace outdated equipment, and £20 million to reduce poor traffic light performance through innovative

technology that responds to live traffic conditions, for 80 local highway authorities across England to improve journey times and reduce congestion caused by red lights;

Consultation on removing the right of uninsured drivers to claim compensation for property damage—a matter of fairness for law-abiding road users and something that we can now do having left the European Union; and

Noise camera research—showing local authorities the success of this technology to secure evidence to prosecute those who have illegally modified their vehicle's exhaust.

These measures demonstrate our intent that drivers should be treated fairly, and that the wishes of local people should be taken into account when decisions on traffic management are considered by local authorities. Further action on these measures and others in “The plan for drivers” will be announced later this year.

[HCWS350]

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**not later than
Monday 25 March 2024**

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