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**HOUSE OF COMMONS  
OFFICIAL REPORT**

**PARLIAMENTARY  
DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

**Monday 25 April 2016**

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# House of Commons

*Monday 25 April 2016*

*The House met at half-past Two o'clock*

## PRAYERS

[MR SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

## Oral Answers to Questions

### EDUCATION

*The Secretary of State was asked—*

#### School Standards

1. **Rehman Chishti** (Gillingham and Rainham) (Con): What steps her Department is taking to ensure that standards in schools match those of England's best international competitors. [904617]

**The Secretary of State for Education (Nicky Morgan):** I want to start by saying to all pupils, teachers and parents affected by last week's cancellation of the key stage 1 spelling test how sorry I am that this has been necessary. I entirely share their anger and frustration. I know how hard everyone has worked to prepare for the tests. Initial investigations by the Standards and Testing Agency show that its internal processes did not sufficiently keep apart sample and live test questions, and human error led to live test questions being put on its website. The STA's interim chief executive has apologised unreservedly for the error. The key stage 2 tests planned for this term are unaffected and will continue as planned.

Our reforms of the curriculum are about ensuring that our young people can compete not only with the best in this country, but with the best in the world.

**Rehman Chishti:** I thank the Secretary of State for that answer, but what is being done to find out what is being done in classrooms around the world so that our students can meet the higher standards and compete with the best?

**Nicky Morgan:** Ministers regularly travel overseas and meet other Education Ministers to discuss our reforms and any reforms that they are introducing. In 2014 we introduced an ambitious national curriculum to match the best education systems around the world. We are reforming GCSEs, A-levels and primary school assessment to represent a new gold standard, and, as my hon. Friend said, to enable students to compete with their peers in the world's best schools systems.

**Mr Barry Sheerman** (Huddersfield) (Lab/Co-op): I hope that the Secretary of State gets this right, as we have made a lot of mistakes in the past by comparing our system of education with those of countries that are very unlike ours, such as Finland and parts of China. The fact is that the results from the programme for international student assessment can be very misleading, so will she be very careful about which systems she compares ours with as the best?

**Nicky Morgan:** We are of course very careful, and we are very mindful of the fact that we want our children to have the best possible results in the world; that is what our reforms are all about. That is why, as well as getting our GCSEs and A-levels to a gold standard that is comparable with the rest of the world, we are making sure that we focus on things such as character education and the importance of good, strong mental wellbeing.

**Neil Carmichael** (Stroud) (Con): Does the Secretary of State agree that we really need to focus on science, technology, engineering and maths as a top priority? We will then be able to deliver a more effective and competitive workforce. The way to do that is by having strong leadership in our schools, academies and, indeed, multi-academy trusts.

**Nicky Morgan:** I thank the Chair of the Education Committee very much for that question; I am looking forward to appearing before his Committee later this week. He is absolutely right to talk about the importance of STEM subjects. Of course, the EBacc includes modern foreign languages. I am sure that Members on both sides of the House will have been pleased to hear the announcement last week about securing the future examinations of all modern foreign languages and lesser-taught languages, including Gujarati, biblical Hebrew and Japanese, which is very important for the future competitiveness of our country.

**Fiona Mactaggart** (Slough) (Lab): But I hope that the Secretary of State agrees that the critical thing in improving standards of education is good-quality teachers. Will she listen to the schools in Slough, 13 of which have been in touch with me about the fact that secondary schools in a small town have already spent half a million pounds in the past year attempting to recruit teachers, yet, as the head teacher at an excellent grammar school in Slough has said,

"we are now appointing teachers who we would arguably not have considered 5 years ago"?

What is the Secretary of State doing to help schools get high-quality teachers in front of children so that they can learn?

**Nicky Morgan:** I agree that the most important thing is the quality of the teachers in our classrooms, which of course is why we have more teachers coming back into teaching. In the White Paper we mentioned that we want to set up a website to save schools the high recruitment costs so that they can reward excellent teachers at the frontline. The most important thing from the recent TES global recruitment survey is that 31% of teachers said that talk of a recruitment crisis was doing their profession down. We want to focus on the important things that make a difference, talking up the profession, not always talking it down.

**Mr Alan Mak** (Havant) (Con): Standards in schools can be raised by encouraging more schools to start breakfast clubs, such as the one at Purbrook Junior School in my constituency. Will the Secretary of State join me in encouraging more schools to start breakfast clubs and homework clubs?

**Nicky Morgan:** My hon. Friend will be aware of the announcements in the Budget regarding the funding from the new sugar levy, which will be used in part to expand breakfast clubs in up to 1,600 schools from

September 2017. Of course, the opportunities offered by the longer school day are also important in ensuring that our young people get the extracurricular activities that help them to achieve the highest possible standards.

**Carol Monaghan** (Glasgow North West) (SNP): Much of the quality assurance in schools is driven and carried out by local authorities. That means that self-evaluation and improvement is a continuous cycle, with only the occasional visit from Her Majesty's inspectorate of education in Scotland, or Ofsted in England, to rubber-stamp the work already done. With the move to academies, how does the Secretary of State envisage quality assurance being monitored locally, and what budget has she set aside for the increased number of inspectors required to drive improvement?

**Nicky Morgan:** Quality assurance will be measured in exactly the same way as it is now, by Ofsted, and, most importantly, by parents, who make the best possible choice for their children by choosing the strongest schools. It is worth noting that, in Scotland, 29% of schools in the most deprived areas are rated weak or unsatisfactory. The SNP has had nine years to raise educational standards in Scotland. What has it done about them?

### Education White Paper

2. **Diana Johnson** (Kingston upon Hull North) (Lab): What progress she has made on implementing the proposals in the education White Paper; and if she will make a statement. [R] [904618]

**The Secretary of State for Education (Nicky Morgan):** Our education policy, including the White Paper, is about making sure that every child gets the best possible start in life to enable them to fulfil their potential. The White Paper is called "Educational Excellence Everywhere" because for us the "Everywhere" is absolutely non-negotiable. We are making progress on commitments in the White Paper. The first stage of our consultation on the national funding formula closed last week, moving us closer to a fairer system where every school's funding is matched to the needs of the pupil.

**Diana Johnson:** Kelvin Hall School is outstanding without being an academy. That is due to its excellent headteacher and staff and its inspirational campus, which was built under Building Schools for the Future. Would Ministers not be better off focusing their time, energy and money on raising standards in poor-performing schools—the original purpose of Labour's pragmatic and targeted academy programme—not pursuing the wasteful and disruptive dogma of imposing rigid structures from Whitehall?

**Nicky Morgan:** I am delighted to hear about the excellent school the hon. Lady mentions. I want that excellent school not to hide its light under a bushel, but to go on to make the rest of the schools in the area as strong as possible and to work in collaboration. I am not going to be the Secretary of State who missed the opportunity to make sure we had a really good, strong school system across the country, offering the best possible education for all our pupils. I am not going to leave the job half done; we are going to finish this job.

**Lucy Allan** (Telford) (Con): My constituency is a rapidly growing new town, and that puts pressure on primary school places. Does the Secretary of State agree that academisation can put a good or outstanding primary in a better financial position so that it can build more classrooms and increase intake to meet parent demand?

**Nicky Morgan:** My hon. Friend is absolutely right to talk about the opportunities offered by schools becoming academies and by fairer funding, which will mean that more money gets to the frontline, that schools are in charge of their own destinies and that they can expand to take on more pupils. We also want local authorities to work with academies to secure more places, and also to secure more free schools—for example, to deal with parental demand.

**Mr Nicholas Brown** (Newcastle upon Tyne East) (Lab): The case for academisation so far rests either on the desire of an individual school to academise or on arguments around school improvement. However, that will not be the case in future, when schools will be required to academise even if they are good or excellent, which will see them risk losing the very features that made them good or excellent. As the Secretary of State considers legislation, will she consider an academisation model that allows such schools that wish to remain in the public sector to have a form of academisation whereby they may do so?

**Nicky Morgan:** I was following the right hon. Gentleman's question up until the last sentence, when he seemed to imply that, somehow, academies were not part of the public sector. He could not be more mistaken: they get their funding directly from the Department for Education, their teachers are trained in accordance with our guidance and they can follow the national curriculum. What does the right hon. Gentleman say to the headteacher who wrote to me after the Academies Show last week, saying that her colleagues were forgetting that children are the priority, change is the reality and collaboration is the strategy. How can it not be our moral responsibility to serve as many children as possible by working together? That is what we want to see.

**Andrew Bridgen** (North West Leicestershire) (Con): Does my right hon. Friend agree that a good argument for academisation is to get schools out of the control of loony left councils, such as Brighton and Hove, which is seeking information in relation to the gender assignment of four-year-olds?

**Nicky Morgan:** The point about academies and academisation is that they are the vehicle for schools to innovate, make best use of the freedom to drive up standards and do the right thing for their children, which often does not happen under local authority control. That is what we want to see, and that is why we want schools to become academies.

**Nic Dakin** (Scunthorpe) (Lab): The Secretary of State has intimated that good local authorities can form multi-academy trusts. Ironically, this would give local authorities more responsibility for running schools than they have now, although the Prime Minister has suggested that local authorities having such responsibility is holding

schools back. Why is such a costly upheaval necessary for outstanding schools under good local authorities? Is it not time for her to smell the coffee and shelve her plans for forced academisation?

**Nicky Morgan:** The hon. Gentleman perhaps knows that I am a caffeine addict, but he is missing the point, which is that good schools have much to offer the whole of the rest of the education system. What we see now in schools across the country is collaboration and partnership in clusters of schools, and that is what we want to continue right across the system. We know that actually the best people to run schools are those on the frontline—the heads, the teachers and the professionals—and that is what we want. The issue for the Labour party is that we never hear talk of the pupils, the children or the raising of standards; it is always about vested interests.

**Lucy Frazer** (South East Cambridgeshire) (Con): Over the past 11 months, one of the issues that has come to me time and again in the constituency has been the cost of the recruitment of teachers, so I was very pleased to see the proposal in the White Paper in relation to the national website that will be set up. Will the Secretary of State tell us how this will help to improve teacher recruitment across the country?

**Nicky Morgan:** I thank my hon. and learned Friend very much, first, for raising this important issue, but also for spotting that only one of the eight chapters in the White Paper deals with school structures, while the rest tackle the issues that schools have been talking to us about, one of which is the high recruitment cost of teachers. We think that if we can work with the sector to provide a low-cost or no-cost website to enable schools to advertise vacancies, it will mean that more money gets to the frontline, which I think we all want to see.

#### Teacher Recruitment and Retention

4. **Angela Rayner** (Ashton-under-Lyne) (Lab): What recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of teacher recruitment and retention. [904620]

16. **Julie Cooper** (Burnley) (Lab): What recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of teacher recruitment and retention. [904632]

**The Minister for Schools (Mr Nick Gibb):** We have record numbers of teachers in our classrooms, and retention rates have remained broadly stable for the past 20 years. I recognise that recruitment has become more challenging for some schools, which is why our White Paper sets out clear plans to boost teacher recruitment, build on the success of measures we have already put in place, such as the £67 million package to improve recruitment of STEM teachers, and generous training bursaries and scholarships.

**Angela Rayner:** Excessive workload is the top reason for teachers leaving the profession. Figures released by the National Union of Teachers show that three quarters of teachers say their workload has increased since the Secretary of State launched the 2014 workload challenge, which was supposed to address the concerns about increasing and excessive work. Why has her workload challenge failed to reduce the workload crisis, and will she agree to meet me and my Labour colleagues in Oldham and Tameside about our local challenges?

**Mr Gibb:** I would be delighted to meet the hon. Lady in her constituency or in Parliament. On the workload challenge, there were 44,000 responses to that survey. The top three issues raised were marking, data management and lesson planning burdens. We set up three working parties, which have now reported with very concrete proposals about how we can reduce the burdens. These are very real proposals that will actually, once implemented, reduce the burdens and workload of teachers.

**Julie Cooper:** The National Audit Office reports that the number of teachers leaving the profession has increased by over 11% in the past three years, and for the past four consecutive years the Government have failed to hit their own recruitment targets. Does the Minister agree that the plan to force all schools to become academies will do nothing to help this situation and may, in many cases, cause teachers to become more demoralised and more likely to leave the teaching profession?

**Mr Gibb:** The professional autonomy that comes with academy status does the opposite—it encourages the profession in a way that has not happened in the past. We have the highest number of teachers of all time in our schools—445,000, which is 13,000 more than in 2010. The National Audit Office acknowledged that despite the very large increase in numbers of pupils—9% in the past few years—the number of teachers has kept pace. In terms of retention, 90% of teachers are still teaching one year after qualifying, 70% are still there after five years, and over half of all teachers are still in teaching 18 years after qualification. These figures are broadly in line with those in other professions.

**Mr Philip Hollobone** (Kettering) (Con): One of the very best ideas that the previous Government had was the Troops to Teachers scheme. Given that personnel in Her Majesty's armed forces are among the very best that Britain has to offer, what success is the Minister achieving in getting personnel from the Royal Air Force, Navy and Army into our schools to teach our pupils?

**Mr Gibb:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend. This is a two-year scheme that started only in 2014, and the current cohort is the first to qualify. Applications by eligible candidates are up, and over 140 former troops are now working in schools across England as part of the scheme.

**Greg Mulholland** (Leeds North West) (LD): It is clear that teachers are not being listened to with regard to the fiasco over the forthcoming SATs—standard assessment tests—as two excellent teachers communicated to me. They also said that the Department for Education is putting children off learning English and maths properly. When will the Minister listen to teachers, listen to children, and change this approach?

**Mr Gibb:** We do listen to teachers, and we consulted very widely on the new primary school curriculum that was published in final form in 2013 and came into force in 2014. It is on a par with the best maths curriculums for primary schools from around the world. We have very high expectations and we do not apologise for that. We need to make sure that pupils leaving our schools are able to compete in a modern world—able to survive

and thrive in a modern economy such as Britain's. That is our ambition, and I wish the Liberal party would share it too.

**Carol Monaghan** (Glasgow North West) (SNP): At Education questions on 7 March I asked the Minister for Schools about the £35,000 income threshold for non-EU nationals and how it would impact on the recruitment and retention of STEM-qualified teachers. He told me that there was an ongoing consultation with the Home Office, but no new announcements appear to have been made on this issue. Will he answer my question today: what steps has he taken to ensure that qualified teachers will be exempt from the £35,000 threshold on earnings?

**Mr Gibb:** The consultation is ongoing and we will report to the hon. Lady and the House in due course.

**Jenny Chapman** (Darlington) (Lab): There is undeniably a crisis in teacher recruitment in schools. I warn the Minister that it is not confined to schools but is starting to affect early years provision too, and hitting it hard because there is no coherent early years career pathway and no set pay scale, with some providers paying wages for only 35 weeks a year. How can the Government possibly hope to improve quality in early years when they are doing their level best to put people off joining the profession?

**Mr Gibb:** We are not putting people off joining the profession, and we are expanding the early years sector. We acknowledge that when we have a strong economy it is a challenge to recruit highly qualified and highly able people. That is the case in this country, and it is the same in other successful economies around the world. We are doing a huge amount to encourage more professionals to come into the profession. We have a very effective advertising campaign. We have very generous bursaries right across the system; we are spending £1.2 billion on those bursaries. This is working, because we recruited 94% of our target to teacher training last year and we have record numbers of people in teaching. What we do not do, as the hon. Lady and Labour Members are doing, is talk down the profession, because, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said, teachers tell us that talk about a recruitment crisis helps to deter people from coming into the profession; it does not encourage them to do so.

#### Parental Involvement: Academies

5. **Stuart Andrew** (Pudsey) (Con): What steps her Department is taking to ensure that parents have more influence in the running of their children's schools when those schools become academies. [904621]

11. **Wendy Morton** (Aldridge-Brownhills) (Con): What steps her Department is taking to ensure that parents have more influence in the running of their children's schools when those schools become academies. [904627]

**The Secretary of State for Education (Nicky Morgan):** Many parents are governors and make a significant contribution to our schools, and we want this to continue, but that is not the only way we want parents to engage in schools. That is why our White Paper outlined our

intention to place a duty on academies to engage meaningfully with parents, introduce parental satisfaction surveys, and set up a new parent portal to help parents to navigate the school system.

**Stuart Andrew:** I am extremely fortunate to have many parents in my constituency who are engaged in local schools. Many have approached me recently because they have been concerned by recent reports that their voice, position and influence may be diminished if all schools are turned into academies. Can my right hon. Friend assure me that that is not the case?

**Nicky Morgan:** I pay tribute to the many thousands of parents who already play a valuable role on school governing bodies. It is vital that schools and governing bodies listen to the views and the voices of parents, and we want academies to engage meaningfully with them. I know that that is happening, for example, in my hon. Friend's constituency at Crawshaw Academy, where parents are invited to half-termly information evenings to comment on academy policies and to share their views with senior leaders. In a recent parent survey, 78% of respondents reported that they felt consulted and able to contribute to the academy's development.

**Wendy Morton:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that the voice and the skills of parents are greatly valued in our schools? Will she further clarify how their voice and their skills will continue to play an important part in governing bodies when a school becomes an academy?

**Nicky Morgan:** My hon. Friend makes a very important point. Involving parents in governance and really listening to the views of parents are not necessarily the same thing. That is why I want academy boards to appoint parents for their skills and experience, and to set up parent councils or other appropriate arrangements to engage parents meaningfully and to represent their views to governing bodies.

**Clive Efford** (Eltham) (Lab): Will the Secretary of State confirm that she is rethinking her White Paper in relation to parents, and that she will reconsider whether they should be consulted over the academisation of our schools and their role as school governors?

**Nicky Morgan:** I do not need to rethink, because we are very clear about the important role that parents play as governors, through parental surveys and through parental engagement. The hon. Gentleman also appears, in the second part of his question, to be fighting a fight that we fought in the Education and Adoption Act 2016, which is now part of the law and which set out the clear role for parents to be involved when a school becomes an academy.

**Chris Leslie** (Nottingham East) (Lab/Co-op): Perhaps the Secretary of State can explain a little more clearly and slowly, particularly to some of her colleagues on the Conservative Back Benches, who are gently asking her to think again about this point. Parental accountability is quite an important part of school life. In what circumstances does she envisage that removing that role of governance in a school from parents will be a good thing?

**Nicky Morgan:** First, I do not think that the hon. Gentleman should be insulting Conservative Members, who perfectly well understand the important role of parents as governors. For the avoidance of doubt, let me speak slowly and clearly to him. We are not suggesting, and never have suggested, that parents should not be on governing bodies.

**David Morris** (Morecambe and Lunesdale) (Con): I have had many parents contact me about the key stage 2 SATs that are going to be examined in the next two weeks, and I have also been contacted by the headteachers of schools. Even though this has been in place since 2014, there is some concern. After the exams, will my right hon. Friend meet me and talk over any concerns that may come up?

**Nicky Morgan:** I would be delighted to meet my hon. Friend to discuss the matter. As the Schools Minister has said, we have raised the bar in relation to the key stage 2 tests that are happening, but the important reason for that is to make sure that our young people have the basics of the reading, writing and maths that will help them to progress in life. We know the difference in GCSE results between key stage 2 pupils at the end of primary who get to the expected level in reading, writing and maths, and those who do not. That can hold people back for life, and that is not fair.

### Children's Social Work Sector

6. **Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck** (South Shields) (Lab): What recent assessment she has made of the adequacy and quality of provision in the children's social work sector. [904622]

**The Minister for Children and Families (Edward Timpson):** May I begin by apologising if I am moving unusually slowly and gingerly to and from the Dispatch Box this afternoon? I have the excuse of having run the London marathon yesterday, along with seven other Members of the House and close to 40,000 other hardy individuals. I ask the House to put on record our collective gratitude to and admiration for them, in particular for the more than £25 million that they raised for hundreds of charities up and down the country.

It is the role of Ofsted to assess the adequacy and quality of provision in the children's social work sector. All local authorities are currently being inspected under the single inspection framework, which assesses arrangements for child protection services for looked-after children and the leadership, management and governance of children's social care. My Department intervenes to support improvement in services where they are judged to be inadequate.

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Gentleman is a hero, but too modest to point out that he has run marathons on a number of previous occasions; because he is too modest I will do it for him.

**Mrs Lewell-Buck:** I thank the Minister for his response. As he well knows, social work is a holistic profession. For example, when I qualified I had knowledge across all social work disciplines, such as mental health, child protection and adult social care, ensuring that I was able to fully grasp all the issues facing my clients. Will he

therefore explain why his Government are investing in Frontline and Think Ahead to the detriment of traditional, more holistic university courses, and are creating specialisms in silos, which is bad for the profession and even worse for the clients?

**Edward Timpson:** I am afraid that the hon. Lady has given a distorted view of the work being done to improve social work practice across the board. Not only are the Government investing in fast-track graduate schemes such as Frontline and Step Up to Social Work, to which 151 local authorities have signed up, but we have the assisted and supported year of employment and the new knowledge and skills that every children's social worker will now have to be accredited and assessed against. That is important because for the first time there is a relentless focus on high-quality social work practice rather than a simple theoretical understanding of social work. We need to get that balance right, and that will be at the heart of our social work reforms.

**Peter Dowd** (Bootle) (Lab): St Monica's Catholic Primary School in my constituency has had five consecutive outstanding Ofsted reports. It has a fantastic headteacher, teachers, pupils and parents. Can the Minister tell me what benefit there is to forcing that school to become an academy?

**Edward Timpson:** I would answer the question, but I am not sure that it has any relevance to the original question asked by his hon. Friend the Member for South Shields (Mrs Lewell-Buck).

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Gentleman wished to give the Minister his views, which he has done, but now that he has I am afraid his question is not really suitable for a ministerial answer at this time.

### Special Educational Needs and Disability Services

7. **Debbie Abrahams** (Oldham East and Saddleworth) (Lab): What steps she is taking to improve special educational needs and disability services. [904623]

**The Minister for Children and Families (Edward Timpson):** The 2014 special educational needs and disabilities reforms represent the biggest change to the system in a generation, helping to transform support by joining up services across education, health, and social care, and focusing on positive outcomes for education, employment, housing, health and community participation. We have invested heavily in practical and financial support for implementation, including an extra £80 million in 2016-17, and from May 2016, all areas will be inspected by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission.

**Debbie Abrahams:** I thank the Minister for that answer, but I have been contacted by a constituent who has raised concerns about the potential effect that forcing schools to become academies will have on her autistic son in terms of his being marginalised. Will the Minister tell me what assessment has been undertaken of how forcing schools to become academies will affect disabled children?

**Edward Timpson:** I am happy to meet the hon. Lady to give her a lot more detail about exactly how the system operates. I can reassure her that, under the Children and Families Act 2014 and the new special

educational needs system, academies have exactly the same duties to pupils with special educational needs as all other schools, and must co-operate with their local council, whether in developing their local offer or publishing details of their SEN provision. That will not change. We are confident that it is the right approach so that every child gets the right school with the right support for them, irrespective of what type of school that is.

**Graham Stuart** (Beverley and Holderness) (Con): Does the Minister agree that one of the most egregious elements of today's unfair and broken school funding system is that which affects children with special educational needs, and will he confirm that, like the schools block, the special needs block will be part of the review, so that we can have a transparent and fair system for all children?

**Edward Timpson:** My hon. Friend, the former Chair of the Education Committee, is right to point out that the high needs funding element of the dedicated schools grant has, over time, become extremely skewed with regard to finding the formula to distribute that important money for the support of children with special educational needs and disabilities. In December 2015 we announced an additional £92.5 million for the high needs element, but we need a fairer system so that every child has their needs met, irrespective of where they are in the country. That will be part of the consultation.

**Ruth Cadbury** (Brentford and Isleworth) (Lab): The ring-fenced nature of the schools block under the London schools funding proposals needs no flexibility. This year, the Hounslow schools forum agreed to transfer £7 million to the high needs block to address the needs of vulnerable children. The Secretary of State's proposals for London will result in a huge funding shortfall for special needs. What will the Secretary of State do to address the very great concern of parents and headteachers?

**Edward Timpson:** I reiterate that we want a funding system based fairly and squarely on meeting children's individual needs. We have consulted widely right across the sector, as well as through the public consultation, to ensure we achieve just that. I will certainly consider what the hon. Lady says about London—as well as the situation across the country—so that every child can benefit from the new system as we move forward.

**Richard Drax** (South Dorset) (Con): If I may pick up on funding for special schools, Wyvern Academy in my constituency looks after children who are particularly physically and mentally disabled; so much so, in fact, that other schools that do the same work pass them on to this school. The funding, however, does not recognise the high level of care that is needed. Will the Minister consider this matter in any funding formula reform? If I write to him, perhaps he could help me to find out whether there is a pot of money somewhere to help this excellent school to continue to do a wonderful job.

**Edward Timpson:** We know that many children have profound needs. In making sure we have educational excellence everywhere, we must ensure that they have the opportunity to learn, grow and develop into successful adults. To do so, we need to ensure that they are well supported. That is why, through the new education, health and care plans, it is clear there has to be co-operation

right across education, social care and health to provide the money and support those children need. I am, of course, happy to talk further with my hon. Friend to establish how the system is working in his constituency and how we can make it work better in the future.

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson** (Washington and Sunderland West) (Lab): Ever since the Government announced the ham-fisted academisation of all schools, there has been growing opposition, as we have heard, from parents, teachers, SEN charities, Tory council leaders, such as the leader of the West Sussex Council, and even Mr Goddard from "Educating Essex". The plans will adversely affect the education of children with special educational needs and disabilities. Will the Minister further explain what the Government are doing to alleviate those concerns? Will he go as far as to say that parents of a child with an education, health and care plan will be able to name their school, and ensure that children with SEND do not go on to be excluded or fall through the gaps in the increasingly fragmented school system the Government are creating?

**Edward Timpson:** The hon. Lady knows I have a real fondness for her. We enjoyed our time together on the Children and Families Bill in those halcyon days of 2013, but I have to say—I suspect she has been put up to it—that this does not sound like her question. I am confident, as she will be, that the law we both helped to take through this House reflects properly what I said in an earlier answer: that academies have to abide by the same rules as other schools when it comes to children with special educational needs. The law is clear. This is why we are bringing in, for the first time, an inspection regime for special education needs, so we can see a really clear picture of how they are performing.

### Maintained Schools

9. **Stephen Timms** (East Ham) (Lab): If she will make it her policy that maintained schools be given the choice of whether to become academies. [904625]

**The Secretary of State for Education (Nicky Morgan):** Academies reject the old one-size-fits-all approach, and are more dynamic and responsive to performance and the needs of local areas. In the next six years, schools will have time to make choices and to set in place arrangements that will work for them, either as standalone academies or in multi-academy trusts, including diocesan trusts and operating in local clusters.

**Stephen Timms:** It will by now be clear to the Secretary of State that Conservative Members, not just Opposition Members, believe schools should have some choice in whether they become academies. Headteachers of excellent primary schools say they have more autonomy with their local authority than they would as members of a multi-academy trust. Surely enforced compulsion from Whitehall of this change cannot be the right way forward.

**Nicky Morgan:** Ofsted data for the latest inspection results of all schools show that 350,000 children now study in sponsored academies rated good or outstanding. Let us look at the example of an academy in the right hon. Gentleman's constituency. Langdon Academy, a special measures school in East Ham, opened as a



fast-track sponsored academy on 1 January 2014. Over a year later, it has gone from 45% of pupils getting A\* to C to 57%. Those are achievements that I want all young people to have access to.

**Steve Double** (St Austell and Newquay) (Con): Conversion to academies is improving the education of children throughout the country, and it is right that we make this opportunity available to all children. However, concerns have been expressed about the impact that this policy will have on small schools, particularly in a place such as Cornwall, where we have many small schools. Has my right hon. Friend considered that one of the ways of addressing those concerns would be to allow local authorities to be involved in the running of multi-academy trusts?

**Nicky Morgan:** My hon. Friend will know that we published a White Paper in order to make sure that we talk to Members in all parts of the House, as well as to local authorities. Like my hon. Friend, I want all young people to have the best possible start in life. We know that academies make a difference. We also know that small schools can benefit from working together in clusters, including the 15 schools in Cornwall that converted to academies together as one group last week to provide mutual support. I look forward to continuing my conversations with my hon. Friend.

**Kelvin Hopkins** (Luton North) (Lab): Luton has the highest-performing schools in the eastern region of England and most of the town's schools remain in local authority control. When will the Government undertake an objective analysis of why some schools do better than others, and accept that this has nothing to do with academy status?

**Nicky Morgan:** We know from the international evidence that the more autonomy those on the frontline have—heads, teachers and governors—the more they take responsibility for the results that are achieved. I want the good schools in the hon. Gentleman's constituency to share their expertise with other schools that are not yet so good. That way we have a strong education system, which is what I as Secretary of State for Education and this Government want to be available for everyone.

**Suella Fernandes** (Fareham) (Con): In Fareham, primary schools such as Hook with Warsash Church of England and St Anthony's converted from maintained schools to academies and saw their results improve, surpassing the local authority average. Does my right hon. Friend agree that this policy represents an opportunity for Hampshire, which performs well as a local authority, to get involved and create a mass to enable more autonomy and improvement overall?

**Nicky Morgan:** My hon. Friend is right to say that we can see that the results in primary sponsored academies, for example, which have been open for two years have improved by an average of 10 percentage points, which is double the rate of improvement in local authority schools. She is right to say that there are many talented individuals working in Hampshire local authority and I hope they will take advantage of the new system as well.

## Post-16 Education and Training

10. **Liz McInnes** (Heywood and Middleton) (Lab): What discussions she has had with education providers on area-based reviews of post-16 education and training provision. [904626]

**The Minister for Skills (Nick Boles):** I wish I could claim to have run the London marathon, like my hon. Friend the Minister for Children and Families. I went on only a two-mile run this morning and it nearly finished me off. To answer the hon. Lady's question, I have regular meetings with post-16 education providers about area reviews and all the issues that those throw up. I am also holding meetings with hon. Members once area reviews produce recommendations for any changes in provision in their area.

**Liz McInnes:** A particular concern of my constituents is mergers between colleges and the potential for young people in rural and suburban areas such as mine to be forced to travel long distances to get to college. What funding would be available from the Department for students forced to travel further as a result of closure or amalgamation of their courses? Would the Department consider reinstating the education maintenance allowance?

**Nick Boles:** The hon. Lady will be aware, first, that any of the recommendations that come out of an area review that might include proposals for a merger have to be accepted by the colleges themselves. They are independent corporations. In my constituency I also have a very sparsely populated area with towns 25 miles apart so I understand full well the issues surrounding travel to course provision. Colleges can use funding, including the bursary funding, to contribute towards transport costs, but it is ultimately up to the college to decide whether it thinks that move is going to be good for it and its students.

**Bob Blackman** (Harrow East) (Con): Will my hon. Friend update the House on the position of area-based reviews of colleges which are in special measures? At the same time as colleges are being encouraged to merge, inspectors and the people involved are not allowing such mergers to take place.

**Nick Boles:** I am not aware of the particular case that my hon. Friend refers to. If he wants to write to me, I would be happy to meet him to discuss it. In general, we do not want mergers to be rushed into before an area review has had a chance to look at the provision in a whole area, but we do not want to stop institutions making arrangements that help them address problems, so I am happy to look into the situation with him.

**Mr Gordon Marsden** (Blackpool South) (Lab): The Government want to promote apprenticeships in post-16 training and colleges, yet the proportion of apprentices with learning difficulties or disabilities decreased from 11% to 8% between 2010 and 2013. With the area reviews ongoing, an Ofsted report has just said that "monitoring and evaluation of FE and skills provision for high needs learners...were ineffective."

How effectively will the interests of young people in those positions, and those of children on the autism spectrum, be addressed, especially if area reviews force

them to travel further to study in new environments? Will the Minister specifically guarantee decent outcomes for young people with disabilities?

**Nick Boles:** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for raising this important question. I recently had an excellent meeting, facilitated by my hon. Friend the Member for Bedford (Richard Fuller), with groups representing deaf people, and I will shortly be holding a round table with groups representing people with other kinds of disability. It is essential to ensure that everyone can benefit from the opportunity of apprenticeships and other forms of technical education, and we are determined to do that.

### Academies

12. **Jonathan Reynolds** (Stalybridge and Hyde) (Lab/Co-op): What plans she has to require all primary and secondary schools to become academies. [904628]

17. **Mike Kane** (Wythenshawe and Sale East) (Lab): How she plans to implement the proposed requirement for all primary and secondary schools to become academies. [904633]

15. **Andrea Jenkyns** (Morley and Outwood) (Con): What steps her Department is taking to support academies through the creation of multi-academy trusts. [904631]

**The Minister for Schools (Mr Nick Gibb):** We expect all schools to be academies, or have plans in place to convert, by 2020 and all schools to be academies by 2022. By setting out our clear expectation for full academisation now, we can give schools, local authorities and dioceses the opportunity to plan effectively for a sustainable future and ensure that no school is left behind. We have set aside funding to support a high-quality, fully academised school system, including over £500 million available this Parliament to build capacity.

**Jonathan Reynolds:** I support academies where people want them, but there is nothing worse than a top-down reorganisation of a public service for political, rather than sound policy, reasons. In response to a written question from me earlier this month, the Department confirmed that deficits for schools that convert will remain with the local authority. In my borough, over half of our schools will have deficits by 2017. How can the Government justify transferring this burden on to local councils, when it is their own funding of schools that is to blame?

**Mr Gibb:** I read the hon. Gentleman's recent letter to the Ofsted lead for the north-west, Chris Russell, and I share his ambition to improve standards of education in Greater Manchester, but it is not a top-down reform; it is devolution in its purest form that gives control of schools to the professionals on the frontline. That is what this is about. He should be supporting the measures because they will raise academic standards right across our schools system.

**Mike Kane:** This morning, I visited Springfield Primary School, in my constituency, which is run by the most dedicated professionals I have ever known—I had the privilege to teach there myself for the best part of a decade. They tell me that it is more than adequately

supported by the Conservative local education authority in Trafford, and in Mike Freeman it has a brilliant LEA Labour councillor and school governor. Will the Minister join me in praising the school for all it does in my constituency and explain to it why its model, which is really good, needs to be changed?

**Mr Gibb:** We do not want the model under which that school operates to change; we want the school to take the model it uses to raise standards and teach children well, despite the loss of the hon. Gentleman as a teacher, and to spread that excellence to other schools in the area. That is the essence of the academies programme. It is about ensuring that every local school in every part of the country, beyond Trafford, has a good local school. That is the ambition. I hope he shares it.

**Andrea Jenkyns:** I recently visited Jerry Clay academy, in my constituency, which has seen huge improvements under the leadership of the head, Tracy Swinburne. We should ensure that academies that have benefited from strong leadership are recognised and that they can support other schools through the creation of multi-academy trusts. Will my hon. Friend join me in congratulating her and the academy on their success and inform me what steps the Government are taking to ensure that those in leadership positions in trusts are strong and effective?

**Mr Gibb:** I am pleased that the headteacher of Jerry Clay academy is exploring the possibility of joining a multi-academy trust. The regional schools commissioner has discussed the matter with the school and continues to support it as it considers the opportunity. We are supporting leaders of trusts to succeed in their vital role through programmes such as the successful multi-academy trust chief executive programme and the academy ambassadors programme, which have resulted in over 190 experienced business leaders joining trust boards.

**Mr Speaker:** We have now exceeded the time available for the Minister's exam, and we come now to topical questions.

### Topical Questions

T1. [904642] **Victoria Atkins** (Louth and Horncastle) (Con): If she will make a statement on her departmental responsibilities.

**The Secretary of State for Education (Nicky Morgan):** Last week, I had the pleasure of marking the 400 years since the death of William Shakespeare, watching a live stream of "The Merchant of Venice" at Lings primary school in Northampton—a school serving a disadvantaged area with 55% of its pupils getting free school meals. The inspirational headteacher there has shown how all pupils, regardless of their backgrounds and experiences, can develop an appreciation of and a love for great literary works. We want to encourage more pupils to experience Shakespeare, as countless previous generations have before. That is why the national curriculum requires all pupils to study at least three complete Shakespeare plays while they are at school.

**Victoria Atkins:** We Conservative Members all welcome the Government's decision to introduce a fairer funding formula for schools. Will my right hon. Friend assure my constituents that the particular needs of our rural

and coastal schools will form part of the new formula so that children in my constituency are not disadvantaged under the current formula simply because of an accident of geography?

**Nicky Morgan:** The fair distribution of funding is a priority for this Government. As we have already heard, fair funding will ensure that every school is allocated funding fairly and transparently according to need. I can reassure my hon. Friend that the formula we propose includes a lump sum payment for every school, with extra sparsity funding to support our smallest and most remote schools so that every child can access an excellent education.

**Lucy Powell (Manchester Central) (Lab/Co-op):** This weekend, the Conservative-led County Councils Network added its very strong opposition to the Secretary of State's plans to force all schools to become academies, adding to that already expressed by the National Association of Head Teachers, the Association of School and College Leaders, parents, the National Governors Association, leading names in the academies programme such as the chief executive of the Harris Foundation and the Freedom and Autonomy for Schools National Association, as well as a growing number of her own Back Benchers. It is hardly a list of what she might call—or, in fact, what she just called—the vested interests. Can she therefore clarify today for those who have these very serious concerns whether she will bring forward legislation to force good and outstanding schools to become academies against their wishes?

**Nicky Morgan:** I have already set out very clearly our desire to make sure that every child gets the best start in life. We believe that academies, as the House has heard from other Conservative Members, are absolutely the right vehicle for innovation on curriculum, pay and freedom for headteachers. I wonder whether the hon. Lady in her vocal opposition has taken account of the writer on the Labour teachers blog, who said that

“we have people on the left describing thousands of schools, in fact a majority of secondary schools, and the hundreds of thousands of teachers who work in them, in terms that are so unjust as to be deceitful.”

Is that how the hon. Lady wants to be taken?

**Mr Speaker:** Order. I simply point out to the Secretary of State that she is not responsible for what is written on Labour blogs and that there is a shortage of time on topical questions. We must press on, without extraneous matters being introduced.

**Lucy Powell:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Secretary of State may not appreciate what a huge amount of upheaval, uncertainty and, frankly, panic she has caused by her announcement. Headteachers are already facing huge challenges trying to work around her botched new SATs tests, her massively behind-schedule new GCSEs and her real-terms cuts to school budgets, and those heads need and deserve more clarity from the Secretary of State than we have heard so far. Let me remind the right hon. Lady that she already has powers to turn underperforming schools into academies and that good and outstanding schools can already choose to convert, so the only remaining power she needs to deliver her objectives is to force any good or outstanding

school that does not want to become an academy to do so. Is it still her intention to ask Parliament for these new powers—yes or no?

**Nicky Morgan:** I have been very clear that I will not be the Secretary of State who leaves undone the job of making our school system as strong as possible for the benefit of all pupils. I hope that as she visits schools up and down the country, the hon. Lady includes visiting those that are already taking advantage of the new academy freedoms. Amanda Bennett from the Greetland primary academy in Halifax said, for example:

“As an academy we have had the freedoms to explore the specific needs of the children in our care—so our curriculum progression, pitch and expectations are able to adapt when we want them to, to respond to our changing needs. This has allowed us to be consistently in the top performing schools nationally.”

Conservative Members are all for improving opportunities and life chances for all children. Is it not interesting that we never hear the hon. Lady talk about pupils or standards, because she is so obsessed with one chapter in the White Paper?

T2. [904643] **Nicola Blackwood (Oxford West and Abingdon) (Con):** Digital skills are fundamental to the success of our knowledge economy, but evidence given to the Science and Technology Committee during its inquiry showed that only 35% of ICT teachers have a specialist qualification, and more than half lack confidence when it comes to delivering the new computing curriculum. What steps are the Government taking to train ICT teachers, and to ensure that we are equipping young people with the skills that they need not just for today's workplace, but for a jobs market that may be unrecognisable in a decade?

**The Minister for Schools (Mr Nick Gibb):** Digital literacy is, of course, a core part of the national curriculum, and computing is a statutory subject in all four key stages in maintained schools. We are training a cadre of specialists who can cascade the knowledge that teachers require in order to be able to teach that very important subject.

T8. [904649] **Neil Coyle (Bermondsey and Old Southwark) (Lab):** Charles Dickens Primary School is an outstanding foundation primary school in my constituency, which, along with the London borough of Southwark, rightly has great expectations for all Southwark students. The chair of its governors has been in touch with me to express his concern about the enforced academisation of schools. Why is the Secretary of State ignoring the concerns of staff, governors, parents and pupils? Why is she insisting on dictating a structure that offers no choice, but only the academy approach, which could damage the standard of the education that is currently provided?

**Nicky Morgan:** I had the pleasure of visiting Charles Dickens Primary School during the last academic year. It is an absolutely brilliant school, with an inspirational head teacher. I want that head teacher not only to help, support and inspire the young people in her school, but to spread the excellence of her school to other schools in the area that are struggling. That is what we want to see in the education system. I am surprised that Labour Members are not interested in raising standards for all children in all parts of the country.

T3. [904644] **Christopher Pincher** (Tamworth) (Con): Dig-iT, the dyslexia group in Tamworth, tells me that while provision can be good, it is all too often uneven across local schools. What can the Government do to maintain not just the quality of dyslexia and dyspraxia provision, but its consistency in schools in Tamworth, Staffordshire and England?

**The Minister for Children and Families (Edward Timpson):** I commend the work of the dyslexia group in my hon. Friend's constituency. I can reassure him that we are investing heavily in practical and financial support for SEND—special educational needs and disability—including funds for a project run by the British Dyslexia Association to address issues such as early identification and effective provision, and funds to enable the Dyslexia SpLD Trust to provide expert advice, information and training for schools and parents. I can also tell my hon. Friend that we are procuring a new contract in 2016-17 so that we can continue to support children and young people with dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties—including dyspraxia—in schools and post-16 institutions.

T10. [904651] **Sue Hayman** (Workington) (Lab): Last year I spoke to the Minister about the difficulty of recruiting and retaining teachers in my constituency, which is partly due to its remoteness. He has talked a great deal about the recruitment of teachers, but what specifically is being done to encourage them to come to remote areas such as west Cumbria?

**Mr Gibb:** The National Teaching Service was established to second high-performing teachers to parts of the country with a history of recruitment problems. When a remote rural school is part of a multi-academy trust, that helps to recruit teachers, because they know that they can move, within the trust, from a rural to an urban school and back again. That makes recruitment and retention far easier.

T4. [904645] **Graham Stuart** (Beverley and Holderness) (Con): According to Ofsted, the best educational settings in the country are maintained nursery schools, of which 58% are "outstanding" and 39% are "good". Remarkably, they perform just as well in poor areas as they do in less affluent areas. What consideration has the Minister given to allowing them to become academies if they wish to do so, in order to ensure that these great institutions continue their work?

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education (Mr Sam Gyimah):** My hon. Friend is absolutely right. Although maintained nurseries provide only 3% of the places in early years, they offer excellent early-years education and, over the past few years, we have seen the structure of maintained nurseries evolve as a number have federated or joined multi-academy trusts. I know that my hon. Friend has a special interest in this area, and I would welcome the opportunity to meet him to discuss how we can promote the excellent work that those nurseries do.

**Caroline Flint** (Don Valley) (Lab): On 20 April, the Comptroller and Auditor General, Sir Amyas Morse, provided an adverse opinion for the second year running on the truth and fairness of the Department for Education's group financial statements. Sir Amyas said:

"Providing Parliament with a clear view of academy trusts' spending is a vital part of the Department for Education's work—yet it is failing to do this."

How will the Secretary of State ensure that Parliament will be able to see whether extending academies is giving the taxpayer good value for money, when that clearly is not happening now?

**Nicky Morgan:** I utterly refute what the right hon. Lady has just said. We have a more rigorous system for the governance of individual academies when they become academies. The issue with the Department's consolidated accounts is a technical and accounting problem caused by academies producing accounts covering the academic year to the end of August, rather than to the end of March. We have now agreed with Parliament a new methodology for the current financial year that will better reflect the situation.

T5. [904646] **Rehman Chishti** (Gillingham and Rainham) (Con): Will the Secretary of State join me in congratulating the excellent headteacher, staff, students and governors at Barnsole Primary School in my constituency, which has gone from "requires improvement" to "overall: outstanding"?

**Nicky Morgan:** I thank my hon. Friend for his question, and I should like to thank the head, Sean McKeown, his staff and the pupils of Barnsole Primary School for an outstanding Ofsted judgment. It is an amazing achievement to move from "requires improvement" to "outstanding", and I was pleased to read a report describing the high-quality teaching that leads its pupils to make accelerated progress in reading, writing and maths. I hope that the school will now consider sharing its experience and expertise by forming a multi-academy trust.

**Catherine McKinnell** (Newcastle upon Tyne North) (Lab): The vast majority of children entering the care system have experienced abuse and neglect and are particularly vulnerable in regard to their mental health needs. Will the Minister accept the concerns expressed by the NSPCC, which I share, that if the Department does not commit to counting and tracking abused and neglected children, those children will continue to be at risk of falling through the cracks and not receiving the mental health support that they need to rebuild their lives?

**Edward Timpson:** I had the opportunity to appear in front of the Education Committee during its inquiry into exactly this issue, which I welcome. The hon. Lady is right to highlight the fact that this area needs a better response. That is why we have set up a joint working group with the Department of Health to create new care pathways specifically for looked-after children to improve their mental health prospects. We also have the strengths and difficulties questionnaire for children who are looked after, which is collected every 12 months, but we need to look at what more we can do to follow their progress and ensure that they really achieve what they are capable of.

T7. [904648] **Mr Philip Hollobone** (Kettering) (Con): At the end of last week, Tresham College, which has its headquarters in Kettering, announced draft proposals

to end its A-level provision. I join local parents and students in opposing those plans but, should the worst outcome be realised, will the Minister make it clear to the college that it must do everything it can to ensure that those students who have already completed one year of their A-level course will be able to complete the second year at Tresham College?

**The Minister for Skills (Nick Boles):** I am happy to reassure my hon. Friend that the college would have a clear responsibility to ensure that those students were able to complete their A-levels at another high-quality institution, and I would be happy to work with him to ensure that it lives up to that responsibility.

**Jo Cox (Batley and Spen) (Lab):** Does the Secretary of State accept that all the evidence shows that being an academy is intrinsically neither good nor bad for a school's performance? With expert opinion now lined up from the County Councils Network to the Bow Group, it is surely time to revisit this flawed plan to force schools to become academies against their will.

**Nicky Morgan:** The hon. Lady ought to take note of Andreas Schleicher, the deputy director for education and skills at the OECD, who says:

“What our data do show is that school systems which offer a greater deal of school autonomy tend to have higher performance, but they do not say anything about trends...I view the trend towards academies as a very promising development in the UK, which used to have quite a prescriptive education system, if you look at this through international comparison”.

I think we should take note of the international evidence.

**Ben Howlett (Bath) (Con):** As a school governor at the Bath Studio School, which is a member of a multi-academy trust, I must declare an interest. I have seen for myself the amazing performance that is being improved as a result of being a member of that academy chain. Will the Secretary of State join me in welcoming the continued success of academies in Bath, and does she

agree that having an increasing number of good and outstanding schools will ensure that our standards match those of our international competitors?

**Nicky Morgan:** I had the pleasure of visiting The Bath Studio School with my hon. Friend, and it was excellent and inspiring for the young people there. Some 1.4 million more children are in schools rated good or outstanding than in 2010. We intend to push on with that.

**Andrew Gwynne (Denton and Reddish) (Lab):** Does the Secretary of State share the concerns of parents at Audenshaw School academy trust, which has withheld £40,000 a year of pupil premium money for the past three years? Is that not the wrong intention for that money?

**Nicky Morgan:** I am of course concerned to hear about that. The hon. Gentleman and I have had conversations about academies and schools in his constituency. He can write to me with further details, but, yes, the pupil premium money has to be spent on those most in need and has to get to the frontline.

**Caroline Ansell (Eastbourne) (Con):** Teachers and primary headteachers in my constituency have contacted me about the additional workload that unexpected academisation could place on them. As a teacher, I share that concern. What steps is my right hon. Friend taking to ensure that time, focus, energy and morale are not lost while the White Paper is discussed and that teachers continue to do what they do best—inspire young people and children?

**Nicky Morgan:** We have set out that schools will have six years, from now until 2022, to become academies. However, the point is that teachers should be doing what they do best, which is teaching in the classroom. Support is available for schools that want to become academies, and the heads and governors of schools will be driving that process.

## Shipbuilding on the Clyde

3.36 pm

**Emily Thornberry** (Islington South and Finsbury) (Lab) (*Urgent Question*): To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the Government's plans for shipbuilding on the Clyde.

**The Minister for Defence Procurement (Mr Philip Dunne)**: Before I answer the hon. Lady's question, I am sure that the whole House will join me in offering our sincere condolences to the family and friends of Captain David Seath, who tragically died after collapsing during the London marathon on Sunday. This was of course not an operational casualty, but given the interest that many hon. Members take in raising funds for charity through the marathon, as do many members of our armed forces, I thought that it was appropriate to start my response in that way. Our thoughts are with his family and friends at this difficult time.

I welcome the opportunity to outline our plans for building complex warships. The Type 26 global combat ship programme is central to those plans. The strategic defence and security review restated this Government's commitment to the Type 26 global combat ship programme. The ships are critical for the Royal Navy, and we are going ahead with eight anti-submarine warfare Type 26 global combat ships. The SDSR also made it clear that build work on Type 26 would be preceded by the construction of two additional offshore patrol vessels and that we would launch a concept study and then design and build a new class of lighter, flexible, general purpose frigates. The construction of the additional offshore patrol vessels will provide valuable capability for the Royal Navy and, crucially, will provide continuity of shipbuilding workload at the shipyards on the Clyde before construction of the Type 26 begins.

Nothing has changed since the publication of the SDSR, and over the next decade, we will spend around £8 billion on Royal Navy surface warships. We continue to progress the Type 26 global combat ship programme, and we announced last month the award of a contract with BAE Systems valued at £472 million to extend the Type 26 demonstration phase to June 2017. That will enable us to continue to work with industry to develop an optimised schedule for the Type 26 and OPV programme to reflect the outcome of the SDSR, to mature further the detailed ship design ahead of the start of manufacture, to invest in shore testing facilities and to extend our investment in the wider supply chain in parallel with the continuing re-baselining work.

Overall, the SDSR achieved a positive and balanced outcome, growing the defence budget in real terms for the first time in six years, delivering on our commitment to spend at least 2% of GDP on defence and, in the maritime sector, setting the trajectory for expansion of the Royal Navy's frigate fleet. That growth in numbers will be achieved through the introduction of a more affordable light general purpose frigate—GPF. The GPF reflects a shift in the Navy's focus and posture to delivering the strategic defence outputs of continuous at-sea deterrence and continuous carrier capability with our unique high-end warships: six Type 45 destroyers and eight Type 26 frigates. A large range of other naval tasks will be undertaken by the GPF.

To deliver the SDSR, we must improve and develop our national shipbuilding capability to become more efficient, sustainable and competitive internationally. To that end, we announced the intent to have a national shipbuilding strategy, and I am delighted that Sir John Parker, a pre-eminent engineer and foremost authority in naval shipbuilding, has started work as the independent chair of that project. I look forward to receiving his recommendations, which will address, among other things, the best approach to the GPF build.

I understand the strong interest in the timing of the award of the contract to build the T26 global combat ship, and I also understand that reports of delays create anxiety, but let me assure the shipyard workers on the Clyde that this Government remain absolutely committed to the Type 26 programme and to assembling the ships on the Clyde, and that we are working closely with BAE Systems to take the Type 26 programme forward, ensuring that it is progressed on a sustainable and stable footing.

More broadly for Scotland, our commitment to the successor programme will sustain 6,800 military and civilian jobs there, rising to 8,200 by 2022. As the programme progresses, an additional 270 personnel will be based at Her Majesty's naval base Clyde. Extending the Typhoon until at least 2040, and upgrading it with the active electronically scanned array radar, will benefit RAF Lossiemouth and continue to benefit Selex ES in Edinburgh. Our new maritime patrol aircraft will be based at RAF Lossiemouth, which is ideally placed for the most common maritime patrol areas and is currently used as a maritime patrol aircraft operating base by our NATO allies. This will also lead to significant investment, and our current estimate is for some 200 extra jobs in Scotland.<sup>1</sup>

**Mr Speaker:** Order. I am most grateful to the Minister for his words, but I gently point out that he took more than twice his allotted time. I felt that he had germane information to impart, so I let it go on this occasion, but I cannot do so on a subsequent occasion; there are rules in this place and they must be observed. In recognition of how long it took the Minister, the hon. Lady now has slightly longer, if she wishes to take it.

**Emily Thornberry:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. May I, on behalf of the Opposition, also extend our condolences to the family of Captain David Seath?

I am grateful for the opportunity to raise this matter in an urgent question, although I am deeply disappointed that the Minister had to be dragged to the House this afternoon to explain what on earth has been going on with the Government so far. The Secretary of State cannot be seen for dust. After three days of considerable uncertainty over the future of British shipbuilding, during which the Government have remained completely silent, the Secretary of State has, unfortunately, failed to clear the air. This is about a commitment to our Royal Navy and the national defence of the UK.

As a maritime nation, it is bad enough that our Navy has had its surface fleet cut by a sixth since this Government came into office. We have been promised that at least 13 new frigates will be built, but if the timetable for delivering the new frigates has slipped, the Government's promise to maintain the Navy's fleet at its current size is put at risk. Can the Minister answer a simple question: will construction begin this year, in line with previous

1. [Official Report, 3 May 2016, Vol. 609, c. 1MC.]

commitments? He claims that the orders for the new frigates will proceed as set out in the SDSR, but it says nothing about the timetable—and the timetable is vital. The unions are now being told that this could be delayed by up to a year. Is he saying that that is not the case? Does he also deny the claims made by unions that the start of Type 26 construction has already been delayed?

The issue is not just about the Type 26 frigates. Over the past two years, the Government have repeatedly promised that all 13 of the Navy's new frigates would be built on the Clyde—not only the eight Type 26s, but “at least” five lighter frigates announced in the SDSR as well. Can we have confirmation that that is still true today? What about the budget? There are rumours that the next two offshore patrol vessels will now come out of the same budget as the frigates, meaning that the overall budget is almost certain to fall—is that right? Has nothing changed, as the Minister says? If that is right, why has BAE Systems not denied press reports that there will be redundancies at the shipyards? If that is not the case, why are the unions being told that there will be redundancies? This is a matter of national importance for the United Kingdom. The future of hundreds of people in Glasgow hang on the Minister's words this afternoon. Will he please answer my questions about delay, as this is a very important matter?

The Government say that they are publishing a shipbuilding strategy later this year. We have been waiting 16 months, and we are now told that a chair has been appointed. That is good, but will we get the shipbuilding strategy this year, because, frankly, at the moment, it looks like a shambles? This is not the time for weasel words such as “optimised schedules”. We need clear-cut assurances from the Government that they will honour the commitments that they have made both to local communities and to our national defences. If they do not honour those commitments, this will be yet another Tory betrayal of Scotland, which the SNP will not be able to fix. Only a British Labour Government will be in a position to safeguard the future of Glasgow's shipbuilding industry.

**Mr Dunne:** I am grateful to you, Mr Speaker, for your advice at the end of my opening remarks. I will keep my response brief.

The hon. Lady is seeking to make party political capital out of a routine meeting between BAE Systems and the trade unions that took place last week and that happened to come nearly two weeks ahead of the election for the Scottish Parliament. As I said in my opening remarks, the commitment of this Government to the Royal Navy is crystal clear. We have a 10-year forward equipment plan, in which we will be investing more than £8 billion in surface ships. Where is her party's commitment to the Royal Navy? What percentage of GDP will her party commit to spend on defence in this country? We hear nothing about that.

Let me turn to the hon. Lady's specific questions. She asked whether construction will begin this year. As I said earlier, we placed a contract last month for a further £472 million, which takes our contract on this programme up to some £1.6 billion. That is paying for equipment sets for the first three vessels; long lead items; and shore-testing facilities. The programme therefore remains on track. We have confirmed before, and I have done so again today, that there will be eight Type 26

frigates built on the Clyde. As I have said, this is a multi-year programme that extends beyond the equipment plan. The Type 23s will be replaced by a combination of the Type 26s and the new GPF.

The hon. Lady asked when the national shipbuilding strategy will be published. We have invited the independent chairman to ensure that his work is completed before the end of the year, and I fully expect that it will be. She asked when the timeframe for the general purpose frigates will be determined. As that is a principal part of the national shipbuilding strategy, the answer will be apparent once that strategy is published.

**Dr Julian Lewis (New Forest East) (Con):** Since 1997, the total number of frigates and destroyers has declined from 35 to only 19. Does the Minister recognise that the lighter general purpose frigates could offer a great opportunity to reverse that decline in numbers and to create not only more platforms for the Royal Navy, but more work for the shipyards and possibly even export opportunities if the frigate is designed in the right way, which should be modular, adaptable and capable of being upgraded in service, rather than having all the accoutrements put on it from day one?

**Mr Dunne:** I thank my right hon. Friend for his question. He is very knowledgeable about matters naval. He is right to draw attention to the fact that the introduction of a new and lighter class of frigate raises the prospect not only of more surface platforms for the Royal Navy, but of more exports. As far as I am aware, there has not been a complex warship exported from Clyde yards to other navies around the world for some decades. This provides us with the opportunity, through the general purpose frigate and the additional offshore patrol vessels, to give the Royal Navy, in due course, a larger physical presence and therefore to reverse the decades of decline.

**Brendan O'Hara (Argyll and Bute) (SNP):** I am sure that those watching will be disappointed that this urgent question descended so quickly into a Tory-Labour bun fight. I pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline and West Fife (Douglas Chapman), whose question exposed the revised timetable. The reply he received confirmed what we have suspected ever since the strategic defence and security review was published last year: that this Government are creating the conditions in which to betray workers on the Clyde once again. Earlier today, Scotland's First Minister met the unions at BAE Systems, and they expressed their grave concern that the UK Government are set to renege on the promise they made, along with the Labour party, before the independence referendum, that there would be a steady stream of work coming to the yards on the Clyde, guaranteeing employment. Just three years ago, the Prime Minister said:

“Scottish defence jobs are more secure as part of the United Kingdom.”

Given that, can the Minister confirm today that there will be no redundancies at BAE Systems in Glasgow, and will he confirm that the Ministry of Defence will stick to the timeline that has been agreed and set out?

**Mr Dunne:** What I can confirm to the hon. Gentleman is that, had the independence vote gone the way that he and his colleagues would have liked, no warships would

[Mr Dunne]

have been built on the Clyde, because the United Kingdom Government would not have chosen to build them there; we made that very clear. As it is, as I have just confirmed to the House, we will be proceeding with the construction of eight complex Type 26 warships on the Clyde as and when the programme is ready.

**Jack Lopresti** (Filton and Bradley Stoke) (Con): Does my hon. Friend share my concern that the shadow Defence Secretary's refusal to commit her party to the NATO target of spending a minimum of 2% of GDP on defence is a threat not only to our national security, but to key equipment programmes and investment for the Type 26?

**Mr Dunne:** My hon. Friend is right to highlight that obfuscation on the part of the official Opposition. I draw to his attention the backlog of work ahead of shipbuilders in this country as a result of our equipment plan and our commitment to build the eight Type 26 vessels. No warship yard in Europe has the prospect of eight warships to look forward to. From that perspective, those working in those yards in Scotland can take considerable heart from the fact that they are working in our yards, rather than those elsewhere in Europe.

**Mr Iain Wright** (Hartlepool) (Lab): The Secretary of State for Defence has stated in the past that UK warships are only built in UK yards, but what percentage of the total contract value will flow to British companies, and what specific work will be given to the British steel industry from those contracts, with regard to not only the value of the orders in the supply chain, but the swift timetabling for the awarding of contracts, to help the beleaguered British steel industry now?

**Mr Dunne:** That is a good question, and I wish that I were in a position to give the hon. Gentleman a full answer. What I will say is that the vast majority of the contracts that have been placed thus far have gone to UK contractors. In relation to the systems and long-lead items that have been placed thus far, the contracts have gone primarily to BAE Systems and Rolls-Royce; in relation to the gearboxes, they have gone to David Brown. As far as the steel content is concerned—I know this is a matter of great interest to the hon. Gentleman—I have made it very clear previously in the House that UK steel mills will have the opportunity to bid for steel tenders that are put out by the prime contractor over the course of this programme. It will be up to the British steel industry to see whether it is in a position to match those orders for the specification and the timelines required.

**Mrs Flick Drummond** (Portsmouth South) (Con): Does my hon. Friend have any information on when the designation of the GP frigates will be confirmed? Will it be a Type 31, as has been rumoured in the press, and will it, as my right hon. Friend the Member for New Forest East (Dr Lewis) said, be directed to exports? Will we be building it, or will we get ideas from outside on what the exports should be?

**Mr Dunne:** My hon. Friend pushes me to pre-empt the Royal Navy's normal routine on the making of designations and, indeed, the naming of vessels—she did not ask about that, but I am regularly asked about it

by colleagues in the House, who rightly like to express an interest on behalf of their constituents. I am afraid I cannot currently give her any comfort on the designation of the vessels. She is right to ask whether they will be designed with export prospects in mind. As I said to my right hon. Friend the Member for New Forest East (Dr Lewis), the Chairman of the Defence Committee, that is something we intend to look at, but the priority will be to meet the requirements of the Royal Navy, rather than of other navies, so the vessels will be designed to Royal Navy specifications, but with an eye on the possibility of exports to other navies.

**John Woodcock** (Barrow and Furness) (Lab/Co-op): Does the Minister have an estimate of the percentage of work on the frigates that will be carried out in Scotland? Has that changed over the last 18 months, and do the Government have an estimate of how many fewer shipbuilding-related jobs there would be in Scotland if the Scottish National party got its wish to carry out its obsession with taking Scotland out of the United Kingdom?

**Mr Dunne:** The hon. Gentleman is a doughty champion of English shipbuilding capability in his constituency, which is across the border from Scotland. I do not have a figure for him—he asked what would happen with the Type 26 programme in Scotland—but our intent is to build the ships on the Clyde, in Scotland, so I do not foresee any direct change from the position we were in last year. As far as his comment on independence is concerned, he is absolutely right that there would have been an enormous reduction in the jobs in Scotland had the Scottish people decided to follow Scottish National party advice and vote for an independent Scotland. [Interruption.]

**Mr Speaker:** Order. Some people need to calm down. Mr Blackford, you are an extraordinary individual; you do become very excitable. I prefer your cerebral side. If you feel you can find it before the afternoon is out, the House would be greatly obliged to you. I call Tom Pursglove.

**Tom Pursglove** (Corby) (Con): Following on from the question from the hon. Member for Hartlepool (Mr Wright)—

**Carol Monaghan** (Glasgow North West) (SNP): On a point of order, Mr Speaker—

**Mr Speaker:** Order. We can come to points of order later. I say to Carol Monaghan that I do not know what has exercised her, but we cannot deal with the matter now. We will have points of order afterwards, when I will happily hear her. [Interruption.] There is a certain amount of gesticulation going on. Members on the Labour Benches and the SNP Benches should calm down. I will come to the point of order at the appropriate time if it is still germane. Now, we must all unite in hearing Mr Tom Pursglove.

**Tom Pursglove:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Following on from the question from the hon. Member for Hartlepool, has any specific assessment been made of the impact of any delays in the programme, particularly on the British steel industry?



**Mr Dunne:** We have made it very clear that British Government procurement policies are being adopted by the Ministry of Defence. In all our contracts where steel is involved, we are looking to provide for contractors to ensure that British steel manufacturers have an opportunity to bid. In that respect, the only change is that there are perhaps greater opportunities since we implemented that new policy than there were before.

**Mr Alistair Carmichael** (Orkney and Shetland) (LD): The workforce on the Clyde are highly skilled and motivated men and women, and I really do wish that the focus of the House this afternoon could be on preserving their futures and livelihoods, instead of on other considerations. With that in mind, will the Minister assure me that, between the end of the construction of the offshore patrol vessels and the start of work on the Type 26 frigates, everything will be done to ensure continuity, because it is in our national strategic interest to ensure that the workforce is maintained?

**Mr Dunne:** I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for focusing his question on that important subject, and I agree that the workforce on the Clyde are highly skilled; indeed, I make a point of meeting the trade union representatives of shipbuilders on the Clyde, and I did so last month. The short answer to his question is yes. The five offshore patrol vessels—three of which are in build, and two of which we added as part of the SDSR—do provide continuity between the Type 45s and the aircraft carrier blocks, as they finish being produced on the Clyde, and the beginning of work on the Type 26s.

**Richard Drax** (South Dorset) (Con): I welcome the news of the new-build ships. We still do not have enough, but we are going in the right direction. May I ask that no HM ships currently serving be withdrawn before and until any new ship is built and commissioned?

**Mr Dunne:** I think my hon. Friend is referring to the Type 23 class of frigates. The Royal Navy's intention is that the new vessels replace Type 23s on a like-for-like basis as they come out of service.

**Carol Monaghan** (Glasgow North West) (SNP): When the Prime Minister visited BAE in February last year, he stated that the contract for the Type 26 frigates would secure jobs on the Clyde for the next 30 years. The delays in this contract now threaten the very jobs that the contract should secure. Will he tell the workforce when they should expect to cut steel on the first Type 26?

**Mr Dunne:** I can tell the workforce that, as I have told their trade union representatives—I also said this to the hon. Lady when she visited me last month—we have a programme for the Type 26, the offshore patrol vessels and the subsequent general purpose frigate that will secure jobs for the shipbuilding workforce in this country, especially on the Clyde, for decades to come. This is the biggest shipbuilding forward programme we have had in this country for a number of years, and that should reassure the highly skilled workforce that they will have jobs for decades to come.

**Jason McCartney** (Colne Valley) (Con): With quality jobs and apprenticeships being secured at David Brown engineering in Huddersfield, which is producing the

gears for the Type 26 frigates, will the Minister assure me that as we move forward with the general purpose frigate programme the northern powerhouse will be a major part of that programme?

**Mr Dunne:** My hon. Friend is right to highlight the gear box work for David Brown, which, as I said earlier, has secured long-lead contracts last month. The benefit of the Royal Navy shipbuilding programme is not confined to Scotland; it affects constituencies right across this country, which is just as it should be. When contracts are placed, we will seek to highlight to hon. Members the work we will be providing in their constituencies for their constituents.

**Paula Sherriff** (Dewsbury) (Lab): Amid the politics, perhaps the House could remember the estimated 800 families for whom, with their livelihoods at risk, this is a very worrying time. Will the Minister confirm that the promised investment in upgrading the shipyards will still go ahead?

**Mr Dunne:** I hope that some of the remarks I made earlier will provide some reassurance to the families of those who work on the Clyde. Part of the contracts we have already signed with BAE Systems will help to provide shore test facilities both on the Clyde and through the supply chain, so some investment is going into facilities. The overall level of facilities investment will be part of the overall contract, so I cannot update the hon. Lady further at this point.

**Mr Philip Hollobone** (Kettering) (Con): Our Type 45 destroyers have world-class capability, but they cost £1 billion each. One of the reasons they cost more and took longer to build than we thought they would is that they kept being redesigned after construction had started, and we now learn that there have been major problems with the power plant. Will the Minister assure the House that these mistakes will be avoided with the Type 26 frigates?

**Mr Dunne:** My hon. Friend makes a really valuable point. There is no doubt that before starting the construction of a complex warship, it makes an enormous difference if the design is more complete than otherwise. He is right to point out that the Type 45 programme began with a less advanced design than the Type 26 will have, and we hope we are learning lessons from that. We have certainly learned lessons in relation to the power and propulsion, and we will have a different system.

**Chris Stephens** (Glasgow South West) (SNP): As someone with the privilege of representing the Govan shipyard, may I first tell the Minister that a meeting between an employer and trade unions, with 800 jobs at risk, is not "a routine meeting" by any standard? I hope he will reflect on his earlier remarks. Will the Minister confirm that the original date for cutting steel for the Type 26 was May 2016, and will he explain the reasons for the delay? Finally, what message does the Minister have for the trade unions and the workforce on the Clyde, who view the national shipbuilding strategy with suspicion and as an attempt to reduce the role of shipbuilding on the Clyde? Are the fears of the workforce unfounded, or is that another betrayal that is still to come?

**Mr Dunne:** It is very unfortunate that the hon. Gentleman, who represents his constituents well—I have been pleased to meet him at the yard in the past—uses words such as “betrayal”, because that does not characterise what is happening. We are making commitments to build the Type 26 for several years ahead. I cannot, I am afraid, give him an update on the date for cut steel, as that will emerge from the programme work that is yet to be finalised. It is wrong to suggest that people should be fearful of the outcome of the national shipbuilding project, which seeks to put the rollercoaster ride of shipbuilding in this country in recent years on to a firm and stable footing so that there is clarity for the next decades. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Gentleman says, “That is what they think”, so perhaps I can help him by saying that the objective of the national shipbuilding strategy is to align the Royal Navy’s requirements, which stretch out for many years ahead, with the capability to maintain in this country the high-quality engineering skills that, at present, reside primarily on the Clyde in his constituency.

**Stephen Doughty** (Cardiff South and Penarth) (Lab/Co-op): I very much second the comments made about the importance of using UK steel in these products, unlike in many recent Ministry of Defence projects. I want to ask the Minister two very specific questions: will there still be five general purpose frigates, and where will they be built—on the Clyde or elsewhere?

**Mr Dunne:** The hon. Gentleman will have to wait and see what emerges from the national shipbuilding strategy. The intent is that by having a more affordable design we are able to do some of the less high-tempo tasks that the Type 26 will undertake. That should allow the Royal Navy to have more than five frigates. I can confirm that the intent is to replace the Type 23s on a like-for-like basis as between the Type 26 and the general purpose frigate, with the potential for there to be more. He will have to wait to see what emerges from the national shipbuilding strategy with regard to the timetable and the location.

**Stewart Malcolm McDonald** (Glasgow South) (SNP): As ever at this time of year, there is much reminiscing over the UK’s defeat of Argentina. Given that that took a taskforce of 42 Royal Navy ships, does the Minister really expect us to believe that a fleet of 19 frigates and destroyers is sufficient for a Navy with the strategic ambitions outlined in the 2015 SDSR?

**Mr Dunne:** I remind the hon. Gentleman that part of the strategic ambition is fulfilled by the two primary battlegroup capabilities: continuous at-sea deterrence and the continuous carrier capability. I can absolutely reassure him that the military assets in place on and around the Falklands are of an order of magnitude greater than they have been in previous times, particularly compared with 1982, so the notion of having to send a flotilla of the type that was sent at that time would not be required in the event of a threat to the Falklands today.

**Alison McGovern** (Wirral South) (Lab): Shipbuilders on the Clyde are very skilled, as are those on Merseyside, and they share having experienced the threat of redundancy over many years. Will the Minister confirm that the Government’s now-delayed shipbuilding strategy, once we have it, will cover the supply chain in all parts of this country, wherever marine engineering skills reside?

**Mr Dunne:** The objective of the national shipbuilding strategy is to look at the manufacture of complex warships. As part of that, there are, as the hon. Lady says, significant capabilities across the country through the supply chain. We are not expecting a detailed review of all elements of the supply chain, but I take her point and will reflect on it in my conversations with Sir John Parker.

**Kirsten Oswald** (East Renfrewshire) (SNP): I asked in July about the building of Type 26 frigates, when it had been reported that the order process could be fragmented to bring to it what the Government called “realism”. With this uncertainty, exactly what kind of realism are the Government looking to bring? Does the Minister not think that the workforce on the Clyde deserve to hear, specifically and clearly, exactly what work will be available and when?

**Mr Dunne:** The hon. Lady will have to have a little more patience. The way in which major procurements of this nature take place means that it is not appropriate to set hares running or, frankly, to be alarmist about the prospects for individual companies or locations. Until such time as a contract has been signed, there is not the clarity that the hon. Lady seeks to achieve.

**Ms Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh** (Ochil and South Perthshire) (SNP): The 2015 SDSR gave an explicit commitment to the eight Type 26 frigates being built on the Clyde. Given that the workers at Govan and Scotstoun also heard that there would be 12 Type 45 destroyers, and then that there would be eight, before finally being given work for six, does the Minister wonder why the Clyde workforce are unsure about MOD promises? On that basis, can he categorically confirm that eight Type 26s will be built there?

**Mr Dunne:** The hon. Lady needs to speak to those who were in post when the decisions were taken to reduce the Type 45 class. That was certainly not done under this Government. We made it crystal clear in the SDSR that eight Type 26 global combat ships would be built on the Clyde. In response to the hon. Member for East Renfrewshire (Kirsten Oswald), may I say that that is the reassurance that the workforce on the Clyde need? This is a forward programme, the like of which, during the past six years under the previous coalition Government, we had not been able to implement: now we can.

**Stephen Kinnock** (Aberavon) (Lab): The Minister has spoken about the role of steel in the frigates and other key pieces of procurement that the MOD will be undertaking, but I was not particularly comforted by his comments on the role that procurement will play in this case. Can he confirm that local content and local value will play a key role when decisions are made about procuring steel?

**Mr Dunne:** As the hon. Gentleman knows—he may well have been an expert on the subject for a long time, but he is certainly something of an expert now—steel of the specification and standards required for naval warships is not available in many of the routine runs of, for example, plate steel provided by UK suppliers. That is why there have been different proportions of UK steel content in different types of military platforms. The offshore patrol vessels, for example, have a thinner plate

than that which is currently available from any of the mills in the UK, which is why no UK mills chose to bid for the steel content that has been contracted thus far. I cannot tell him whether there is capability at this stage for the Type 26 steel requirements, but I have made a commitment that we will invite steel manufacturers to understand what those capabilities are and give them an opportunity to bid.

**Tommy Sheppard** (Edinburgh East) (SNP): The Minister said earlier that he is still confident that the Department's orders will provide job security for decades to come, but that will be of little benefit to anyone who is made redundant between now and when the Department makes up its mind what it is going to do. May I ask him again the question that he has not so far answered: will he give a commitment that there will be no compulsory redundancies on the Clyde as a result of these delays?

**Mr Dunne:** All I can say to the hon. Gentleman and to the workforce on the Clyde is that we have, through the SDSR and again today, made a commitment to build eight Type 26s on the Clyde. That will provide work for the highly skilled workforce on the Clyde for many years.

**Gavin Newlands** (Paisley and Renfrewshire North) (SNP): There is a growing sense of anger and frustration on the Clyde, and many of those hard-working and highly skilled workers are starting to feel as though they have been used as constitutional pawns. What does the Minister say in response to the secretary of GMB Scotland, who said that the UK Government's recent actions in the Clyde are "a total betrayal of the upper Clyde workforce"?

**Mr Dunne:** I find it hard to characterise a commitment to build eight complex warships on the Clyde as a betrayal. That is what we did in the SDSR and it has not changed.

**Peter Grant** (Glenrothes) (SNP): Nicola Sturgeon, the First Minister, has today written to the Prime Minister saying:

"The BAE yards on the Clyde require a cast iron commitment from your government that you will deliver the contract as promised, with the full scale up of the workforce without any risk to employment at the yards."

Will the Minister recommend that the Government reply positively to that request?

**Mr Dunne:** I am sorry to have to say to the hon. Gentleman that the risk to employment on the Clyde would have arisen if the people of Scotland had followed his advice and chosen to vote for an independent Scotland. Thankfully, they did not, and as a result hundreds of people are still working in shipbuilding on the Clyde.

**Martin Docherty-Hughes** (West Dunbartonshire) (SNP): In a debate such as this, language is extremely important. In his response, the Minister has stated that ships would be "assembled", and, at one point, "constructed". To clarify

and put it beyond doubt, will he tell the House, and those in my constituency who work in the shipyards and those represented by my hon. Friends, that that will include fabrication, and that the process will be in the yards from beginning to end, not somewhere else?

**Mr Dunne:** I encourage the hon. Gentleman to spend a little more time in the yards on the Clyde to understand how components and systems are an integral part of the capability of building a complex warship. Fabrication is an important part, but much of the value and content comes from introducing weapons command and control systems, which are not built on the Clyde. Fabrication is done there, as is integration, and that will continue to be undertaken there.

**Steven Paterson** (Stirling) (SNP): On 4 April 2013, the Prime Minister said that Scottish defence jobs were "more secure as part of the United Kingdom."

Does the Minister realise how ridiculous that now sounds?

**Mr Dunne:** I have to repeat to the hon. Gentleman that we have committed to build eight Type 26 complex warships on the Clyde. Had the people of Scotland voted for an independent future, we would not have made that commitment.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**Mr Speaker:** Order. After a little time to simmer down, I hope that the hon. Member for Ross, Skye and Lochaber (Ian Blackford) has now acquired the poise, gravitas and serenity to which he should aspire.

**Ian Blackford** (Ross, Skye and Lochaber) (SNP): Thank you, Mr Speaker, but perhaps, like the workers on the Clyde, we on the Scottish National party Benches are beginning gently to simmer. I reflect on the Minister's words: he said that the demonstration phase is now going to continue to June 2017. Is the cat not now out of the bag—he is putting back the construction process? Why does he not give a guarantee to the workforce that their jobs are safe? We can all now reflect on what Better Together meant—duping the people of Scotland once again.

**Mr Dunne:** I am not sure that the simmering has really calmed the hon. Gentleman down. As I have said, we have made a clear commitment to build eight Type 26s on the Clyde, providing high-quality jobs. That would not have been the case had the people of Scotland voted for independence.

**Carol Monaghan:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Speaker:** Points of order come after statements, and there are a number of statements. That is the way in which we deal with these matters, and that is how it will be handled today.

## Junior Doctors Contracts

4.18 pm

### **The Secretary of State for Health (Mr Jeremy Hunt):**

We have many choices in life, but one thing over which we have no control is the day of the week that we get ill. That is why the first line on the first page of this Government's manifesto said that if elected we would deliver a seven-day NHS, so we can promise NHS patients the same high-quality care every day of the week. We know from countless studies that there is a weekend effect showing higher mortality rates for people admitted to hospital at weekends. The British public know that, too. Today, we reaffirm that no trade union has the right to veto a manifesto promise voted for by the British people. We are proud of the NHS as one of our greatest institutions, but we must turn that pride into actions. A seven-day service will help us to turn the NHS into one of the safest, highest-quality healthcare systems in the world.

This week, the British Medical Association has called on junior doctors to withdraw emergency care for the first time ever. I will update the House on the extensive measures being taken up and down the country to try to keep patients safe. But before I do so I wish to appeal directly to all junior doctors not to withdraw emergency cover, which creates particular risks for A&Es, maternity units and intensive care units.

I understand the frustration that many junior doctors feel that, because of pressures on the NHS frontline, they are not always able to give patients the highest quality of care that they would like to. I understand that some doctors may disagree with the Government about our seven-day NHS plans and, in particular, the introduction of a new contract. I also understand that doctors work incredibly hard, including at weekends, and that strong feelings exist on the single remaining disagreement of substance: Saturday premium pay. However, the new contract offers junior doctors who work frequently at weekends more Saturday premium pay than nurses, paramedics and the assistants who work in their own operating theatres, and more than police officers, firefighters and nearly every other worker in the public and private sectors.

Regrettably, over the course of this pay dispute 150,000 sick and vulnerable people have seen their care disrupted. The public will rightly question whether this is appropriate or proportionate action by professionals whose patients depend on them. Taking strike action is a choice. If they will not listen to the Health Secretary, I urge them to listen to some of the country's most experienced doctors—Professor Sir Bruce Keogh, Professor Dame Sally Davies and former Labour Health Minister Lord Darzi—who have all urged doctors to consider the damage it will cause to both patients and the reputation of the medical profession.

Let me today address some of the concerns raised by junior doctors: first, that a seven-day NHS might spread resources too thinly. The Government's financial commitment to the NHS has already seen a like-for-like increase of 10,700 more hospital nurses and 10,100 more doctors. Despite the pressure on national finances, last year's spending review committed the Government to a £10 billion real-terms increase in the annual NHS

budget by 2020. I can today tell the House that by the end of the Parliament the supply of doctors trained to work in the NHS will have increased by a further 11,420. While it is true that pressures on the NHS will continue to increase on the back of an ageing population, we are not saying that the current workforce will have to bear all the strain of delivering a seven-day service, even though, of course, they must play their part.

Secondly, there is a concern that the Government may want to see all NHS services operating seven days a week. Let me be clear: our plans are not about elective care, but about improving the consistency of urgent and emergency care at evenings and weekends. To do this, the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges has prioritised four key clinical standards that need to be met. These are: making sure patients are seen by a senior decision maker no more than 14 hours after arrival at hospital; seven-day availability of diagnostic tests with a one-hour turnaround for the most critically ill patients; 24-hour access to consultant-directed interventions, such as interventional radiology or endoscopy; and twice daily reviews of patients in high dependency areas such as intensive care units. About one quarter of the country will be covered by trusts meeting these standards from next April, rising to the whole country by 2020.

Thirdly, there is the concern that proper seven-day services need support services for doctors in the weekends and evenings, as much as doctors themselves. Less than half of hospitals are currently meeting the standard on weekend diagnostic services, meaning patients needing urgent or emergency tests on a Saturday or Sunday, such as urgent ultrasounds for gallstones or diagnostics for acute heart failure, face extra hours in hospital at weekends or even days of anxiety waiting for weekday tests. Our new standards will change this, with senior clinician-directed diagnostic tests available seven days a week for all hospitals by 2020.

Finally, there is a legitimate concern that a seven-day NHS needs to apply to services offered outside hospitals if we are properly to reduce the pressure on struggling A&E departments. So, as announced last week, the Government's seven-day NHS will also see transformed services through our GPs. We are committing an extra £2.4 billion a year for GP services by 2020-21, meaning that spending will rise from £9.6 billion last year to over £12 billion by 2021—a 14% real-terms increase. Thanks to this significant investment, patients will see a genuine transformation in how general practice services operate in England. By 2020, everyone should have easier and more convenient access to GP services, including at evenings and weekends. We will not be asking all GP practices to open at weekends to deliver this commitment, but instead using networks of practices to make sure that people can get an evening or weekend appointment, even if not at their regular practice. We have committed to recruiting an additional 5,000 doctors to work in general practice to help meet this commitment, and we will support GPs in this transformation by harnessing technology to reduce bureaucratic burdens.

Returning to the strikes, the impact of the next two days will be unprecedented, with more than 110,000 outpatient appointments and more than 12,500 operations cancelled. However, the NHS has made exhaustive preparations to try to make sure that patients remain safe, and I want to thank those many people in NHS

England, NHS Improvement and every trust in the country who have been working incredibly hard over this weekend to that effect.

I have chaired a series of contingency planning meetings, bringing together the operational response across the entirety of the NHS and social care systems. From this, NHS England has worked with every trust to ensure that they have plans in place to provide safe care, with particular focus on their emergency departments, maternity units, cardiac arrest teams and mental health crisis teams. As part of their duties for civil contingency preparedness, trusts also have major incident plans in place which are ready to be enacted if required. NHS England has also asked GP practices and other primary care providers in some areas to extend their opening hours so that patients can continue to get the important but non-emergency care that they need, such as follow-ups and assessments.

Finally, we have set up a dedicated strike page on the NHS website to provide as much information as possible to the public on local alternatives to hospital care, where these alternatives are, and when they are open. This website is now live and can be reached at [www.nhs.uk/strike](http://www.nhs.uk/strike). The NHS 111 system will also work as normal during the strike, and has been provided with additional staff to cope with expected increased demand. We would encourage people who are concerned that they may need urgent care to visit this website, and call 111 in advance of showing up at an A&E department.

The NHS is busting a gut to keep the public safe. However, we should not lose sight of the underlying reason for this dispute, namely this Government's determination to be the first country in the world to offer a proper patient-focused seven-day health service. To help deliver this, the NHS will this year receive the sixth biggest funding increase in its history. But it is not just about money, as we know from the mistakes of previous Governments. It is also about taking the tough and difficult decisions necessary to make sure that we really do turn our NHS into the safest, highest-quality healthcare system in the world. This Government will not duck that challenge. I commend this statement to the House.

4.28 pm

**Heidi Alexander** (Lewisham East) (Lab): I thank the Health Secretary for the advance copy of his statement.

Tomorrow's strike is one of the saddest days in the history of the NHS, and the saddest thing is that the person sitting opposite me could have prevented it. Yesterday the Health Secretary was presented with a genuine and constructive cross-party proposal to pilot the contract. That would have enabled him to make progress towards his manifesto commitment on seven-day services and, crucially, it could have averted this week's strike. Any responsible Health Secretary would have grasped that opportunity immediately, or at least considered it and discussed it, but not this one. Yesterday morning he tweeted "Labour 'plan' is opportunism". That was a deeply disappointing and irresponsible response.

Let me remind the Health Secretary that the proposal was not a Labour plan, but was co-signed by two of his respected former Ministers, the Conservative hon. Member for Central Suffolk and North Ipswich (Dr Poulter) and the Liberal Democrat right hon. Member for North

Norfolk (Norman Lamb), and the Scottish National party's health spokesperson, the hon. Member for Central Ayrshire (Dr Whitford). Let me also remind him that it had the support of several medical royal colleges, including the Royal College of Surgeons, and, crucially, that the BMA had indicated it was prepared to meet the Government to discuss calling off Tuesday and Wednesday's action.

The Health Secretary claimed yesterday that a phased imposition was the same as a pilot. Will he explain how imposition on a predetermined timescale, with no opportunity to right the wrongs of his proposed contract and no independent assessment of its impact on patient care, is the same as a pilot? Why is he so afraid of an independent evaluation? Why does he not want to know how changing the contract contributes in practice to meeting his aspirations for more consistent emergency care across the seven days of the week? And why is he so determined to railroad this contract through, with all its associated implications, instead of road-testing it and working with junior doctors and hospital bosses to bring about the changes in patient care and outcomes he wants to see?

The Health Secretary claims that any further delay means it will take longer to eliminate the so-called weekend effect, but he has failed to produce a shred of evidence to show how changing the junior doctors contract alone will deliver that aim. He will know that the very person he appointed to lead his negotiations, Sir David Dalton, has said that the staff group that needs to change its working patterns the least to deliver seven-day care is junior doctors—because they already work weekends, nights and bank holidays.

The Health Secretary rightly talked about safety. NHS England's update today said the NHS was pulling out all the stops to minimise the risks to the quality and safety of care this week. We know that in many cases senior staff will be stepping in to provide cover and ensure the provision of essential services, but there is no escaping the fact that this is a time of unprecedented risk, and he should have thought about that yesterday, before dismissing a plan that could well have averted the strike.

The Health Secretary wants to be remembered as the person who championed patient safety, but safety is not just an issue this week; it will be an issue in the months and years ahead. Long after his tenure in Richmond House is up, it will be the people who work in the NHS who will be picking up the pieces of this dispute, and they are rightly worried about the long-term safety implications of the proposed contract. How can it be safe to impose a contract when no one knows what the impact will be on recruitment and retention but everyone fears the worst, and when he is running the risk of losing hundreds of female doctors, given the contract's disproportionate impact on women? Even if just 1% of junior doctors decide enough is enough and leave the NHS, they will be people we can ill afford to do without.

How can it be safe to impose a contract that risks destroying the morale of junior doctors, given that the NHS does not just depend on the good will of staff going the extra mile but survives on it? The Health Secretary is breaking that good will. How can it be safe to introduce a contract when there is no guarantee that effective and robust safeguards will be in place to control

[Heidi Alexander]

hours worked and shift patterns? A pilot could have addressed these issues, which is precisely why it had the backing of so many people.

I suspect that when the Health Secretary gets back to his feet, he will launch another attack on me and the Labour party to detract attention from his culpability for tomorrow's action. I know this because last week, instead of working to resolve this dispute, the Health Secretary was busy writing me a two-page letter that he briefed to *The Sun*, asking whether I would be on a picket line.

Let me deal with this matter now in the hope that we can get some constructive answers from the Health Secretary. No, I will not be on a picket line tomorrow or on Wednesday, but that is not because I do not support the junior doctors' cause, and it is certainly not because I feel even an ounce of sympathy for the Health Secretary. It is because I think patients affected by this dispute want to see politicians working together to find a constructive solution—and that is exactly what I was doing last week, while the Health Secretary was penning his pathetic political attacks.

I am flattered that the Health Secretary attaches such significance to my actions, but the truth is that it is his actions, and his actions alone, that can stop this strike: not me, not the Labour party, but him. If he ploughs on, I warn him now that history will not be kind to him. It will show that when faced with a compromise, the Health Secretary chose a fight; that when presented with a way out, this Health Secretary chose to dig in; and that when asked to put patients first, this Health Secretary chose strikes.

The way in which the Government have handled this dispute is the political equivalent of pouring oil on to a blazing fire. Even if we put to one side the legal question about his authority to impose a contract and the detail of the contract provisions, the simple truth is this: there is no trust left between the people who work in the NHS and this Health Secretary. He can barely show his face in a hospital because he ends up being chased down the road. This is a deeply, deeply sad day for the NHS, and even at this eleventh hour, I urge him to find a way out.

**Mr Hunt:** The shadow Health Secretary can do better than that. She talked about the judgments that I have made as Health Secretary, so I will tell her what is a judgment issue—it is whether or not you back a union that is withdrawing life-saving care from your own constituents. Health Secretaries should stand up for their constituents and their patients, and if she will not, I will.

The hon. Lady also talked about the trust of the profession. The Health Secretary who loses the trust of the profession is the Health Secretary who does not take tough and difficult decisions to make care better for patients—something we have seen precious little evidence of from the hon. Lady or, if I may say so, her predecessors.

The hon. Lady also talked about putting oil on a blazing fire. What, then, does she make of the shadow Chancellor's comments recently when he said:

"We have got to work to bring this Government down at the first opportunity...Whether in parliament, picket line, or the streets, this Labour leadership is with you?"

Yes, it is with the strikers, but also against the patients. Labour should be ashamed of such comments from the shadow Chancellor.

Let us deal with the substance of what the hon. Lady said. She talked about her proposal for pilots. If this was a genuine attempt to broker a deal between all the parties, why was it that the first the Government knew about it was when we read *The Sunday Times* yesterday morning? The truth is that this was about politics, not peace making. If she is saying that we should stage the implementation of this contract to make sure we get it absolutely right, I agree. That is why only 11% of junior doctors are going on to the new contract in August. She says she wants more independent studies into mortality rates at weekends, but we have already had eight in the last six years, pointing to the weekend effect. How many more studies does the hon. Lady want? Now is the time to act, to save lives, and to give our patients a safer NHS.

The hon. Lady talked about legal powers, which we discussed in the House last week. The Health Act 2006 makes very clear where my powers are to introduce a new contract, either directly or indirectly, when foundation trusts choose to follow the national contract.

I have given very straight answers today. Will the hon. Lady now tell us yes or no? Will Labour Members now tell us yes or no? Do they or do they not support the withdrawal of life-saving care from NHS patients? Last week, the hon. Lady's answer was "no comment". Well, "no comment" is no leadership. Labour used to stand up for vulnerable patients, but now it cares more about powerful unions. It is the Conservatives who are putting the money into the NHS, delivering a seven-day service for patients, and fighting to make NHS care the best in the world.

**Dr Sarah Wollaston (Totnes) (Con):** There are only losers in this bitter dispute, but those who have the most to lose are patients and their families. Tomorrow people will visit hospitals to see those whom they care about more than anything in the world, and will ask themselves why the doctors on the picket line are not inside looking after the people they love. May I ask the British Medical Association directly whether it will show dignity, put patients first, and draw back from this dangerous escalation? May I ask all sides, whatever provocation they may feel, to put patients first in this dispute?

**Mr Hunt:** My hon. Friend has spoken very wisely. She recently wrote, in *The Guardian*, something with which I profoundly agree: she wrote that there could have been a solution to this problem back in February, when a very fair compromise was put on the table in relation to the one outstanding issue of substance, Saturday pay.

I understand that this is a very emotive issue. The Government initially wanted there to be no premium pay on Saturdays, but in the end we agreed to premium pay for anyone who works one Saturday a month or more. That will cover more than half the number of junior doctors working on Saturdays. It was a fair compromise, and there was an opportunity to settle the dispute, but unfortunately the BMA negotiators were not willing to take that opportunity. I, too, urge them, whatever their differences with me and whatever their differences with the Government, to think about patients

tomorrow. It would be an absolute tragedy for the NHS if something went wrong in the next couple of days, and they have a duty to make sure that it does not.

**Dr Philippa Whitford** (Central Ayrshire) (SNP): I welcome the absolute commitment that the Secretary of State has given today that this is only about seven-day emergency care, because in the past he has often seemed to move between elective and emergency care. However, Sir Bruce Keogh has criticised the imposition of the contract, and has said that what has lost consensus across the profession has been the conflation of the need for a robust emergency service over seven days with the junior doctors' contract, when junior doctors already work seven days.

I think that people have also been upset by the use of statistics without analysis. It is not a case of extra deaths at the weekend, which suggests poor care, but a case of extra deaths among people who were admitted at weekends within 30 days. That is quite an odd formula, but we can think of factors that might contribute.

I support the four standards that the Secretary of State mentioned, but none of them relates to junior doctors. Number one is probably access to diagnosis: people lie in hospital over the weekend with no access to scans, and their whole pathway is delayed. When we conducted an in-depth audit of surgical mortality in Scotland, it identified issues such as the insufficient seniority of an operating surgeon and, later, the insufficient seniority of an operating anaesthetist. However, part of the problem is that we have not worked out what the problem is. The Secretary of State may go on about the four standards—about a senior review, 24/7 access to interventional care, and access to diagnostics—but that will not be changed by the junior doctors' contract.

The Secretary of State calls on the BMA to listen to leaders. What about the 11 royal colleges that have written to him? In his letter to the leader of the BMA over the weekend, he highlighted the things that still need to be sorted out, and that means that there is a need to talk. There has been no talking for five weeks. Surely we should stop the imposition, get rid of the strike, go back to the table, and complete the talking.

**Mr Hunt:** I agree with the hon. Lady on one point: it is a total tragedy when the Health Secretary ends up with no other choice but to impose. Had we had sensible negotiations, that would have not have been necessary. She talked about the royal colleges. They say that the withdrawal of emergency care should not happen. Clare Marx, the president of the Royal College of Surgeons, has said that she personally would not and could not strike. I have tried to be very clear this afternoon about exactly what we are trying to do, and we have been clear on many occasions that this does not apply to elective care.

If the hon. Lady is concerned about the statistics, I would encourage her to read some of the 15 international studies covering stroke, cancer, emergency surgery and paediatric care, including the very thorough Fremantle study published last September. She is right to suggest that many of them talk about senior decision-makers being present. That could be a consultant, but it could also be an experienced junior doctor. As she knows, the term "junior doctor" is something of a misnomer because someone could have been a doctor for seven years and still be a junior doctor.

The hon. Lady also asked about the link with the junior doctor contract. The single outstanding issue is Saturday pay rates, as the BMA has confirmed in private emails that it has sent out. We need to make it possible for doctors to roster more people at weekends, and Saturday pay rates are obviously connected to that. What I have tried to do today is to show that the supply of trained doctors into the NHS will be going up during this Parliament, so we will not be depending on the current workforce to supply the additional Saturday cover in its entirety. There will be more doctors going into the NHS, which will spread the burden, and that is the way that we will get the safe NHS that we want.

**John Redwood** (Wokingham) (Con): I support the vision of a seven-day NHS and a safer NHS that my right hon. Friend is so energetic about. However, for the benefit of all those uncommitted people listening to our debate who just want the NHS to work, will he tell us how big the gap is over that remaining issue, and how he sees it being resolved as quickly as possible?

**Mr Hunt:** My right hon. Friend is right to draw attention to the difficult paradox that we face. Earlier this year, we came close to an agreement and, had there been a willingness to negotiate rather than what I fear was the BMA's desire to settle for nothing less than a full Government climb-down, we could have had a deal. The outstanding issues were about pay for antisocial hours and particularly about Saturday hours pay. That is where the main difference lay. We proposed a sensible compromise on that but, as Sir David Dalton, the chief executive at Salford Royal, said, we had to decide quickly what we were going to do because the contracts are coming in this August and there is a process we have to go through. So that will be in the new contracts from this August, but we are very willing to talk to all parties, including the BMA, about the implementation of these contracts, about the contents of future contracts and about anything to ensure that this contract works, because we would much rather have a negotiated agreed solution and it is a great tragedy that we were not able to do that this time.

**Mr Dennis Skinner** (Bolsover) (Lab): When the Secretary of State came into the Chamber today, I do not know whether he realised that there was a smirk and an arrogance about him that almost betrayed the fact that he is delighted to be taking part in this activity. He could start negotiations today, wipe that smirk off his face and get down to some serious negotiations. It has had to be done in the past, but instead he comes here to try and blame the Opposition for what is taking place. This strike can only be caused by two sides: the junior hospital doctors and the Government. He is almost giving the impression that he is revelling in standing up to the junior hospital doctors. Start negotiating now and sort the matter out!

**Mr Hunt:** The hon. Gentleman has made many memorable contributions in the House, but that was unworthy of his track record. Let me tell him exactly what the Government have been trying to do to solve the issue. We have been talking to the BMA for over three years. We have had three independent processes. We have had 75 meetings to try to resolve the issues. He may be interested to know that we made 74 concessions

[*Mr Jeremy Hunt*]

in those meetings. There has been a huge effort. It is about not just talking, but both sides compromising to reach a solution. The BMA's junior doctors committee was not willing to have constructive discussions, which is why we face the tragic situation that we face now. When the hon. Gentleman says that it takes "two sides", I hope he recognises that we need a counterparty with which we can have sensible negotiations. We have not had that this time.

**Mrs Anne Main** (St Albans) (Con): I met some junior doctors on Saturday morning, and they said that they wanted to go back to talking, which perhaps means that the union is not representing doctors as well as it could—I do not know. They also said that they had genuine concerns about a couple of issues apart from pay. Will the Secretary of State look at concerns relating to rostering and timing and whether a daytime shift should finish at 1.30 am or 2 am with the next day continuing as normal? Some issues are open to discussion, and my doctors want those discussions to happen, so perhaps the union is not being as helpful as it could be.

**Mr Hunt:** I am afraid that junior doctors, who work incredibly hard and are the backbone of the NHS, have not been well represented by their union. The BMA is currently telling junior doctors not to co-operate with trusts in any discussions about the implementation of the new contract. The kinds of issues mentioned by my hon. Friend are exactly those that we want to sit down and talk to the BMA about. I wrote to Mark Porter, the chair of the BMA's council—in fact, I talked to him earlier this afternoon—about the possibility of talks to go through all those extra-contractual issues and the contract itself to ensure that we implement it in the best possible way. That is the kind of dialogue that the Government are willing to have and that we would welcome, but we need another party to come to the table if we are to succeed in doing so.

**Mr Ben Bradshaw** (Exeter) (Lab): The Health Secretary knows well that seven-day working has absolutely nothing to do with his proposed new contract. The Health Committee recently visited Salford Royal hospital, to which he referred earlier and which is already running a seven-day service on the existing contract. His petulant rejection of the all-party proposals to pilot the contract shows that tomorrow will be his responsibility and his alone.

**Mr Hunt:** Let us be absolutely clear. The people who are responsible for the strike tomorrow are those who choose to do the BMA's urging and withdraw emergency care for patients. That is where the responsibility lies.

Let me deal with the right hon. Gentleman's point directly. There are a couple of trusts in the country that have been good at introducing seven-day standards in urgent and emergency care, but my judgment, and that of the Government, is that it would not be possible under the current contractual structures to roll that out across the whole NHS. Those trusts happen to have some of the NHS's most outstanding leaders, and we need to learn from what they have done, but we also

need to make it possible for those same things to happen at all hospitals, including the right hon. Gentleman's own.

**Dr Liam Fox** (North Somerset) (Con): Those of us who have served our time as junior doctors understand the hard work and very long hours that they do in a system that has had too few doctors since its inception. Many of us believe that there is no dispute about pay and conditions that justifies putting patients' lives at risk.

There has been some confusion about what the Government have meant by a seven-day NHS. There has always been a seven-day emergency service, but it is too patchy across the country, which needs to be addressed. That is different, however, from a seven-day elective service, which simply cannot be achieved by doctors alone and requires bacteriologists, haematologists, and radiographers. Might my right hon. Friend get the Government's case to be more clearly defined in future so that we know what we are trying to achieve? There is little difference between what the Government and doctors want, notwithstanding the fact that the BMA has behaved rather badly.

**Mr Hunt:** My right hon. Friend is right; the tragedy here is that what the Government want, which is to eliminate the weekend effect, whereby there are higher mortality rates for those admitted at weekends, is exactly what every doctor wants. We should be sitting around the table discussing how we can achieve a proper, consistent, seven-day service for urgent and emergency care. When it comes to elective provision, that is not part of our plans, although some trusts are operating elective care on a seven-day basis—that is their choice. We are trying to reduce the higher mortality rates for weekend admissions, and that will be at the heart of our vision for a true seven-day NHS.

**Thangam Debbonaire** (Bristol West) (Lab): Can the Health Secretary name a single medical college that backs his decision to impose this contract?

**Mr Hunt:** All I would say is that every medical college agrees with me that doctors should not withdraw emergency care in tomorrow's strike, because, as one of my right hon. Friends said, this is a line the medical profession has not crossed before. I do not think it should cross it tomorrow either.

**Mr Speaker:** May I say, on behalf of Members on both sides of the House, how good it is to see the hon. Member for Bristol West (Thangam Debbonaire) back in her seat and, I hope, now in very good health?

**Sir Oliver Heald** (North East Hertfordshire) (Con): Many Members are as concerned as the Secretary of State is about the prospect of emergency care not being provided. Does he agree that junior doctors seem to have concerns about the rota and shift patterns, particularly where they are married to another doctor? Is he able to give any assurance that this issue will be looked at carefully as things are rolled out and that the NHS will help couples in that situation by making sure the rotas are more reasonable?



**Mr Hunt:** My hon. and learned Friend is right about that, which is why when we announced our decision to proceed with the current contracts we also said that we would set up a process to look at all the quality of life issues that could make a difference to the current junior doctor workforce and to their morale. One of those issues is that it is currently too difficult for doctors who are partners to work in the same city, because of the processes we have—we want to reform that. There are many other things we could do in terms of improving the predictability and reliability of shift patterns, but to do that we need the BMA to co-operate with the Bailey review, which we have set up and which is led by the president of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges. We could then sort out these problems, but at the moment we do not have that co-operation, which is why we are not making the progress we want.

**Norman Lamb** (North Norfolk) (LD): May I say to the Secretary of State that it is because I have very real anxieties about the impact on patients of a strike involving emergency services, not because of political opportunism, that I signed that letter? I urge him, even at this eleventh hour, to meet all of us to discuss this in a reasonable and rational way. Ultimately, we all have a responsibility to try to avert this strike.

**Mr Hunt:** I absolutely agree with that, but I gently say to the right hon. Gentleman that if that was the case, he has my mobile phone number and he could have contacted me, and he did not need *The Sunday Times* to be the first place I saw his proposal. If the people involved were genuinely serious about brokering a deal, that was not the way to go about it. We all have a duty to do everything we can to avert tomorrow's strike, but his proposal to change the Government's plans into pilots would mean, as he knows perfectly well, that seven-day care would get kicked into the long grass and would probably not happen. That would be wrong. As he well knows, we have a responsibility to patients to deliver our manifesto promises, and that is what we are going to do.

**Sir Roger Gale** (North Thanet) (Con): I wonder whether my right hon. Friend can refresh my memory. Is it not the case that under the new contract those who are going to strike tomorrow—it is by no means all junior doctors—putting patients' lives at risk, will be earning more, rather than less, and for fewer hours, rather than more? Would he also remind me of any other public sector employee who gets time and a half for working on a Saturday morning?

**Mr Hunt:** My hon. Friend makes an important point. The deal on the table is fair for junior doctors; there is higher premium pay for people who work regular Saturdays than there is for nurses, paramedics, healthcare assistants in their own operating theatres, fire officers, police officers and pretty much anyone else in the public or private sector. Under the new contract we are bringing down premium rates for Saturday pay, but we are making sure we compensate that with a 13.5% increase in the basic pay—to my knowledge, that is not being offered anywhere else in the public sector. That will mean take-home pay goes up for 75% of junior doctors. It is a very fair deal. It is designed to make sure that they are

not out of pocket as we make changes that are safer for patients, which is why we should be talking about these changes and not having these strikes.

**Debbie Abrahams** (Oldham East and Saddleworth) (Lab): A phased implementation is not the same as having a pilot with an independent evaluation to assess the effects of this contract on the workforce, and on safety and quality of care. Why will the Health Secretary not accede to the wholly reasonable proposal to pilot the new contract, which will break the current deadlock?

**Mr Hunt:** We have had eight studies in the past six years—those were independent studies, not commissioned by the Government, and they covered areas such as paediatric and cancer care, emergency surgery and a whole range of other areas. Six of those eight studies mentioned staffing levels at weekends as something that seriously needs to be investigated. Today there are higher mortality rates for weekend admissions, and the Government have a responsibility to do something, not to commission further studies. That is why we are determined to press ahead.

**Dr Julian Lewis** (New Forest East) (Con): May I reiterate my concern that there appears to have been no ballot of junior doctors specifically on the question of withdrawal of emergency care? Does the Secretary of State share my fear that if, despite his best efforts, people die as a result of this withdrawal of emergency cover, public demand for a legislative change to ensure that that can never happen again will become irresistible?

**Mr Hunt:** My right hon. Friend is right to say that the public will be extremely disappointed that professionals are putting patients at risk in such a way, and it is extremely tragic that they are doing so. I am afraid that I think this is a crossing of the Rubicon—crossing a line in a way that has not happened before. I think it is totally tragic, and I support the concern of my right hon. Friend.

**Valerie Vaz** (Walsall South) (Lab): In his statement, the Secretary of State said that this was “in our manifesto”. This is about ideology, not about the NHS. If he cares about the NHS, will he hear the will of the House, contact the BMA straight after this statement and negotiate?

**Mr Hunt:** If by “ideology”, the hon. Lady means a commitment to make the NHS the safest, highest quality health care system in the world, I plead guilty to ideology. That is the NHS that I want, and that means a seven-day NHS in which we do not have higher mortality rates for people admitted at weekends. There was a time when the Labour party would have been prepared to take tough and difficult decisions to make things better for patients, but that day has passed.

**Dame Angela Watkinson** (Hornchurch and Upminster) (Con): Many professions and occupations require seven-day working in the public and private sectors. Given that all but one of the points of difference between the BMA and the Government have been resolved, does my right hon. Friend agree that this drastic strike action on the remaining issue of Saturday pay is wholly unjustified?

**Mr Hunt:** It is wholly unjustified because the offer on the table for Saturday pay is extremely generous, and in some ways more generous than that available to pretty much any other professional in the public or private sectors. This is a very extreme step as far as patients are concerned, and the BMA must recognise that this Government are as committed to the NHS as it is. When the Government want to learn the lessons of Mid Staffs, turn around our struggling hospitals, and ensure that our care is safe every day of the week, it is right to sit around the table, negotiate and talk, but that is not what we have had from the BMA. We must not be deflected from taking difficult decisions even if we have that opposition, because our ultimate responsibility is to patients.

**Yvonne Fovargue (Makerfield) (Lab):** I recently visited the Royal Albert Edward Infirmary in Wigan and met many junior doctors, all of whom told me that every day they work two or three hours longer than their contracted hours, without pay and out of concern for their patients. Is it not folly not to pilot this contract and to risk losing the good will and services of those dedicated people? Surely that will decrease, not increase, patient safety.

**Mr Hunt:** What is devastating to the morale of junior doctors is when they are represented by an organisation that constantly feeds them misinformation about the contents of the new contract. First, the BMA told them that it was going to mean that their pay was cut. Then it told them that they were going to be asked to work longer hours. In fact, the reverse is true on both those things. The way that we raise morale among the very important junior doctor workforce is by the BMA saying that it is prepared to take a constructive approach to sensible negotiations, not refuse to budge, as we saw in February.

**Sir Peter Bottomley (Worthing West) (Con):** It is important to be both rational and reasonable. It is reasonable for registrars to be earning, on average, £53,000 a year and, when fully established, more than £100,000. It is rational for junior doctors' leaders to accept that rostering should be a matter of discussion, as there is a right and a wrong level. The remaining issue is some of the premium pay for Saturdays. It seems that it would be a good idea if those behind the BMA negotiators came out into the open and explained in detail to my patients and the patients of the 649 other MPs, or the MPs in England anyway, what the issue is that is stopping it calling off the strikes, getting people back to talks and making agreements.

**Mr Hunt:** As ever, my hon. Friend is absolutely right. When I have spoken to junior doctors who are protesting, they have not wanted to bring up issues in the new contract, as much of it is very good for them. I am talking about the fact that they cannot be asked to work six consecutive nights, which they can be at the moment; the fact that they cannot be asked to work more than six long days in a row, which they can be currently; and the fact that the maximum hours that they can be asked to work is going down from 91 to 72. There are many things that are good in this new contract, which is why the sensible and rational thing for them to do is to sit down and discuss it with the Government and not to set their face against it at any cost.

**Naz Shah (Bradford West) (Lab):** This morning, Dr Ben White resigned as a trainee doctor. He said it was “to fight the contract on behalf of his patients and on behalf of the NHS.”

I also met junior doctors over the weekend, and their morale is really low. Does the Health Secretary believe that it can be safe for patients to impose a contract that risks destroying the morale of junior doctors and impacting on staff retention?

**Mr Hunt:** I will tell the hon. Lady what is unsafe for patients. It is not standing up to the BMA when it behaves in a totally unreasonable way with a Government who are determined to make NHS care safer. With the greatest respect to her, because she is new to the House, she should appreciate that previous Labour Governments did not stand up to the BMA, and that is why we are left with many of the problems that we face today.

**Dr Andrew Murrison (South West Wiltshire) (Con):** The Health Secretary is doing the right thing for patients, and I welcome his statement. However, does he accept that there is more to be done in contractual terms for the NHS workforce if Sir Bruce Keogh's 10 clinical standards are to be implemented? Although he may not wish to reflect on it at this particular point in time, what does he think can be done to improve contracts for non-training grades and consultants in the NHS?

**Mr Hunt:** My hon. Friend speaks very wisely and also from experience on these issues. He is right. I have tried to make the point in my statement that a seven-day NHS is not just about junior doctors—it is about the whole range of services; it is about consultants, diagnostic services, general practice. As we seek to move towards a seven-day NHS, we will also be expanding the NHS workforce to ensure that the current workforce does not bear all the strain by itself. This is an opportunity. We have had lots of comments today about morale. I simply say this: the way to improve morale for doctors is to enable them to give the safest possible care to patients. At the moment, much of the frustration from doctors is that they do not feel able to give the safe care they would want to. We want to change that and to work with the BMA to make that possible.

**Peter Kyle (Hove) (Lab):** So far the Secretary of State has not grabbed the opportunity presented to him from across the House—I am talking about a cross-party solution—with both hands. If patients were at the centre of his thinking, he would have done so. He has told the House that he has not done so, because he read about it in *The Times* rather than getting a phone call. If the right hon. Member for North Norfolk (Norman Lamb) agrees to call his mobile and tell him anything that he wants to hear—whisper sweet nothings into his ear—will he agree to have the conversation and call off this strike?

**Mr Hunt:** I have to say that the right hon. Gentleman never whispered sweet nothings in my ear, and he certainly has not done so since being in opposition. With regard to doing what it takes, let me tell the hon. Gentleman directly that we have been trying to solve this problem for three years, with 75 meetings, 74 concessions and three independent processes. We have been doing everything we possibly can to solve this problem. What we have is a

very intransigent and difficult junior doctors committee of the BMA, which has refused to negotiate sensibly. In that situation, the Health Secretary has a simple choice: to move forward or to give up. When it comes to patient safety, we are moving forward.

**Andrea Jenkyns** (Morley and Outwood) (Con): Patient safety is a matter close to my heart. Tomorrow, doctors will shout that this strike is not about pay or Saturday working, but about patient safety. They will march under banners declaring the contract to be unsafe and unfair. Will the Secretary of State reassure the House that there is absolutely no prospect of the Government giving into this naked attempt by the doctors' union to hold vulnerable patients as hostage in a row over pay? Patients must always come first.

**Mr Hunt:** My hon. Friend is absolutely right. The truth is that being Health Secretary is never easy, whichever Government they are in, but where they have made mistakes in the past is where they have been too willing to compromise on vital issues of patient safety, and a seven-day NHS is one of those issues. When it comes to safety, Channel 4's "FactCheck", which is not a known supporter of the Government, has compared the new contract with the old one and said that, on the face of it, the new one is safer. That should reassure many doctors that this is the right thing for the NHS to do, and they should work with us, not against us.

**Helen Jones** (Warrington North) (Lab): The Secretary of State has said that this is all about patient safety. Well, the junior doctors I have met in Warrington believe that it is all about patient safety, too, and they do not believe that overtired doctors provide the best service for patients. Has he done a risk assessment on the imposition of a contract and the consequences for patient safety of lowering doctors' morale and losing doctors from the NHS?

**Mr Hunt:** Let me gently tell the hon. Lady the facts about what the contract involves. It involves the maximum number of hours that any junior doctor can be asked to work in any week coming down from 91 to 72. It involves reducing the number of nights and long days they can work, as we discussed earlier. It is a safer contract. The reason morale is low is that, rather than negotiating sensibly, the BMA has gone for an outright win, which was a very big mistake. We could have had a negotiated solution a long time ago. In that situation, a Health Secretary has to do what is right for patients, and that is what we are doing.

**Mr Steve Baker** (Wycombe) (Con): I have long found that the BMA is not universally admired by doctors, perhaps because of its long history of putting doctors' interests ahead of patients' interests. Will the Secretary of State ensure that he does not inadvertently drive doctors into the arms of the BMA, and will he look into adopting some of the old left ideas of mutuality, which would reconnect doctors to the interests of their patients?

**Mr Hunt:** My hon. Friend and I have discussed that recently, and I do think that the mutual structure is something we should be open-minded about. When junior doctors go on to the new contracts, which will happen in stages starting this August, they will find that

it is safer and better and that they have more predictable shift patterns. It will enable them to have a better quality of life. Then they will realise just how badly represented they have been by the BMA.

**Richard Burgon** (Leeds East) (Lab): I am worried about the potential consequences of the Secretary of State having people believe that if they are ill on the day of strike action there will be no A&E for them to go to. If they do not go and there are consequences, I believe that the consequences will be his responsibility, so could he now clear this matter up for the British public and confirm that there will be A&E cover on the days of these strikes, if they go ahead?

**Mr Hunt:** We do believe we will be able to keep all A&E departments open tomorrow and the next day, during the days of the strike, but that does not mean there will not be huge pressure on hospitals, which is why we are urging people to go to A&E only if they really need to. I would simply say to the hon. Gentleman that this disruption is the responsibility of the people who are choosing to withdraw emergency care for the first time in the history of the NHS.

**Andrew Bridgen** (North West Leicestershire) (Con): Can I ask my right hon. Friend to stick to his guns and not to give in to the unreasonable demands of the BMA? Doctors are among the most highly remunerated of our public servants—far better remunerated than members of the police or the armed services, who are essential workers and who are barred by law from taking strike action. Can I urge my right hon. Friend to review the situation with regard to A&E medics?

**Mr Hunt:** Interestingly, A&E departments will benefit from the new contract because there are special premiums to encourage more people to go into A&E as a specialty. However, on his broader point, I agree: when someone is paid a high salary, that comes with the responsibilities of a profession. That is why, however much people disagree with the new contract, and however much they may not agree with the Government's plans for a seven-day NHS, it is totally inappropriate to withdraw emergency care in the way that will happen tomorrow and the next day. That is why doctors should be very careful about the impact this will have on their status in the country.

**Alison McGovern** (Wirral South) (Lab): The Secretary of State said in his statement: "Taking strike action is a choice". However, when someone's back is against the wall, and the person in charge will not listen, it never feels like a choice. A month ago, the Secretary of State could not answer my question about how big the NHS provider deficit would be in the last financial year—it was about £3 billion—so will he answer my question now, because money is at the heart of this? What will the NHS provider deficit be in the next financial year?

**Mr Hunt:** We are taking serious action to bring that deficit down. In particular, one thing we need to do to do that is to reduce the use of agency staff. That will help with the provision of more full-time staff in the NHS, which will be good for the junior doctor workforce.

**Mr Gary Streeter** (South West Devon) (Con): I commend my right hon. Friend for the way he is conducting himself in this matter. Will he remind the House of when the

[Mr Gary Streeter]

BMA's junior doctors negotiating committee first refused to meet him because it wanted to achieve a political outcome rather than a resolved settlement?

**Mr Hunt:** Regrettably, there has not been only one occasion. In the October before the election, the junior doctors committee walked out of talks after extensive efforts to negotiate a new contract. We then had the independent pay review body process. Then—this was the most shocking thing of all—we had the decision of the committee to ballot for strike action before it had even been prepared to sit down and talk to me about what the new contract involved. That has been at the heart of so many misunderstandings about this contract and has led to so much disappointment on all sides. If the committee had sat down and talked to us, it would have discovered that we all want the same thing: a safer, seven-day NHS.

**Joan Ryan** (Enfield North) (Lab): The Secretary of State tells us he has spent over three years on this matter—three years, and he has brought us to this unprecedented state of affairs. May I gently suggest to him that it is not the junior doctors who are the problem, but him? My constituents—hundreds of whom have written to me—overwhelmingly feel that he has been irresponsible and intransigent. He needs to get back to the negotiating table, lift the imposition and put the people who need A&E—in the next few days and beyond—first.

**Mr Hunt:** If the right hon. Lady is asking whether I will compromise in my pursuit of a safer NHS for her constituents and my constituents, the answer is I will not. I am the Health Secretary who had to deal with Mid Staffs and with a huge number of hospitals up and down the country that the Labour party, when in power, did nothing to turn around. We dealt with that. We put 27 hospitals into special measures. We have dramatically increased the number of doctors and nurses in our hospital wards because we care about a safer NHS. When there are issues about weekend care, the right thing to do is to address those issues, not to duck them.

**Philip Davies** (Shipley) (Con): I think the Secretary of State can be criticised in this dispute, and my criticism is that he has been far too generous to junior doctors. Despite their understandable embarrassment at admitting it, this is a good old-fashioned pay and terms strike by an old-fashioned trade union. As far as I am concerned, it is an absolute disgrace to withdraw emergency cover on the basis of what premiums are paid on a Saturday when most of my constituents, who are much more poorly paid, go out to work on a Saturday as a normal day without any premiums whatsoever. No Government should ever give in to this kind of industrial action. Will he give a firm commitment that, despite the bluster from the Labour party, he will stick to his guns on this issue?

**Mr Hunt:** I absolutely give my hon. Friend that commitment. He is absolutely right to say that professionals should not withdraw emergency care in pursuance of a pay dispute. It is totally and utterly inappropriate. It is not just me saying that; it is what very experienced

doctors such as Professor Bruce Keogh are saying. This is the wrong way to go about this dispute. In the end, the public recognise a simple truth: you cannot choose which day of the week you get ill. If we are to have the best health service in the world, we need to reflect that in the medical cover we provide at the weekends as well as during the week.

**Diana Johnson** (Kingston upon Hull North) (Lab): I have previously raised with the Secretary of State the problems with recruitment and retention in Hull and East Yorkshire. I would like an undertaking from him. If he moves forward with the imposition of the new contract and evidence comes to light that retention and recruitment are going to be difficult, will he stop the imposition and think again?

**Mr Hunt:** We are constantly monitoring what will happen with the new contract, and we want to make sure that we get it absolutely right. If the hon. Lady makes such a plea to me, she should also talk to the BMA and say that the way to make sure we implement this contract correctly is to sit down with the Government and talk about how to make it successful, rather than to refuse to talk to us, which is what is happening at Hull Royal infirmary and many other hospitals.

**Jeremy Lefroy** (Stafford) (Con): I briefly attended a medical conference over the weekend, where doctors said they were hugely concerned about the impact on the vast majority of junior doctors who neither wish to strike nor believe that the contract is satisfactory, for the reason given by my hon. Friend the Member for St Albans (Mrs Main), when she was in the Chamber. They are being put in an impossible position. I really urge the BMA to withdraw the threat of strike action and the Secretary of State to make it quite clear that he will do whatever it takes in sitting down to resolve this issue for the sake of all our patients and their safety.

**Mr Hunt:** I am absolutely prepared to talk about anything that could be improved in the contract that will be introduced and, indeed, extra-contractual things such as the way in which rota gaps are filled and the training process. However, at the moment we do not have such a dialogue, and that has been the problem. The imposition of a new contract is the last thing in the world that we wanted as a Government. It followed 75 meetings—it was a totally exhaustive process—but in the end we found that our counterparty was not interested in sitting down to talk about this; it just wanted a political win. We had to make an absolutely invidious choice about doing the right thing to make patients safer. I wish we had not got to that point. We have got to it and we need to carry on, but the door is always open for further talks and discussions.

**Rachael Maskell** (York Central) (Lab/Co-op): The Secretary of State is the one person who can stop this strike. Why will he not now take a step back, engage the services of ACAS—specialists in negotiations—remove the conditionality and address the remaining issues? Proper dialogue will get a resolution.

**Mr Hunt:** Had Nye Bevan given way to the BMA there would be no NHS.

**Henry Smith** (Crawley) (Con): I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for visiting my constituency earlier this month. In the last decade, the previous Labour Government removed medical services from Crawley hospital; now, we have a 24/7 urgent treatment service and a doctors out-of-hours service. Does my right hon. Friend share the dismay of my local patients that the BMA is essentially asking junior doctors to go against their Hippocratic oath?

**Mr Hunt:** I think many people inside and outside the medical profession are deeply upset that that is happening. I really enjoyed my visit to my hon. Friend's constituency, and we will continue to invest in his local health services. I think that his constituents will be upset by the fact that the pay and conditions many of them have for working at weekends go nowhere near what is being offered to junior doctors under the new contract. In that sense, it is totally disproportionate to withdraw emergency care, which is such an extreme measure and has never happened before.

**Nic Dakin** (Scunthorpe) (Lab): I welcome the Secretary of State's recognition that junior doctors are the backbone of the NHS and his expression of willingness to talk about the implementation of the contract. Those words are great, but I urge him to take actions to match them and take the opportunity of the cross-party initiative to pilot this contract. If he does not do that and ploughs on regardless, he will jeopardise patient safety.

**Mr Hunt:** I welcome any genuine attempt to try to resolve this issue, but Health Education England has said that it does not believe that that cross-party approach is workable. As I have said to the hon. Gentleman before, having pilots of seven-day care and new junior doctor contracts would mean that we took too long to deliver a key manifesto promise.

**Rebecca Pow** (Taunton Deane) (Con): Farmers in Taunton Deane, as well as retail workers, journalists and bus drivers, all work across the week, and we need the NHS to do so as well. We cannot choose which day our children fall sick, and it makes absolute sense for the NHS to operate seven days a week for the sake of patients. It is crucial for the BMA to join the Government and resolve these well-thought-out plans. I urge the Secretary of State to keep up the good work.

**Mr Hunt:** I thank my hon. Friend, who eloquently makes the point that this is a moment of opportunity for the NHS. We have been through some terrible problems at Mid Staffs and a number of other hospitals where there were serious issues with the quality of care, and now we are going on a journey to make the NHS one of the safest healthcare systems in the world. That means facing up to these problems, not ducking them, and that is what is going to happen for the time that I am Health Secretary.

**Liz McInnes** (Heywood and Middleton) (Lab): The junior doctors I have spoken to are concerned about unsafe staffing levels and unworkable rotas as a result of the imposition of this contract. They ask me to make it clear to patients and to the public that the two strike days are nine hours in length and will last from 8 am until 5 pm, and that emergency care will be provided by

consultants. The solution is in the Health Secretary's hands: withdraw the imposition of this contract and get back round the negotiating table.

**Mr Hunt:** As I have said many times, were we to do that we would be giving the BMA a veto over a manifesto commitment, and no union should have a veto over what an elected Government do. I hope that what I said in my statement will give comfort to the hon. Lady and some of her constituents that we are increasing staffing levels in the NHS to deal with the extra pressures. With regard to unworkable rotas, perhaps she will go and tell the BMA to sit round the table and talk to its local trust managements so that we can get those rotas to work, because the way to sort out these problems is to sit down and discuss them.

**Antoinette Sandbach** (Eddisbury) (Con): Will the Secretary of State join me in thanking the consultants and nurses at Leighton hospital and Countess of Chester hospital who will be working extra hours in order to give as much patient cover as they can? Does not the recent leak of emails from members of the junior doctors committee last week show that they utterly reject any compromise and that any offer at this stage is simply not a serious offer?

**Mr Hunt:** I thank my hon. Friend for what she says about consultants in her local trust and, indeed, up and down the country, as well as nurses, paramedics and many other people who will be working to keep the public safe. I salute all of them. She is absolutely right: those leaked emails show that those on the junior doctors committee know that had they been prepared to negotiate on Saturday pay we would not have had an imposed contract, so it was completely in their hands to avoid this outcome. They chose not to do that; they wanted war. That was a totally irresponsible thing to do. They need to recognise that the way we will build a safer NHS is by sitting round and talking to a Government who want to create it.

**John Woodcock** (Barrow and Furness) (Lab/Co-op): Why does the Secretary of State suspect the motives of his former ministerial colleague, the hon. Member for Central Suffolk and North Ipswich (Dr Poulter)? Why has he taken to Twitter to accuse him of political opportunism?

**Mr Hunt:** My hon. Friend—the one Conservative who signed up to that proposal—when he was Health Minister proposed a contract that was much tougher on junior doctors than the contract we have ended up introducing. This has been a very interesting U-turn on his part.

**Oliver Colville** (Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport) (Con): To take pressure off GPs, A&E units and junior doctors, may I urge my right hon. Friend to make full use of the pharmacy network and ensure that it can play its full part in a seven-day national health service?

**Mr Hunt:** No health statement would be complete without a mention by my hon. Friend of the important role that pharmacies can play in solving absolutely any problem that the NHS faces. Once again, I commend his excellent contribution.

**Jonathan Reynolds** (Stalybridge and Hyde) (Lab/Co-op): Whatever the Government's aspiration, the fact is that we cannot run a health service on any day of the week without doctors who are willing to work in it. The reality is that the doctors I speak to in my constituency are exasperated. They are angry. They feel as though they have no choice. The Conservative party is kidding itself if it thinks that this is about the BMA making a political fight. There is a genuine strength of feeling about the way in which these people have been treated. That is shared by consultants and nurses, which is why they are willing to cover for their colleagues. The idea that the Government have no responsibility for the single biggest industrial dispute in the history of the NHS is, frankly, pathetic. People want to know why, if there is just one issue left to settle, imposition is necessary. Why can that not be taken off the table, so that negotiations can begin again and the strike avoided?

**Mr Hunt:** Because on that one issue—Saturday pay—the BMA said in writing last November that it would negotiate, but it tore up that agreement and said that it was not prepared to negotiate even one iota. That was why the agreement fell apart. The BMA could easily, had it stuck to its word, have negotiated an agreement and we would not have a strike today. The Government have been totally reasonable and fair throughout. The BMA has not. It is the BMA's choice to call these strikes. It should think again, because this is the wrong thing for patients and the wrong thing for the NHS.

**Christopher Pincher** (Tamworth) (Con): Many of our constituents will be concerned, and indeed angry, at the thought that some of the most vulnerable people in our society—the old, the young and the sick—are being put at risk by what they will see as some of the most advantaged people in our society. Does my right hon. Friend agree that this could do tremendous reputational harm to the medical profession, and that that will do more to damage the morale of the medical profession than any bluster from the Opposition or the BMA?

**Mr Hunt:** I totally agree with my hon. Friend. Medicine is a profession. It has very important values attached to it, the most famous of which are the Hippocratic oath and "do no harm". It is a step too far to say that in pursuance of a pay dispute and more pay on a Saturday, you are prepared to withdraw emergency care from vulnerable patients. That is the wrong call for the medical profession, when the alternative on the table is to sit down and talk with a Government who want to work with the medical profession to provide safer NHS care.

**David Morris** (Morecambe and Lunesdale) (Con): A doctor who is a constituent and on the board of the BMA said in 2014 that he became politicised in the 1990s because he once crashed a car as a result of the gruelling hours he worked as a junior doctor. Does my right hon. Friend agree that with all the revisions to the proposals for doctors' hours, this should be a thing of the past?

**Mr Hunt:** I totally agree with that. That is why, since then, junior doctors' hours have been reduced, and under the new contract we are reducing yet again the maximum hours that junior doctors can be asked to work. Every doctor should welcome the new agreement,

but because, unfortunately, the BMA has not chosen to negotiate sensibly despite exhaustive efforts, we are left with the very difficult decision as to whether we proceed with our plans for a seven-day NHS or whether we give up. I think that elected Governments should never give up on manifesto promises.

**Bob Blackman** (Harrow East) (Con): Junior doctors went into medicine to save lives, not to place them at risk. Does my right hon. Friend agree that by striking, junior doctors are putting people at risk? Can he confirm what the position would be if he had allowed contracts to lapse, and what the effect would be on the national health service?

**Mr Hunt:** I agree that the strikes are putting patients at risk. I think that what my hon. Friend means by the second part of his question is: what would have happened if we had just allowed the current contracts to roll over? The answer is that we would not have made progress towards a safer seven-day NHS, which will be of enormous benefit to his constituents and mine.

**Mark Spencer** (Sherwood) (Con): Will the Secretary of State use the Dispatch Box this afternoon to appeal directly to junior doctors to ignore the militant BMA, to turn up to work tomorrow, to acknowledge that the Government have met the BMA over 70 times and made more than 70 concessions round the negotiating table, and to put patients first and make sure that my constituents get the level of health service, seven days a week, that they so deserve?

**Mr Hunt:** My hon. Friend speaks extremely wisely. I say to every junior doctor in the country that what they want from our NHS—safe service and safe care for patients across every day of the week—is what we want as well. This Government are committed to the NHS. We are this year putting the sixth biggest increase in resources into the NHS in its history, so we are putting our money where our mouth is. We want to sit down with the medical profession and make this work for patients.

**Mr Philip Hollobone** (Kettering) (Con): Will my right hon. Friend tell me whether my understanding of the Saturday pay dispute is correct? On the one hand the BMA wants time and a half throughout a Saturday. On the other, Her Majesty's Government are offering time and a half between midnight on Friday and 7 on a Saturday morning, time plus 30% between 7 o'clock in the morning and 5 o'clock in the afternoon for those who have worked more than one in four Saturdays, time plus 30% between 5 o'clock in the afternoon and 9 o'clock, and time and a half between 9 o'clock and midnight. My constituents in Kettering had sympathy for the junior doctors but are totally opposed to the withdrawal of lifesaving emergency care, especially when the difference between the doctors' position and that of the Government is so narrow.

**Mr Hunt:** My hon. Friend speaks wisely, as ever, on this. The fact is that we have moved a very long way to meet one of the BMA's biggest concerns: that there should still be premium pay on Saturdays. For doctors who work regularly at weekends this is a very good deal—better than that for pretty much anyone else in

the public sector. That is why we think that the reasonable thing to do would have been to accept the deal and not to call these wholly unnecessary strikes.

**Kevin Foster** (Torbay) (Con): I know my right hon. Friend will agree that a dispute over pay cannot justify a threat to withdraw emergency cover. Will he confirm that after the new contract comes in no doctor will be treating patients while working their 91st hour in the same week, and that he will be looking at the availability not just of junior doctors but of other support services that are needed to deliver the seven-day services we have pledged to provide?

**Mr Hunt:** Absolutely. My hon. Friend is quite right to point out that the seven-day NHS vision is not just about junior doctors but about support services for junior doctors that will make the provision of care to their patients at weekends not just better for those patients but much more rewarding for them. It is immensely frustrating for doctors not to be able to get diagnostic tests back quickly because it is the weekend. We want to sort out all those problems. That will be better for doctors and better for patients.

**Alex Chalk** (Cheltenham) (Con): Whatever the objections to this contract, and however sincerely they are held, withdrawing emergency care for seriously ill patients cannot be on the list of options. On Saturday pay, will the Secretary of State bring absolute clarity to something that may have been misrepresented, or at least misunderstood: will doctors who work regular Saturdays—that is, more than one in four—continue to receive a pay uplift?

**Mr Hunt:** Yes, they will. That is the main outstanding issue of a very small handful of issues that were not resolved. We went a very long way towards what the BMA wanted. We are reducing premium rates for Saturday pay, but are making up for that with a 13.5% increase in basic pay. That will mean that hospitals can roster more doctors at weekends and that the doctors who work the most weekends will continue to get premium pay for that extra work. It is a good thing for doctors and for patients.

## BHS

5.38 pm

**The Minister for Small Business, Industry and Enterprise (Anna Soubry):** With permission, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to make a short statement to update the House on the latest position following the announcement this morning that British Home Stores has filed for administration. This is obviously a very difficult time for all its employees. Somewhere between 8,500 and perhaps as many as 11,000 people work in its many stores across the United Kingdom. We must of course bear it in mind that it is also a difficult time for the many creditors concerned, especially those that are small businesses.

BHS is a name that has been synonymous with the British high street for more than 80 years. The company has been an important player in the history of British retail, and still has a significant high street presence, with 164 stores nationwide and, as I have said, somewhere between 8,500 and 11,000 employees. I recognise that consumer trends are changing, moving away from high street shopping and, increasingly, towards online retail channels. We continue to see the retail landscape change. The media speculation today and in the past few days has been particularly troubling for BHS workers and their families, but a clear message is going out to all staff today: BHS is still open for business as usual. There are no plans for immediate redundancies or store closures and the administrators are looking to sell BHS as a going concern. If that proves not to be possible, the Government stand ready to offer their assistance, including through the Jobcentre Plus rapid response service, to help people to move into new jobs as quickly as possible.

There has been a lot of comment and speculation about the BHS pension scheme. The pension regulator is investigating a number of concerns and allegations. I understand that the BHS scheme is in the early stage of a Pension Protection Fund assessment, during which time the PPF will determine the final funding position of the scheme and whether it should assume responsibility for it.

The retail sector is crucial for the United Kingdom economy. The total value of retail sales, excluding fuel, was £340 billion in 2015. The value of retail sales has increased every year for the past 12 years, although in 2015 the volume of sales grew faster than values, indicating a decline in prices overall. The sector accounts for 3 million jobs. Almost a third of those employees are under the age of 25. We intend to ensure that this success continues. In the Budget, the Government announced the biggest ever cut in business rates in England, worth £6.7 billion over the next five years. I commend the statement to the House.

5.41 pm

**Ms Angela Eagle** (Wallasey) (Lab): I thank the Minister for her statement and for giving me early sight of it.

Eleven thousand BHS staff will be desperately worried about their jobs today. BHS is a venerable British company, which has been a feature of our high streets for almost a century. I am sure Members on all sides of the House will hope that administrators will be successful in their attempts to sell BHS as a going concern. At this difficult time for the workforce and their families, we all

[Ms Angela Eagle]

want to be reassured that the Government are doing everything they can to support a successful outcome to the process. If the worst happens, BHS workers will want to know that the Government stand ready to offer help for them to get back to work as soon as possible.

The crisis facing BHS highlights a wider challenge for our high street retailers, with increased competition from online retailers. It is vital that our high streets adapt and change to stay relevant and competitive. It is important to understand how we ended up here and to think about the implications for public policy.

There are some serious questions to answer, not least by the former owner, Sir Philip Green. He bought BHS in 2000 for £200 million. In just two years of his ownership, £422 million in dividends was paid out, with the vast majority going to him and his family. He seems to have taken out far more in value than he paid for the business in the first place. Last year, he disposed of BHS for just £1. When Sir Philip bought BHS, the pension fund had a surplus of more than £5 million and it remained in the black as late as 2008. Yet when he got rid of the business, he had turned this into a deficit of hundreds of millions of pounds. The pension fund now reportedly has a black hole of £571 million.

If the worst happens, the liability will be covered by the Pension Protection Fund, as the Minister indicated, and BHS staff will get only 90% of the pension they have worked so hard for and saved for. However, Philip Green seems to have got much more out of BHS for himself and his family than that. BHS staff and the public will understandably want to know whether the former owner, who took so many millions of pounds out of the business, will have to pay his fair share of the liabilities that accrued during his stewardship.

It is right that the pensions of working people are covered in the event of their employer going under, but in this situation it appears that the owner has extracted hundreds of millions of pounds from the business and walked away to his favourite tax haven, leaving the Pension Protection Fund to pick up the bill. We know that Sir Philip is such a vocal supporter of the Conservative party that in 2010 the Prime Minister asked him to conduct a review for the Cabinet Office of how to slash Government spending. What he appears to have done with BHS is to extract huge value from the business before walking away and leaving all the liabilities to others, including the public purse. Now we are learning that BHS has paid more than £25 million to Retail Acquisitions, which bought it for £1 in 2015.

What help can the Department give to ensure that the interests of the 11,000-strong workforce are properly looked after? Does the Minister think that taking hundreds of millions of pounds out of a business which then accumulates a huge pension black hole is responsible ownership? What comments does she have on the conduct of Sir Philip Green during his ownership of BHS? Does she agree that in cases such as this, former owners should be held accountable and liable to pay their fair share of any accumulated pension deficit, rather than leaving it to responsible pension funds to pick up the bill through the pension protection scheme?

Sir Philip has reportedly offered a mere £40 million in lieu of the pension deficit. That is less than 10% of the total, but he has taken far, far more than that out

of the business. Does the Minister believe that that offer is acceptable? If not, can she set out the options which the Government and the Pensions Regulator have to pursue him for a fairer settlement? Will she review the current law to ensure that irresponsible owners are not able to extract value from businesses and then walk away, leaving the liabilities elsewhere?

**Anna Soubry:** My concern is for the workers of BHS and the creditors, notably the small businesses. I find it most peculiar, though perhaps not unexpected, that the hon. Lady should turn this into some party political game. This is way above all that. I have said that the Pensions Regulator is looking at the various matters, and the Insolvency Service, which will oversee the administration, will take very seriously any allegations of any misconduct by any of the directors of the business. Any impropriety is taken very seriously not only by this Government but by all the regulatory bodies that oversee these things.

I could say that it is, perhaps, unfortunate that Labour decided to vote against our very moderate but important proposals on Sunday trading, when there was clear evidence that that would have helped the retail sector. If the Opposition had not done that, they might have a little more credibility when they comment on the unfortunate situation of BHS. This is not a political football to be kicked around by the Opposition.

**Mark Field** (Cities of London and Westminster) (Con): I agree with the Minister that the predicament of BHS should not be a party political football. The Pension Protection Fund is not designed to be used as some sort of convenient bargaining chip in financial negotiations over the sale of troubled businesses. Instead, it should be used in rare circumstances for Governments and others to intervene to protect the contributions to company pensions where there has been a sudden collapse in a company. Therefore I agree with some of the concerns expressed from the Opposition Front Bench and hope that the Department will undertake an urgent inquiry into the conduct of the erstwhile and current owners of BHS. It seems appalling that the Pension Protection Fund is being abused in this way, and I suspect that BHS is not the only company in this position.

**Anna Soubry:** I thank my right hon. Friend for his wise comments. As ever, he provides a good, sensible insight into the situation. I agree with him: we must be sure that the PPF scheme is in no way abused by anybody. I welcome his comments and he can be assured that this team of Ministers takes these matters very seriously and will keep a keen eye on developments.

**Hannah Bardell** (Livingston) (SNP): Let me associate myself and the Scottish National party with the comments made in relation to the BHS workers and families, and express our concerns for them. One of Scotland's larger stores is in my constituency, and the store and workforce are well known and widely respected in the local community. We stand in solidarity with them today, and we are thinking of all the BHS workers and their families across the UK at this very difficult time.

The SNP is deeply concerned about job losses now that BHS has gone into administration. We acknowledge the centrality of loyal customers to a store which has



been part of our high streets since 1928. Behind every closure and job loss will be a personal story. BHS workers have a diverse range of skills and many of them have given long service. In some respects, BHS's predicament has more to do with the UK Government's failure to stimulate economic recovery and the confidence of people across these isles than with Sunday trading, and I am shocked and surprised that the Minister, in one breath, tells Labour not to resort to political point scoring and, in the second, resorts to political point scoring herself.

Dig a little deeper into today's media commentary and one finds some very worrying claims emerging. In a blog published this morning, the *Financial Times* asked:

"Would 11,000 BHS workers still have jobs if Tina Green hadn't siphoned £1bn out of the business?"

The tax and business affairs of BHS and the gap in its pensions fund merit serious investigation, so I hope that the Minister and the Government will look carefully at this issue. Will she please tell the House, the nations of the UK and, most importantly, the workers of BHS what the UK Government will do to facilitate the sale? The Scottish Government will do all they can to support the workers in Scotland, but we want a commitment to leave no avenue unconsidered in a bid to secure the future of BHS and its workers.

**Anna Soubry:** As I said, our thoughts are with the workforce. It is important to point out, however, that the stores are still open and people still in work—they have not lost their jobs—so we must not talk down the business. We want somebody to come forward and buy the company and to make sure it has a good, sustainable future. That is where my thoughts are at the moment. We want to help in any way we can to make sure a buyer comes forward. I pay tribute to the excellent workers at BHS not just in the stores but—not forgetting—in the various distribution centres around the country. I also have to say, however, that we are the Government who delivered 2.5 million new jobs in just five years.

**Mr John Baron** (Basildon and Billericay) (Con): Tens of thousands of BHS pensioners are set to suffer from this news, so I ask that the Government do what they can to ensure answers to the following questions: how did a £5 million pension fund in 2001 turn into a deficit of £571 million and was there any wrongdoing? If so, will they ensure that those responsible are brought properly to book?

**Anna Soubry:** As I said, the Pensions Regulator is looking at the many concerns that hon. Members on both sides of the House are raising, and the PPF is now involved. My hon. Friend makes important points. Unfortunately, some companies find themselves with very large pension fund deficits, which should concern us all.

**Mr Iain Wright** (Hartlepool) (Lab): First, may I thank the Minister for spending this morning at the Tata Steel facility in Hartlepool? I was grateful for her time.

On BHS, a theme seems to be emerging across the House. Does the Minister agree that it cannot possibly be right that Sir Philip Green, as the previous owner, loaded the company with debt, did not invest in the business and paid his wife over £400 million in dividends

via the tax haven of Monaco? How an owner runs a business is up to them, but when 11,000 jobs are under threat and the taxpayer might face substantial pension liabilities, something is gravely wrong. Will the Minister consider changing company legislation on directors' duties to ensure that former owners cannot simply walk away from the fallout, having taken the fast buck, and that substantial, long-term value creation is prioritised over short-term value extraction?

**Anna Soubry:** We have to make it clear that allegations of impropriety by anybody holding a directorship are taken very seriously and that serious consequences can follow an investigation—nobody is above that—and I am confident that any allegations will be investigated. As we know, the Pensions Regulator is already looking into these matters.

Finally, I know it is a bit off subject but I want to respond to the hon. Gentleman's first point. I am sorry we had to cut short our trip to Hartlepool, but it was an excellent visit, and, as ever, I found excellent management, an excellent workforce and excellent steel products made with British steel.

**Sir Peter Bottomley** (Worthing West) (Con): I went to the BHS shop in Worthing this morning. I did some shopping and told the staff that they had the support of people in the House and across the country during this uncertain time. The important thing is to keep them in jobs, if we can, and to make sure that nothing is done that harms their prospects of getting the best possible pension, for which many have been working for years.

**Anna Soubry:** I completely agree with my hon. Friend. It is the old story: you don't know what you've got till it's gone. Unfortunately, BHS is one of those retail chains that has suffered from the presence of online sales and the lack of the support that companies traditionally had. We are old enough to remember when people always shopped in the same places. Those days have gone—there is no longer that sort of loyalty—but here is a perfect opportunity: the shops are still open and still taking vouchers, so if someone has BHS vouchers, they should go and spend them and support the staff and, as ever, the great British high street.

**Joan Ryan** (Enfield North) (Lab): I am pleased to hear the Minister say that any impropriety will be taken extremely seriously, because there is a serious concern, given what we have heard about the previous surplus of at least £5 million turning into a pension fund deficit of £571 million, over a period when the company paid hundreds of millions of pounds to Sir Philip Green and his family. I reiterate that because it should be said time and again until we get satisfactory answers. On the workers, the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers has offered to work with management to help consult staff at this difficult time. Will the Minister join me in encouraging BHS to take it up on this offer?

**Anna Soubry:** Absolutely. I am a firm supporter of good, responsible trade unions. I am a former shop steward myself, so I know the invaluable role that trade unions can play in representing workers, as long as they act in a good, sensible and responsible way—as they are doing, if I may say, in our steel industry.

**Kevin Foster** (Torbay) (Con): This is a worrying time for staff at the BHS store on Union Street, Torquay. Will the Minister confirm that, as well as planning to support the company, we should offer support to councils faced with having to find new tenants for major anchor stores on their high streets?

**Anna Soubry:** In such circumstances, there is a role for everybody, and my hon. Friend makes a good point about councils, which are invariably concerned about the future of their high streets. Good councils are already doing considerable work to make sure that their high streets are good, healthy places—in a business sense—and this should be a continuation of that. I would urge councils immediately to contact the local management to see what help, if any, they can provide. Some landlords, however, have already been engaged in a period of rent reduction, or of no rent at all. Despite much effort, this business is still in dire straits, but we are positive about the fact that a new buyer might well come along, which is what we want.

**Alison Thewliss** (Glasgow Central) (SNP): I represent Glasgow city centre, which has a great retail sector and two BHS stores, one on Sauchiehall Street and one in the St Enoch shopping centre. My sympathies go out to the workers in those stores who face an uncertain future. I understand that around 1,500 subcontractors are employed by Compass, which does the cleaning and catering, within the stores, and there are also connected supply chain jobs. What is the Minister doing to ensure job security for those workers, in addition to those directly employed by BHS, and will she work closely with the Scottish Government to ensure that those workers have the best possible future?

**Anna Soubry:** When any business is in difficulty, it has a knock-on effect throughout the whole supply chain. It is not simply about the difficult circumstances in which the immediate employers find themselves. I have already mentioned the creditors, but there are the connected attendant businesses too. It is not just about the immediate impact; it goes all the way through the chain, which is why it is important to stay positive and make sure and hope that a buyer comes forward.

**Richard Fuller** (Bedford) (Con): It might be that, facing a large and growing pension deficit, the previous owner, when Retail Acquisitions came knocking on his door to purchase the business, laughed all the way to the bank. If the sale was done on the understanding that it was avoiding a responsibility for pension losses, that £1 he received was equivalent to 30 pieces of silver in his betrayal of the BHS employees and pensioners. There is a reputational question for Sir Philip Green to answer. Will the Minister write to him and ask him to respond to the questions raised in the House, and will she look acutely at the PPF to ensure that the original legislation is strong enough to avoid this unacceptable face of capitalism in the passing on of losses to the taxpayer?

**Anna Soubry:** My hon. Friend knows me of old, and he knows that while I support capitalism, I do not believe it should have anything other than a caring heart. I do not believe in unfettered free trade and all the rest of it, as one would expect from a Conservative on my wing of the party.

I want to agree with my hon. Friend that this is a very serious matter, and this Government take these sorts of issues and allegations extremely seriously. At the moment, of course, the regulator is involved. Let us see what conclusion the regulator comes to. My hon. Friend and anyone else listening to or indeed reading this debate, as no doubt Sir Philip Green will, should be absolutely assured that if there are any suggestions of impropriety, we will come after people. We believe in everybody in our society doing the right thing, especially when they hold people's livelihoods pretty much in their hands.

**Melanie Onn** (Great Grimsby) (Lab): Since the closure of Woolworths, Great Grimsby has said goodbye to Comet, Staples, Homebase, Phones 4u and, most recently, WHSmith, which has vacated a very large space within our Freshney Place mall. Many constituents regularly share their worries with me about the future for our town centre, and the loss of BHS would be a real blow to the local community. Does the Minister share my concern, echoed around this place today, about the report that while significant funds of up to £100 million of so-called "negative goodwill" were secured by Philip Green for the future of BHS, rather than being invested in the business, that money was apparently diverted using dividends offshore? If the Minister is concerned, will she investigate those claims, because up to 11,000 members of staff will be concerned about their redundancy payments and, of course, their pensions?

**Anna Soubry:** I am in danger of repeating everything I have already said about how seriously we take these sorts of allegations and about how we are looking forward to seeing the outcome of the work done by the pensions regulator. I am familiar with Grimsby, having had the great pleasure of visiting Grimsby Crown court and shopping in the hon. Lady's town centre. *[Interruption.]* It is probably a good job that I did not hear what the hon. Lady said. In all seriousness, in common with many town centres, Grimsby faces many challenges. I would like to commend to the hon. Lady a report that was written for her party by a gentleman called Bill Grimsey. He produced one of the most radical and brilliant reports I have ever seen on the future of Britain's high streets. It is pretty controversial and the hon. Lady may not agree with everything written in it—I am not sure I do—but for understanding the future of retail and how people will shop now and in the future, I think Bill Grimsey had a great insight and put forward many excellent solutions. I commend his report to everybody.

**David Mowat** (Warrington South) (Con): When this business was sold a year ago, there were clear going concern issues: there was a massive pension deficit, and the business was sold to an organisation with no retail experience. Does the Minister know whether or not the pension trustees of the BHS pension fund signed off on this deal, prior to it going ahead, or whether the PPF scheme itself was involved? If not, does the Minister agree that there is a loophole that really needs to be fixed?

**Anna Soubry:** I always try to give a straight answer to a good, straight question, but I simply do not know the answer to my hon. Friend's question. I undertake to make full inquiries to answer it. I will write to my hon. Friend, and if any other hon. Members would like

to see a copy of my letter, I am more than happy to share it with them, including the hon. Member for Wallasey (Ms Eagle).

**Angela Rayner** (Ashton-under-Lyne) (Lab): I, too, would be happy to receive a copy of that letter. I associate myself with the comments of others about the conduct of Philip Green, and I welcome the Minister's comments about the investigation by the pensions regulator. Just over a week ago, the pensions regulator had the corporate plan and published it, referring to austerity/efficiency cuts within it. Will the Minister reassure me that there will be a robust approach and that the pensions regulator will have enough resources to produce a timely response to ensure that this does not happen to anyone else?

**Anna Soubry:** There will be a robust investigation, and I have full confidence in the regulator.

**Oliver Colville** (Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport) (Con): Will the Government's reforms of business rates help the BHS property in Cornwall street in my Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport constituency and in the city centre?

**Anna Soubry:** I suspect I am going to disappoint my right hon. Friend—I mean my hon. Friend, I nearly gave him a bump up there, which I am sure he deserves—because the changes in business rates are more likely to affect small businesses. Multi-chain businesses, even those with just three or four shops in a particular area, will not get the great benefit that we have undoubtedly given to small businesses, whereby very few of them pay any rates at all and many will have had a big reduction in their bills. That would not have benefited BHS, however.

**Greg Mulholland** (Leeds North West) (LD): I commend Ministers for listening where there have been abuses of corporate power before, and I urge this Minister to listen to the Select Committee on this issue. Given the need to modernise in retail, will she reconsider the freeze on further education budgets, so that those in the retail sector can be upskilled to face the sort of challenges that arise in that sector?

**Anna Soubry:** I am not particularly convinced, but I will have a look at it and probably write to the hon. Gentleman. Frankly, I think the most important thing is that retail has suffered in many ways, although in some instances it has benefited, from the internet. That is the real trick. It is about how we make sure that there is still a place for the shop on our high streets in the internet age. I believe that there absolutely is a place for shops. I advise reading Bill Grimsey's report on the future of the high street, which is enlightening, as I said, and contains some excellent ideas.

**Mr Philip Hollobone** (Kettering) (Con): Although this is clearly bad news from BHS, does the Minister agree that we should not lose sight of the fact that Britain is spending more on its shops than ever before, that we are the biggest recipient in Europe of foreign direct investment in retail, and that the Government's plans to cut corporation tax from 28% in the last Parliament to 17% by 2020 will help successful retailers to do even better?

**Anna Soubry:** I am delighted to agree completely with everything my hon. Friend has said. I agree that we are doing the right thing in setting the right conditions for businesses to flourish in our country. That is why our economy has grown in the way it has, so that we have become the fifth largest economy in the world, with the subsequent creation of over 2 million jobs. That is our record of success, because we have been doing the right thing by business.

**Cat Smith** (Lancaster and Fleetwood) (Lab): The 11,000 BHS workers no doubt awoke with anxiety when they saw today's headlines—an anxiety probably shared with many other retail workers on our high streets. The Minister mentioned earlier that she supported trade unions working constructively with the Government to support our industries, so will she join me in meeting USDAW, the shopworkers' union, to see what work the Government can do to support our high streets?

**Anna Soubry:** I can say that I would pretty much meet anybody, but I am very happy to meet USDAW. I might try to convince the union that its stance on Sunday trading was wrong, but that is another matter. There is a really good debate to be had about the future of the high street, and about the recognition that for a large number of people, and especially younger people, the days of going shopping have changed hugely. They will go out to meet their friends, have a coffee and perhaps do some shopping almost as an aside. My daughter's generation does not carry out the same sort of shopping as I did. It is a fascinating topic and would make a great one for a Backbench Business debate, if I may say so.

**Mr Steve Baker** (Wycombe) (Con): The market economy on which our civilisation rests is dangerously undermined when the privatisation of vast profits is swiftly followed by the projection of similarly vast losses on to other people, whether they be taxpayers or pensioners. Since corporations are creatures of the state, will my right hon. Friend look at the incentives, particularly relating to excess debt? Will she look at how the institutions around corporations can be changed so that we do not end up in a position where this can happen again?

**Anna Soubry:** Usually, when something goes wrong, there are lessons to be learned. I have already commented on our combined concerns about many of the issues surrounding what happened to BHS. I really do not want us to have this very negative view of BHS, however. The stores are still open; people are still in work; now we want to secure a buyer so that there is a future for all those shops and the workforce. My thoughts today are with the workforce, as well as the small business creditors.

**Roger Mullin** (Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath) (SNP): I welcome many of the Minister's comments, but while Sir Philip Green awaits delivery of his third superyacht in Monaco, it is the BHS workers in my and other constituencies who are paying the price of his greed and corporate failure. Does the Minister understand why many employees will feel that the pensions regulator should seek the entire £571 million actuarial deficit from Sir Philip?

**Anna Soubry:** I am getting worried, because, increasingly, the hon. Gentleman and I agree about so many things. I am sure that he is as worried as I am.

The hon. Gentleman has made a serious point about the way in which developments like this affect everyone, especially people who have been in their jobs for a long time. The hon. Member for Hartlepool (Mr Wright) has left the Chamber now, but I have visited the Hartlepool steelworks, and I know that people have been working there for up to 30 years and paying into a pension fund in the expectation that when the moment comes for them to retire, they will have a certain amount of money on which to live, perhaps a lump sum. I think that there is an increasingly good case to be made for the right thing to be done by people who have given long service, paid into a pension fund, and have themselves done the right thing. It seems particularly cruel for a large amount of money to be taken from them, especially given their age.

**Mark Spencer (Sherwood) (Con):** I trust the Minister recognises that it is the administrator who is in charge of this whole situation. Will she encourage the administrator to look forward, not back, and will she ensure that the administrator understands that the best way in which to protect people's pensions and jobs—and the creditors—is to find a credible buyer for the group?

**Anna Soubry:** I entirely agree. My hon. Friend has made an important point. The administrators have been appointed, and there is no doubt that they will make every effort to do the right thing by everyone—which, of course, means both the workforce and the creditors—and to ensure that there is a successful sale. The Insolvency Service also has an important role, and I am confident that it, too, will play its full part. However, we also need to be confident about stores remaining open and workers remaining in work, so let us make sure that the administrators secure a buyer.

**Mr Gavin Shaker (Luton South) (Lab/Co-op):** The retail sector is dominated by structural issues such as low pay, lack of progression and job insecurity. It is also dominated by women, whereas each of the 11 industrial strategies in the Minister's Department is dominated by professions that are run by men. Will she think about what more she can do to rebalance, in gender terms, her Department's efforts to ensure that this vital sector is not lost from the high street?

**Anna Soubry:** The hon. Gentleman has made an interesting observation, and I think there is some merit in what he has said. We know that, until recent years, women suffered from inequality in pay and inequality in opportunity, and that one of the great successes of the last Government was the fact that we reduced the pay gap in the most astonishing way. It no longer exists at all among those under 40. When I have met some of the big retailers, their desire to ensure that people are trained and aspire to advance themselves and make progress has struck me as very good and very healthy, but I will always back any opportunity for the advancement of women.

**John Howell (Henley) (Con):** I think that the Minister is right not to want to talk down the business, but I understand that BHS has already looked for a buyer and failed to find one. The Minister said that the retail

sector was growing, but I wonder whether this is not an indication of fundamental structural difficulties in the sector that will have to be addressed separately.

**Anna Soubry:** That is a valid point. The retail sector does face a number of serious challenges. However, I am reminded that on Friday, when I had the great pleasure of attending the midlands Asian business awards, the head of John Lewis—an outstanding organisation which is almost a proper workers' co-operative—gave us an excellent insight into the way in which his business has been progressing. It has done incredibly well in managing to combine a high-street presence with an excellent online service. The two are not mutually exclusive; they can be brought together. Perhaps we should all take account of some of the big success stories in the retail sector, like that of John Lewis.

**Mr Speaker:** Chris Stephens.

**Jo Stevens (Cardiff Central) (Lab):** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I represent a city centre constituency, and I know that many of my constituents are worried about their jobs at BHS today. The Minister has mentioned the role that the Insolvency Service will play. Given that her Department is voluntarily offering to make cuts of 40% in the service, rather than the 17% demanded by the Chancellor, is she confident that it will be able to help the BHS workers?

**Mr Speaker:** Order. I was calling a Chris with a "ph" rather than a Jo with a "v", but never mind. The hon. Lady was in full flow, and what she said has been heard.

**Anna Soubry:** The short answer is yes: I have complete confidence in the Insolvency Service.

**Mr Speaker:** Chris Stephens.

**Chris Stephens (Glasgow South West) (SNP):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker!

I welcome what the Minister has said about the positive role that can be played in the trade union, and I look forward to further discussion on Wednesday, but will her Department write to the administrators and BHS to ensure that the company is complying with the law and avoiding mistakes made by other companies in the past, when employees have been put at the back of the queue of creditors?

**Anna Soubry:** I have complete confidence in the administrators, and I am sure that they will comply fully with all the requirements that are made of them.

**Liz McInnes (Heywood and Middleton) (Lab):** The Minister mentioned the Bill Grimsey report. I must admit that I had not heard of it until now, but I have just looked at it, and it does not fill me with confidence. The first section is entitled "Why...high streets cannot depend on retailing for future prosperity". I think that it will be an interesting read. However, given that BHS seems to be the latest casualty on our high streets, may I ask the Minister whether the report supersedes the Portas report, which was produced for the Government in 2011? No action seems to have been taken on Mary Portas's recommendations.

**Anna Soubry:** I must point out that it was the Labour party that commissioned Bill Grimsey's report. I urge the hon. Lady to read all of it, rather than scanning it quickly in the Chamber. I should repeat, for what it is worth, that I do not agree with all of it, but I absolutely agree with a huge amount of it. It is interesting to note that a number of our great town centres and high streets are, in effect, putting it into operation. Bill Grimsey makes the good point that high streets cannot rely solely on retail; they have to rely on other things as well. I could go on, and try harder to persuade the hon. Lady that this is an excellent report. I urge her to read it. As I have said, she will not agree with everything in it, but it is a great foundation for understanding the problem and considering some of the solutions.

**Diana Johnson** (Kingston upon Hull North) (Lab): I think that what is going on with British Home Stores should ring alarm bells with the Minister. When Hull-based Comet went into administration in 2012, there were 7,000 redundancies, and the taxpayer ended up paying up to £100 million in redundancy costs. At that point, Comet had been owned for a year by a private equity firm which had bought it for £1, but loaded it with about £75 million worth of debt from which it received huge interest payments before walking off. The Government commissioned a report on what had happened, but they have never published it. I think it is about time that the report was published, so that we could observe the similarities between what happened then and what has happened to BHS, and ask ourselves whether there are lessons to be learnt.

**Anna Soubry:** I do not think that the hon. Lady asked me a question, but it does not really matter. I shall be happy to find out what happened to the report, and write to her about it.

**Martin Docherty-Hughes** (West Dunbartonshire) (SNP): Let me first express the concern that I feel for my own constituents who face the possibility of redundancy, having been on the frontline of retailing for 36 years in the branch of British Home Stores in Clydebank. The Minister mentioned future technologies. Thirty-six years ago, BHS, as a retailer, was the future, and I should like us to have a debate about that in the House. The real scandal, however, is the fact that my constituents face not only the possibility of redundancy, but a 10% reduction in their pensions when they reach pensionable age. Can the Minister assure me, my constituents and the House that when the regulator carries out an investigation, it will be open and transparent, and that if there is guilt to be apportioned, it will be apportioned and will be subject to the full force of the law?

**Anna Soubry:** The short answer to that question is yes. As for the other matter that the hon. Gentleman raised, at one stage BHS really was the future. I will not, at this point, give my own views on the history of BHS and the lessons to be learned from it. As I have said, I want to be positive, to think about the work force and to look for a buyer. However, the hon. Gentleman is right to say that there is a debate to be had about the changing nature of the way in which we shop, and the changing nature of retail.

## Points of Order

6.19 pm

**Carol Monaghan** (Glasgow North West) (SNP): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. I apologise to you for attempting to raise it earlier, at an inopportune moment, but I was so outraged by events that took place during our exchanges on the urgent question about shipbuilding on the Clyde that I became over-enthusiastic. In 20 years of teaching in a comprehensive school in Glasgow, I was never subjected to language such as that to which SNP Members were subjected by the hon. Member for Barrow and Furness (John Woodcock). May I ask you, Mr Speaker, how we should go about making an official complaint?

**Mr Speaker:** I am grateful to the hon. Lady for her point of order. Before I respond—I will have some words to say—I of course invite the hon. Member for Barrow and Furness (John Woodcock) to respond.

**John Woodcock** (Barrow and Furness) (Lab/Co-op): I am sorry that you are being troubled with this, Mr Speaker. To my knowledge, I was not given any prior warning of this point of order. I can only hope that this is a genuine mishearing by the hon. Member for Glasgow North West (Carol Monaghan) and that it is not malicious. I have learned my lesson from my misplaced social media in the last couple of weeks, and I certainly did not use any language that she could complain about. I am slightly at a loss for what to say. Further to this point, although I might have raised this matter in a separate way, I have heard growing concerns about the tactics of those on the Scottish National party Benches, who seem, to an extent, to believe that it is acceptable to bring into the Chamber the kind of intimidation that was practised on the streets of Scotland to shut down free debate during the referendum campaign. In my view, that is acceptable neither on the street nor here.

**Sue Hayman** (Workington) (Lab) *rose*—

**Mr Speaker:** I shall come to the hon. Member for Workington (Sue Hayman), who has a wholly different point of order, in a moment. Let me first respond to the initial point of order and to the hon. Gentleman's response to it. I am at a disadvantage for the very simple reason that if anything offensive or unparliamentary was said by the hon. Gentleman—I emphasise the word "if"—I did not hear it. If I had heard what I have subsequently been told was said—which I have no intention of advertising to the Chamber because it was unparliamentary—I would have deprecated it. Suffice it to say that immoderate language is always to be deprecated, whether it is uttered from a sedentary position or when a Member is on his or her feet. I did not hear it, and I cannot therefore comment on it. [*Interruption.*] Order. I am not prepared to get involved—or to subject the House to getting involved—in an ongoing exchange. Suffice it to say that at the time there was some discontent between the two sets of Benches and I did urge people to calm down. I stand by that. I am genuinely sorry if there are Members who feel offended, but I cannot condemn that which I did not hear. The hon. Member for Barrow and Furness has made his point, which I have heard, and no further exchange is required on that matter.

**John Woodcock:** But I have been named in the Chamber and I do not know what I am supposed to have done.

**Mr Speaker:** I will tell the hon. Gentleman: a complaint was made to me that he had used bad language and that he had deployed an expletive. I did not hear any such deployment and therefore the hon. Gentleman has been convicted of nothing. An allegation has been made. It was reported to me—*[Interruption.]* Order. There is no reason to accuse anybody of dishonesty. A Member whom I respect reported to me her understanding that bad language had been used, but I did not hear it. A complaint has been made and the hon. Gentleman denies any such impropriety. I think the most sensible thing is to say that we let it rest there. However, for the avoidance of doubt—I am referring not to the hon. Gentleman or to any other particular Member—bad language should of course not be used in this Chamber, whether out loud or sotto voce. We ought to conduct ourselves in a more seemly manner. I thank the hon. Gentleman for his response and the hon. Lady for her courtesy. Please let us park it there for today.

**Sue Hayman:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker. During Prime Minister's questions on Wednesday last week, in his response to my question about support for independent pharmacies, the Prime Minister stated:

"We are supporting rural pharmacies—there is a specific scheme to help there".—*[Official Report, 20 April 2016; Vol. 608, c. 916.]*

Since then, I have seen a letter from the National Pharmacy Association to the Prime Minister, advising him that this is untrue and asking him to set the record straight. Can I ask your advice, Mr Speaker, on how I can best go about correcting the record as to the existence of this fund in order to ensure that rural pharmacies do not waste their time looking for a fund that does not currently exist?

**Mr Speaker:** I am grateful to the hon. Lady for her point of order and for her courtesy in giving me notice of it. The truth, as I think she knows, is that she has found her own salvation. She has put her view on this matter on the record, and it will have been heard by those on the Treasury Bench. No doubt it will be conveyed to the Prime Minister's office. If the Prime Minister feels that what he said was inaccurate or misleading in any way, he will doubtless take steps to correct what was said. But it may be—I simply emphasise that it may be—that these are matters more of interpretation or opinion than of fact. I would stress that what Ministers say in this House is the responsibility of Ministers and not of the Chair. The hon. Lady has registered her point with force and alacrity.

### IMMIGRATION BILL (PROGRAMME) (NO. 3)

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

That the following provisions shall apply to the Immigration Bill for the purpose of supplementing the Orders of 13 October 2015 (Immigration Bill (Programme)) and 1 December 2015 (Immigration Bill (Programme) (No. 2)):

#### *Consideration of Lords Amendments*

(1) Proceedings on consideration of Lords Amendments shall (so far as not previously concluded) be brought to a conclusion three hours after their commencement at today's Sitting.

(2) The Lords Amendments shall be considered in the following order: Nos. 87 to 101, 60, 84 to 86, 183 to 215, 1 to 59, 61 to 83, 102 to 182 and 216 to 254.

#### *Subsequent stages*

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

(4) The proceedings on any further Message from the Lords shall (so far as not previously concluded) be brought to a conclusion one hour after their commencement.—*(James Brokenshire.)*

*Question agreed to.*

## Immigration Bill

### Consideration of Lords amendments

6.26 pm

**Mr Speaker:** Before I call the Minister to move the first motion, I would like to make three general points about the designation of the Lords amendments engaging financial privilege that are about to come before us. First, the designation of Lords amendments as engaging financial privilege is not a matter on which I or others exercise choice. I and those who advise me act as servants of the House in giving effect to its procedures and in asserting its financial primacy. Secondly, the designation of an amendment does not have any bearing on the subsequent freedom of the House to debate and then decide whether to agree or disagree to the amendment. Thirdly, I confess that I have felt a growing sense of disquiet over recent years at the strong convention whereby Ministers have no choice as to the terms of the reason they propose when this House has disagreed to a Lords amendment which engages Commons financial privilege, being limited simply to stating that fact without offering the underlying policy reason. I have therefore today written to the Chair of the Procedure Committee inviting his Committee to consider the whole reasons regime, and I have asked the Clerk of the House to prepare a memorandum. I hope that that is helpful to the House.

I draw the attention of the House to the fact that financial privilege is engaged by Lords amendments 1, 11 to 13, 15 to 18, 24, 25, 27 to 45, 87 to 89, 117, 121, 125, 126, 158, 166, 227, 229, 235, 237, 239 and 243. If the House agrees to them, I will cause an appropriate entry to be made in the Journal.

### After Clause 37

#### UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE CHILDREN: RELOCATION AND SUPPORT

6.29 pm

**The Minister for Immigration (James Brokenshire):** I beg to move, That this House disagrees with Lords amendment 87.

**Mr Speaker:** With this, it will be convenient to discuss the following:

Lords amendments 88 to 101.

Lords amendment 60, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendment 84, Government motion to disagree, and Government amendment (a) in lieu.

Lords amendment 85, Government motion to disagree, and Government amendments (a) and (b) in lieu.

Lords amendment 86.

Lords amendments 183 to 215.

**James Brokenshire:** As you have set out, Mr Speaker, there is a range of Lords amendments in this first group. I will first speak to Lords amendment 60, relating to overseas domestic workers, and then to the Lords amendments relating to detention before moving on to Lords amendment 87, relating to refugee children.

I set out the Government's response to James Ewins' review in my written statement of 7 March. We have acknowledged the need to provide domestic workers who arrive in the United Kingdom in an abusive employment relationship with an immediate escape route from that situation, and we have acted on that. At the same time, the Government are concerned to ensure that such abuse is reported where it occurs. If that does not happen, we cannot take action against the perpetrators and abuse may be perpetuated. The Independent Anti-slavery Commissioner has endorsed that approach, making clear his concern that granting a longer extension of stay—as the Lords amendment would—irrespective of whether abuse has occurred, may create an environment in which criminals are ensured a continuous supply of domestic workers in which to trade.

**Fiona Mactaggart (Slough) (Lab):** The right hon. Gentleman is aware that the alternative proposal is that, if someone leaves the employ of an exploitive employer, they should notify the Home Office of that change. That creates an opportunity to investigate the reasons for the departure and therefore to have a successful prosecution for the exploitation of an overseas domestic worker, which has not happened over recent years.

**James Brokenshire:** I respect what the right hon. Lady says, and we have considered the matter carefully. As she will know, Kevin Hyland, the Independent Anti-slavery Commissioner, has set out a clear view on the time period that should apply to the duration of the visa. He said that allowing annual extensions to all overseas domestic workers will significantly increase the risk of exploitation and possibly create an environment in which criminals could operate. Such cases had been happening prior to the 2012 change in visa rules.

We have already amended the immigration rules so that overseas domestic workers are admitted on conditions of stay that permit them, during the six-month period for which they are admitted, to change employer. They do not need to apply to the Home Office to do so. We have also already amended the immigration rules so that overseas domestic workers who obtain a positive conclusive grounds decision can obtain a two-year extension of stay. We have considered the concern that overseas domestic workers may not readily be able to secure alternative employment as a domestic worker if, even when they are referred into the national referral mechanism, their permission to work ends when the six-month period of their admission expires.

We will make a further change to address that, using the powers in section 4(1) of the Immigration Act 1971 to ensure that when an overseas domestic worker has been referred into the national referral mechanism during their initial six-month stay, their permission to take employment will continue while their case is assessed, and without the worker having to make an application. With that additional change, the measures will ensure that, when a worker arrives in an abusive employment relationship, they can leave it with the certainty that they will be able to continue working, while also ensuring that they are encouraged to report the abuse early. The Lords amendment is therefore unnecessary.

It is essential that overseas domestic workers properly understand the protections available to them and are provided with a safe space in which concerns about

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employment conditions can be raised at an early stage. It is not, however, clear that the Lords amendment's provisions in respect of information meetings quite work. It does not appear sufficient to specify a requirement to attend such meetings in guidance issued to immigration staff if they are to be binding on the workers themselves, nor is it clear how we could require attendance to take place within the 42-day period, as the amendment provides, if the requirement to do so is triggered only at the end of that period.

We have already committed to implementing Mr Ewins' recommendations concerning information meetings, so further legislative provision is not required. It would be sensible to preserve flexibility to decide whether the requirement to attend should be triggered at 42 days, as Mr Ewins' originally proposed, or sooner, as the Independent Anti-slavery Commissioner has suggested. We also intend to link the requirement to attend such meetings to a registration scheme for employers, as part of a wider refocusing of our checks on employers, and to ensure that we are better able to prevent employers from bringing more workers to the UK when they have not complied with our requirements. We will do so through further changes to the immigration rules later this year. We will keep the position under review and have sufficient legislative powers to make any additional changes to protect overseas domestic workers. The Lords amendment is unnecessary, will not be effective in practice, and risks increasing the possibility of exploitation and creating an environment in which criminals can operate with impunity.

I turn now to Lords amendments 84 and 85. It is a well-established principle that there must be a realistic prospect of removal within a reasonable time period for an individual to be detained pending removal. Our current published policy in respect of immigration detention is that there is a presumption of liberty. Depriving someone of their liberty must be subject to careful consideration and scrutiny, taking into account an individual's circumstances.

On these broad issues, I have appreciated the input of many colleagues from across the House. I take particular note of the all-party parliamentary group on refugees, led by Sarah Teather in the previous Parliament, which carefully considered the issues and made several important recommendations. I also value the opportunities that I have had to speak to a number of colleagues, including my hon. Friends the Members for Enfield, Southgate (Mr Burrowes) and for Bedford (Richard Fuller) and my right hon. Friend the Member for Meriden (Mrs Spelman), on several such issues. The Government take the matter seriously and announced a wide package of reforms, which is already under way, in response to the Shaw review.

The new adults at risk policy, due to be published in May, will recognise the dynamic nature of vulnerability and introduce a new focus on decision making with regard to immigration detention. Building on the current legal framework, it will strengthen the existing presumption against the detention of those who are particularly vulnerable to harm in detention. Individuals determined to be at risk will generally be considered as unsuitable for detention unless there is compelling evidence that other factors relating to immigration abuse and the

integrity of the system are of such significance that they outweigh the vulnerability factors. A new gatekeeper function will provide additional oversight and scrutiny to ensure that detention is the appropriate option for those entering the detention estate. That will be further strengthened by a new approach to case management, with a clear focus on case progression via a removal plan and a process for a panel to review cases on at least a quarterly basis. The Government's proposed motion is another important safeguard that will complement the wider reform, providing additional judicial oversight.

The proposal is that individuals will be automatically referred to the tribunal for a bail hearing six months after the point of detention, or if they have already applied for a bail hearing in the first six months, six months after that hearing. They will then receive further referrals at six-monthly intervals from the point of the last hearing. The referral requirement will act as a safeguard, ensuring that individuals who do not make an application themselves, for whatever reason, will have independent judicial oversight of their ongoing detention. Individuals will still be able to make an application themselves at any point. The package of reforms should result in fewer people being detained and for the minimum time possible.

**Mr David Burrowes** (Enfield, Southgate) (Con): I welcome the diligence and care that the Minister has afforded colleagues from across the House in relation to the package that was announced last week. It was also indicated that Stephen Shaw, who provided a helpful report, will undertake a further short review. Will the Minister provide some details about the timing of that report and whether its remit will include an assessment of the reforms that the Minister outlines, such as the additional judicial oversight and the impact that that has on length of time in detention?

**James Brokenshire:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his intervention, his insights and his work on the issue over an extended period. We want Stephen Shaw to evaluate the effect and operation of the reforms that we implemented in response to his review. Along with the various measures that we have outlined, they form part of our overarching package of reform to immigration detention.

On the timing, it is right that the system can be implemented and can run for a certain period. I therefore anticipate Stephen Shaw carrying out this short review towards the end of next year. That is an appropriate timescale, allowing us to implement the changes through to the end of this year and then see them run for the best part of a year, to ensure that his consideration is informed by a system that has bedded in.

**Danny Kinahan** (South Antrim) (UUP): I spoke to the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities and was told that its major problem was making sure procedures were followed. So when we look at the comments in a year's time and review this, will we make sure that procedures are being properly followed and that we concentrate on that just as much?

**James Brokenshire:** I am sure Stephen Shaw took an overarching, wide-ranging approach in his initial report and will do so in his subsequent review. We want that to



be in short order; we do not want it to extend into months, because it is about testing whether the reforms we have put in place—there are still more to come, with the adults at risk policy in May—had the effect we intended and therefore give effect to his key recommendations. I am sure he will be focusing on the practical implementation of the steps that we have implemented.

**Imran Hussain** (Bradford East) (Lab): Like others, I welcome and await the guidelines in the light of the Shaw report, but does the Minister accept that all the reports on this matter, including the Shaw review, the inquiry by the all-party parliamentary group and the review by Her Majesty's inspectorate of prisons, have asked for a much shorter period in respect of automatic judicial oversight, at nearer one month than six months? What does the Minister have to say about that?

**James Brokenshire:** This needs to be seen in the context of the reforms we are putting in place in the system, which is why I made reference to the quarterly reviews. This is about having a separate function whereby the removal plans will be subject to that internal scrutiny and then there is this automaticity in relation to bail hearings. It should be noted that the vast majority of those in immigration detention are there for only short periods—fewer than four months. We therefore think this is a right step to put in place, reflecting that desire to have that external arrangement. Indeed, it is open to anybody to apply for bail at any point, but we think there is a need for a further safeguard, which is why we have acted in the way we have, in terms of the amendments before the House this evening.

**Richard Fuller** (Bedford) (Con): I have two quick points for the Minister. On the adults at risk policy and guidance he is putting together in May, will he confirm whether he will take input and advice from independent groups that have been working with people in detention over the past few years? Before a pregnant woman is detained, will an independent assessment be made, as is the case for children who are detained, following the changes we made in the previous Parliament?

**James Brokenshire:** We intend to publish the adults at risk policy in May and I am sure we will seek input from external parties. I appreciate that various stakeholders and organisations take an understandably keen interest in this area and in many ways have helped to frame and develop the policies we are bringing before the House this evening. Let me come back to my hon. Friend's point about the detention of pregnant women later, because it may help the House if I set the position out and allow a further intervention then.

**Mrs Caroline Spelman** (Meriden) (Con): I welcome the amendments that the Government have brought in to address the concerns raised in another place. When the Minister responds on the detention of pregnant women and the very reduced period that the Government are now proposing, will he assure the House that these women will still have access to full healthcare and that consideration will be given not just to where they are detained, but the way in which they are transported?

6.45 pm

**James Brokenshire:** I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for highlighting this issue, which we consider carefully. I assure her that we will continue to look at those specific issues as we develop implementation of the policy. Important steps forward have been taken on the healthcare linkages at Yarl's Wood and in the Bedfordshire healthcare system so that appropriate care and support is provided to pregnant women. I will reflect further on what she has said, particularly on her additional points about transportation.

I was pleased that the amendment to put the adults at risk policy on a statutory footing was accepted in the other place. However, on Third Reading it was amended further by the addition of a subsection placing an absolute exclusion on the detention of pregnant women. The Government do not agree that there should be an outright exclusion of pregnant women from detention. We must retain the ability to detain in certain limited circumstances—for example, where a pregnant woman who does not have the right to enter the UK is identified at the border and can be returned quickly, or where a pregnant woman presents a public risk or has a poor compliance history and the safe and most manageable way forward is a short period of detention prior to removal.

For some time now, I have listened carefully to concerns on the issue of detaining pregnant women pending removal. We had a wide-ranging Backbench Business Committee debate a few months back, and I have listened carefully to the representations made by my hon. Friends the Members for Bedford and for Wealden (Nusrat Ghani), and my right hon. Friend the Member for Meriden. Hon. Members will have noted that the Government's written ministerial statement of 18 April has clearly set out our position on the detention of pregnant women. The Government have tabled a motion that will place a statutory time limit, broadly in line with that for families with children, which will end the routine detention of pregnant women. It would mean that pregnant women may be detained for up to 72 hours, for example, immediately prior to a managed return; to prevent illegal entry at the border where a return can be quickly arranged; or if a pregnant woman presents a public risk. There would be the ability to extend this up to a maximum of seven days in total in particular circumstances, but only on the basis of ministerial approval.

**Stella Creasy** (Walthamstow) (Lab/Co-op): It is important that we are very clear about whom we are detaining, particularly when it comes to detaining pregnant women. We know that the vast majority of people in Yarl's Wood are victims of rape and sexual torture, and they come to us for sanctuary. The Minister talks about carrying out a review, but will he explicitly consider whether being a victim or a suspected victim of rape and sexual torture can be grounds for denying detention? It is the 21st century, and it is humiliating and not cost effective for us as a nation that we lock these women up, rather than set them free.

**James Brokenshire:** It is important to recognise that the majority of people in our immigration removal centres are not asylum seekers; some people will claim asylum when they have been taken into an IRC. The point

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the hon. Lady makes about vulnerability is powerful and important, which was why we commissioned Stephen Shaw to make the recommendations he did on these matters of vulnerability. I hope she will see when we publish the adults at risk strategy and those various points that weigh the relevant factors that we are taking precisely those elements into account and that the presumption should not be to detain unless there are overwhelming factors that support detention and mean it is appropriate. I ask her to hold fire perhaps until she sees that policy, and I look forward to engaging with her further once she has had that opportunity.

**Mr Alistair Carmichael** (Orkney and Shetland) (LD): Stephen Shaw considered these matters and, I recall, concluded that there should be no detention of pregnant women. If the Minister is determined to go against that recommendation, surely he must have decided where those women will be detained. When will he tell that to the House?

**James Brokenshire:** The feedback we have received from a range of different organisations is that the facilities and support at Yarl's Wood, and its links with the health service in Bedfordshire, provide an effective join-up to ensure that those needs are best met, but obviously we keep such matters under close and careful review. The right hon. Gentleman will recall our debates in the previous Parliament on the detention of children. The coalition Government were proud to introduce measures that pragmatically and practically ended the general detention of children, and we are using precisely that model and approach for pregnant women. We are learning from our experiences regarding the detention of children, but we recognise that there may be limited circumstances in which detention might be necessary, either to facilitate removal, or because a young person has been met at the border and the time during which they are held is still technically detention.

**Mr Carmichael:** I remember those debates well. They started from the presumption that Yarl's Wood was not an appropriate place to detain children any more than Dungavel would be. Why are the Government now taking a different position?

**James Brokenshire:** The right hon. Gentleman will probably know that Yarl's Wood is the only immigration removal centre that specifically detains women, so when we review it we must ensure that the best facilities for pregnant women are in place. This is not just about what happens in the centre; it is about how that links up to the broader health service. That is why we judge Yarl's Wood to be the most appropriate place, but we keep such issues under careful review, including the continuing improvements that we want to see.

I promised that I would return to the point raised earlier about assessments. The family removals process operates removal plans for children, and as I said, we are taking a new approach to the use of detention, with focus on a removal plan. Therefore, when anyone goes into detention, that removal plan will need to be considered. As that work develops, there will be detailed consideration

of the appropriateness of detention as part of a removal plan, and we are now implementing a number of reforms to detention.

**Nusrat Ghani** (Wealden) (Con): I thank the Minister for acknowledging the work done across the House in changing the detention of pregnant women, and for coming before the Home Affairs Committee and responding so openly to the questions from me and my hon. Friend the Member for Enfield, Southgate (Mr Burrowes). In the debate in Westminster Hall I mentioned the midwifery unit in my constituency. Will the Minister shed light on what midwifery support will be available for women who will now be detained for a much shorter period?

**James Brokenshire:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for her searching questioning and desire to bring about change, and I am pleased that we are considering these amendments this evening. As I have explained, there is a link between health services in Yarl's Wood and the way that extends and links into midwifery services provided through the Bedfordshire healthcare system. We believe that that arrangement is right to provide joined-up care, with nurses and other health professionals coming from Bedfordshire into Yarl's Wood to provide support for pregnant women.

**Richard Fuller:** I do not wish to underestimate the significant change in direction on immigration detention policy that my right hon. Friend outlined today and last week, but he will understand that scepticism remains about Home Office procedures and policies when they are put into practice—hence the request for an independent point of oversight. In the steps that he is outlining, will there be scope for independent oversight prior to the detention of a pregnant woman?

**James Brokenshire:** The best way to approach this is to implement the changes that I have outlined to the House this evening. Stephen Shaw will review those measures in 12 to 18 months, and I suspect that he will examine how the implementation, policies and procedures will have effect. I will continue to examine how best we can provide greater transparency. Although we have recently created more management information, this is about how we provide reassurance and greater clarity about this procedure. I will continue to reflect on how we do that, so as to give my hon. Friend—and others—greater assurance on what are sensitive matters.

**Catherine West** (Hornsey and Wood Green) (Lab): I thank the Minister for being so generous in taking interventions. I welcome the adults at risk strategy and look forward to scrutinising it. Will there be access to legal aid for women who have specific removal plans, so that that is as lawful as possible?

**James Brokenshire:** Some groups provide support and advice in immigration removal centres, but matters of legal aid are not for me at the Home Office but for colleagues in the Ministry of Justice.

Let me move on to the broader issue of Lords amendment 87. In opposing the amendment, I do not in any way question the motivation of those who tabled it in the other place, or the desire to see this country do more in the region, on the shores of the Mediterranean,

and within Europe. The conflict in Syria continues to have a devastating effect on the lives of many men, women and children who have been displaced from their homes, their country, and their futures. The stories they tell of lives that have been uprooted, and the distressing images that we see of people fleeing in search of a better, safer life, are moving and compelling in equal measure.

I know that many Members have travelled to the region, or to the Greek islands or the camps in northern France, and they have been deeply moved by their experiences. I have appreciated the opportunity to listen to colleagues such as my hon. Friends the Members for South Cambridgeshire (Heidi Allen), for Bury St Edmunds (Jo Churchill), and for Eastbourne (Caroline Ansell), following their visit to the Greek islands, and my hon. Friends the Members for Enfield, Southgate, and for Faversham and Mid Kent (Helen Whately), following their visits to Calais. They set out the practical issues on the ground, and the need for this country to do more.

The Government wholeheartedly share the intentions of the noble Lords to protect and support vulnerable unaccompanied refugee children, but the challenge is how we most effectively harness our strong sense of compassion and moral duty. As my hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth, Moor View (Johnny Mercer) put it to me recently, this is about how we use both head and heart.

Our starting principle is that we must put the best interests of children first, and avoid any policy that places children at additional risk or encourages them to place their lives in the hands of people traffickers and criminal gangs. In any response, we need to be careful that we do not inadvertently create a situation in which families see an advantage in sending children ahead, alone and in the hands of traffickers, putting their lives at risk by making them attempt treacherous sea crossings to Europe. As the horrendous events in the Mediterranean last week demonstrated, that would be the worst of all outcomes.

**Stephen Doughty** (Cardiff South and Penarth) (Lab/Co-op): The Minister specifically mentions the horrific events in the Mediterranean last week. I have heard from a number of constituents who, through their family connections, knew of people fleeing. He mentioned Syria, but people are fleeing not just Syria but conflicts all across the horn of Africa and elsewhere. I have heard some absolutely harrowing stories from those who have survived those terrible crossings—people trying to travel from Alexandria being abused by people traffickers. Does he not agree that, when children survive such horrific tragedies, we need to do our bit in taking some of them here for protection in this country?

7 pm

**James Brokenshire:** I will come on to the broader issues that the hon. Gentleman highlights. Clear judgments have to be made on how the UK most effectively provides support. I will come on to how we can help in Europe and to look at those issues that he highlights, which include: the trafficking gangs that exploit people across Africa and the broader regions; how we are playing our role in the Khartoum process to work with African Union countries to take action; and finding that common sense of engaging and working against the people trafficking and smuggling networks.

**Peter Kyle** (Hove) (Lab) *rose*—

**Tim Farron** (Westmorland and Lonsdale) (LD) *rose*—

**James Brokenshire:** I will if I may finish this point. As I have shown so far, I plan to be generous to all Members during the course of this debate.

No one should be in any doubt about the Government's clear, ongoing commitment to help those most affected by the migration crisis. The doubling of our aid for the Syrian crisis to £2.3 billion—the largest ever response by this country to a single humanitarian crisis—underlines not just that commitment, but our commitment to act in practical ways to improve the lives of as many people as possible. Hundreds of thousands of people in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Egypt are receiving food, shelter, medical treatment and support as a consequence of the actions of the UK. It is also about hope and opportunity and creating a strong sense of how we can quickly rebuild the lives of those torn apart by the war in Syria. The London conference in February galvanised commitments to create an estimated 1.1 million jobs for those in the region by 2018, and quality education for 1.7 million refugee and vulnerable children by the end of the 2016-17 school year, with equal access for girls and boys.

**Tim Farron:** The Minister is being very generous. He makes the point that action to help those who are stranded in Europe would somehow act as a pull factor. With respect, I think that that view is bogus, not least when we consider that there are four times more refugees in the region. The idea that Europe is the only place to which they are heading is nonsense. Even if one were to accept that, his decision not to accept the Dubs amendment is to ignore the tens of thousands of children who are in Europe now. The reality is that 10,000 have gone missing in the past year. They are in the hands of traffickers now. What will he do to help those children who are here on this continent now?

**James Brokenshire:** I was going to come on to that very point. Let me just say that it is about supporting those front-line member states and our other European partners to stand by their responsibilities. In essence, Europe should be a safe space; it is not a conflict zone. Therefore, we judge that the best way to make a difference and to help the greatest numbers of those in need is to support the majority of refugees to enable them to stay safely in their home region, which is why I made those points about aid and assistance. Where people have made that journey to Europe, we should help our European partners to fulfil their duties to them and to provide support on this issue of family reunification.

**Peter Kyle:** I am very grateful to the Minister for giving way; he has indeed been generous with his time. May I point him to what the Home Secretary said in her speech to the Tory conference last October? She said:

“We'll develop a community sponsorship scheme, like those in Canada and Australia, to allow individuals, charities, faith groups, churches and businesses to support refugees directly.”

I have met the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and many of the groups that she mentioned in that speech. They are ready to do it, and they have the systems in place, but the thing that is stopping them is the Government.

**James Brokenshire:** I was just talking to the Under-Secretary of State for Refugees, my hon. Friend the Member for Watford (Richard Harrington), and he made it clear that that is not true. We will come forward very shortly with proposals on the issue of sponsorship, which is important and which we do want to take forward, but it is important that we get it right. That is precisely what my hon. Friend is doing as part of the vulnerable person resettlement scheme.

**Yvette Cooper** (Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford) (Lab): The Minister's point was effectively that the children who are alone in Greece now are Greece's problem, but Save the Children has said that 2,000 children are alone in northern Greece and there are fewer than 500 child shelter places for them, and those are full. What does he really want those children to do when they are sleeping rough, being targeted by traffickers and smuggling gangs, and subjected to abuse? Does he really think that that is just Greece's problem and that we should not do our bit too?

**James Brokenshire:** No, I do not. That is why it is right that we are providing financial aid and assistance in that area. I will come on to deal specifically with that support to underline the important commitment that this country is giving.

**Mr Steve Baker** (Wycombe) (Con): A few minutes ago, my right hon. Friend mentioned the actions of our European partners. Can he give the House an indication of how this Government's actions compare with those of our European neighbours?

**James Brokenshire:** When we look at all these different aspects of our involvement—our aid assistance, the work of our resettlement programmes, which I will come on to shortly, the support we are giving in Europe, and the steps we are taking against smugglers and people trafficking networks with the taskforces that we have set up—we see that we can take very great credit in terms of the work that this country has done and continues to do. It is that focus that we will continue to bring to this issue. We know that the vulnerable and those most in need and most at risk may be best helped here in the UK. We launched the Syrian vulnerable person resettlement scheme to resettle 20,000 people over the course of this Parliament. Well over 1,000 people have been resettled to date, around half of whom are children. That means that, in the next four years, several thousand more children will be resettled in the UK under the Syrian scheme, but as I said in my statement of 28 January, we want to do more, especially for children most in need of support. That is why, last week, I announced a new resettlement scheme for children at risk. That initiative will be the largest resettlement effort to focus on children at risk from the middle east and north Africa region—children who might otherwise attempt their own perilous journeys to Europe and the UK.

We have worked closely with the UNHCR to design a scheme that will protect the most vulnerable children, resettling up to 3,000 people over the lifetime of this Parliament, the majority of whom will be children if the UNHCR deems it to be in their best interests. Children who are identified as at risk will be resettled with their family members or carers where appropriate. The scheme

will not be limited to any particular nationality or group, which will allow us to assist the most vulnerable children whoever they are.

The UNHCR is fully supportive of the launch of this new initiative and the UK's commitment to assist vulnerable refugee children at risk through further resettlement efforts that uphold the principles of child protection.

**Dawn Butler** (Brent Central) (Lab): After being at the Council of Europe last week and hearing representations in relation to the claims made by Save the Children that 26,000 children have gone missing, and hearing other countries talk about what they are doing in regard to those children, I can say that we are not doing as much as we should be doing. To say that we will not pass this amendment will be embarrassing for us as a country.

**James Brokenshire:** I am afraid that I disagree with the hon. Lady.

I will now move on to the support we are providing in Europe, which I think it is important the House recognises. Although our judgment is that the UK can make the biggest difference in the region, and that children in Europe should benefit from support from countries with legal obligations similar to our own, it is right that we should provide assistance in Europe where there are vulnerable children in need of support, and the Government are taking action. The UK is the largest bilateral contributor to the humanitarian response to the crisis in Europe and the Balkans, with a total contribution of £65 million. That includes nearly £46 million to provide life-saving aid to migrants and refugees, including food, water, hygiene kits, infant packs and protection for the most vulnerable, as well as support to organisations helping Governments to build their capacity to manage arrivals in Greece and the Balkans.

On top of our significant support to front-line member states, the Department for International Development has created a £10 million refugee children fund specifically to support the needs of vulnerable refugee and migrant children in Europe. The fund will be used to support the UNHCR, Save the Children and the International Rescue Committee to work with host authorities to care for and assist unaccompanied or separated children in Europe. That includes identifying vulnerable children, providing for their immediate support, referring to specialist care and helping to find solutions, such as family reunification. On that last point, I am clear that it is important to help children reunite with family wherever possible.

**Joanna Cherry** (Edinburgh South West) (SNP): The Minister has said that one reason why the British Government will not take children from the continent of Europe is that it might encourage people smuggling from the middle east to Europe and unsafe journeys. However, when I was in Calais at Easter, I was told by aid workers that, as a result of the British Government's refusal to take children from northern France, children are being trafficked into the United Kingdom and are attempting unsafe journeys by jumping on to or under lorries bound for the United Kingdom. Indeed, I have learned that one girl I met in one of the camps, alone and unaccompanied, has since entered the UK by trafficking methods. Will the Minister not take on board the fact

that, by failing to take children from Europe, he is actually encouraging trafficking and unsafe methods of travel from France to Britain?

**James Brokenshire:** I am very happy to address that point head-on, because I think that there are a number of important ways in which we can take, and are taking, action. That is why I made the point about reuniting children with their families. The hon. and learned Lady will know that we have seconded additional resources to the European Asylum Support Office for Italy and Greece to implement and streamline the processes under the Dublin regulations, including to identify quickly children who qualify for family reunion.

On the specific point about Calais and northern France, I take these issues extremely seriously. I am personally committed to improving and speeding up our family reunification processes so that young people there who have families with refugee claims here can be reunited. That is why we had the recent secondment of a senior asylum expert to the French Interior Ministry to improve the process for family reunion, which I think has had an impact on the number of children being reunited with family in the UK. In the past six weeks over 50 cases have been identified, 24 of which have been accepted for transfer to the UK from France under the Dublin family unity provisions, and more than half of them have already arrived in the UK. I think that we have demonstrated that once an asylum claim has been lodged, transfers can take place within a matter of weeks.

Those who want us to do more on this can help us to do so by encouraging and supporting children to use the processes that are in place to help them be reunited with their family. I know that one of the biggest barriers at the moment is persuading these children to claim asylum so that they can be considered for transfer to the UK under the family unity conventions in the Dublin regulations.

**Heidi Allen** (South Cambridgeshire) (Con): I do not feel that we are taking responsibility; at the moment, it is British citizens who are taking responsibility. I am afraid that seconding one person is not good enough. When I visited, with the right hon. Member for Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford (Yvette Cooper), we saw a similar example of a child who had gone missing pitching up in Kent a week later. This is happening on a daily basis. One person is not enough. Can we please try to get more resources there?

7.15 pm

**James Brokenshire:** As I think I have indicated, we are already providing support to the French Government, as the non-governmental organisation France Terre d'Asile has responsibility for identifying children in and around the camps at Calais and making sure that they go into the system so that we can do the child safeguarding, make those connections and see that they are reunited with family. That is why I underline the need to give a clear message to those who have connections to identify and support children so that they go into the French system, because we will act. I think that we have the systems and processes in place now to be able to act effectively. That is why it is important to see that operationalised, so that we are doing what we can, alongside the French Government, our Border Force

officers and France Terre d'Asile, to ensure that when children are identified, they are immediately pointed to how they can get into the French system so that we can then act.

**Yvette Cooper** *rose*—

**James Brokenshire:** I will give way to the right hon. Lady, as I know of her long-standing interest in this matter.

**Yvette Cooper:** I thank the Minister for giving way once again. On that point, Citizens UK has identified 157 live cases that have been put into the system, but he is saying that only 24 have in fact been accepted, and only half of those have actually made it to Britain. Why are they not all brought here straight away? Why are they still stuck in Calais, cold, living in tents in the mud and at huge risk, when he has accepted that they should be here with family who can care for them?

**James Brokenshire:** We are processing 50 cases, 24 of which we have accepted, but a number of those cases are complicated. It is a question of the safeguarding measures that need to be put in place for the children to be reunited with the families who are here. It is therefore more complex than it is sometimes presented. That is not in any way a desire on the part of the Government, or anyone else, to encourage delay. Rather, it is about the normal child safeguarding measures that I think are appropriate. I say to the right hon. Lady and to Citizens UK that if there are cases that can be linked to families here in the UK, get them into the French system. I make that point again and again, because we stand ready to act and to take charge where there are those links, and to see that if there are children in northern France who are separated from family in the UK, action is taken.

Those processes for family reunion are of course in addition to the unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who make their claims in this country. With over 3,000 asylum applications from unaccompanied children last year, I pay tribute to all those local authorities that, despite the unprecedented pressure on their services, are providing support to those young people. At the same time, we need to shut down the illegal migration routes to Europe that are exploited by human traffickers, who encourage people to risk their lives to make perilous journeys. The Government remain of the view that relocation schemes within Europe risk creating unintended consequences or perverse incentives for people to put their lives into the hands of traffickers. Instead, we are committed to providing safe and legal routes for the most vulnerable refugees to resettle in the UK.

The success of the EU-Turkey migration agreement is a vital opportunity to end the misery and lethal risk that smugglers and organised criminals are causing on a daily basis. We have made an offer of UK support to help implement the EU-Turkey migration agreement. We need to close down illegal crossings from Turkey to Greece and tackle migrant flows upstream. We are offering 75 expert personnel to help with the processing and administration of migrants in Greek reception centres, to act as interpreters, to provide medical support and to bolster our existing team assisting the Commission to ensure that there is effective and efficient co-ordination.

[James Brokenshire]

Those teams, which are ready to be deployed, will include experts in supporting vulnerable groups, such as unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, and those trained to tackle people trafficking. That will help to ensure that vulnerable people, including children, are identified and can access asylum and support procedures as quickly as possible. That is in addition to the work undertaken by the Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Kevin Hyland, to visit hotspots and assess what more can be done to ensure that unaccompanied children are protected from traffickers.

**Tim Farron:** I want to challenge the notion that the EU-Turkey deal is a success. I was at the Idomeni camp on the Greek-Macedonian border a fortnight ago. The camp is meant to host 300 or 400 people as they pass north towards northern Europe, but there were 25,000 people—there were children there as well—crammed into that small space, and they were absolutely desperate. The reason they are not moving from that place is that they have no trust whatever in the system or in the fact that wherever they are moved to next will not mean deportation out of Europe. The EU-Turkey deal may be great in principle, but in practice it has been stitched up for the benefit and convenience of politicians, not of those desperate people rotting in the camps.

**James Brokenshire:** I attended last week's Justice and Home Affairs Council meeting in Luxembourg and I spoke to the Greek Minister. He has welcomed the offer of support that I have just set out, in terms of its practical operationalisation to help make things happen at the front end—in the Greek islands and in Greece. I have highlighted the financial and other support we are giving Greece and others to deal with some of these difficult and challenging issues, and we are playing our absolute part to address this issue and to see that the parts of the EU-Turkey deal happen and have the effect we would all want them to.

**Mr Alistair Carmichael:** The Minister stands there and says we are playing our absolute part, but he told us two minutes ago that we have in fact offered only 75 members of staff, when the Commission itself tells us it needs 4,000. How is that doing our absolute part?

**James Brokenshire:** The contribution we are making stands in very positive terms compared with what other European partners are doing. This is about identifying the right people to deploy so that we have the best effect, and that is precisely what we are doing.

I am conscious that I have spoken for an extended period, and I want other right hon. and hon. Members to get into the debate. For the reasons I have given, the approach proposed in amendment 87 is not the right one. As the selection of amendments notes, the amendment engages financial privilege, and the Speaker identified some of the issues that that raises in terms of the reasons we give the House of Lords.

Under amendment 87, we could end up relieving pressure on developed countries in Europe that have the means to support children, instead of helping developing countries that are under real pressure and that do not

have the capacity to support them. The best answer is upstream intervention before children at risk try to come to Europe.

The Government are committed to making a full contribution to the global refugee crisis, particularly by helping children at risk. We strongly believe that our approach of resettling children at risk and their families directly from the region will have most impact on safeguarding vulnerable children. The significant aid package in Europe, and our practical and logistical assistance to front-line member states to ensure vulnerable children are properly protected wherever they are in Europe, is the correct way to approach this issue.

The UK can be proud of the contribution we are making, which stands comparison with any. We are doing everything we said we would to provide aid and to resettle vulnerable refugees. We are already making a real difference to hundreds of thousands of lives.

I recognise the sincere feelings of those who support amendment 87. We share the objective of identifying and protecting children at risk, but I firmly believe that the approach I have set out provides the best way to support our European partners, help vulnerable refugee children and provide the biggest impact for the contribution this country can make.

**Keir Starmer** (Holborn and St Pancras) (Lab): I thank the Labour Peers and the many Cross Benchers who brought these amendments before the House today. The amendments raise important issues, and none more so than amendment 87.

Amendment 87—the so-called Alf Dubs amendment—was tabled by Lord Dubs. As many people know, Lord Dubs arrived in this country in 1939 as an unaccompanied child under the Kindertransport system, so he speaks with particular authority. The vote in the House of Lords was won by 100 votes, reflecting the long campaign to change the position on unaccompanied children in Europe. That campaign has been supported by Members of this House, along with non-governmental organisations and charities. The matter was first raised by my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Camberwell and Peckham (Ms Harman), who put it to the Prime Minister in September 2015. My right hon. Friend the Member for Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford (Yvette Cooper) has continually raised it, and I pay tribute to her work. I also pay tribute to Save the Children for raising this issue so much over the last year.

The issue is comparatively simple to state: hundreds of thousands of families across the world—millions of people in total—are fleeing their homes. The refugee crisis we are witnessing is on a scale we have not seen since the second world war. The Minister spoke of the devastating effect of war on so many people. We have become familiar with the images of families making treacherous journeys—often across the Mediterranean—but I am sure I speak for the whole House when I say we are all still shocked every time we see footage and images of desperate families making those desperate, treacherous journeys.

**Catherine West:** Does my hon. and learned Friend agree that, given the emails and anguish-filled letters we receive as constituency MPs, there seems to be a lack of

urgency among Government Members, which, to me, reflects the fact that they are out of touch with how the country really feels about this issue?

**Keir Starmer:** The number of constituents who have contacted me and other Members—I am sure that this is true across the House—about the plight of refugees in the last 12 months has been considerable. Many of those communications—again, I am sure that this is the same for many Members—are individual, rather than part of mass campaigns. These people have real concerns, and they usually say, “What can I do? I don’t think the Government are doing enough. Can I send money or clothes?” Many have said, “Can I take somebody in?” or even, “Can I adopt?” There is therefore a very powerful feeling out there that more needs to be done about refugees.

I have spoken of the hundreds of thousands of families—the millions of people—fleeing their homes.

**Andy Slaughter** (Hammersmith) (Lab): My hon. and learned Friend is exactly right. He has been to the camps in France, and I have been to the Calais camp. Much of the help there is given by individual British people who make the journey over or who organise trips, often providing substantial amounts of aid. Our constituents’ view is clear, and the Government would be wise to listen to it this evening.

**Keir Starmer:** I have been to the camps in Calais and Dunkirk, and, like many other people, I was shocked. I have discussed that with the Minister and with the Minister with responsibility for refugees, and what I have tried to get across—this is important in relation to the amendment—is that when I went to Dunkirk, there were 3,000 individuals, including many children, living in a swamp in flimsy tents in the freezing cold. There were eight volunteers doing their level best to help in the camp, but there was not an official in sight, apart from two gendarmes on the gate, and all they were doing was preventing pallets from being brought in. I know things have changed—I did say that when I went, and I have never been slow to acknowledge when steps have been taken—but there needs to be a reality check about the ability of children in those camps and elsewhere to access the advice and help they need to make a claim.

**Mr Burrows:** I have similarly visited Dunkirk, where I was appalled by the inhumane conditions, and no one should walk by. Does the hon. and learned Gentleman have any details about deliverability if the Dubs amendment is passed? How many unaccompanied minors will come to this country, and when? How will that operate?

**Keir Starmer:** As the hon. Gentleman will have seen, the amendment proposes a scheme for taking children, and that is important. I accept that there needs to be a proper scheme and that things need to be done properly. As with any other scheme, accommodation, schools, healthcare and so on have to be put in place for anybody who arrives. The proposal is therefore for a scheme, rather than just a set number of children without a scheme.

I want to move on. I have described the hundreds of thousands—

**Tom Elliott** (Fermanagh and South Tyrone) (UUP): Will the hon. and learned Gentleman give way?

**Keir Starmer:** I will make some progress, if I may, and then I will of course take further interventions.

I have described the situation for millions of families travelling across the world, but we are now dealing with children making such treacherous journeys on their own. It is estimated that there are 26,000 of them in Europe. I met four of them in Glasgow when I visited there. The children—two girls and two boys—were from Iran, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They told me their very powerful stories about their trip across to Europe.

7.30 pm

One of the boys described to me how, aged 14, he had to get into a boat intended for 60, but in which there were 100 adults who were strangers to him. He was ordered to dispose of all his personal items, or he would not have been allowed on the boat. That 14-year-old arrived in Europe, with no personal belongings at all, with stranger adults, and he made the rest of his journey on his own. That is a typical example.

**Alison McGovern** (Wirral South) (Lab): Does my hon. and learned Friend agree that the story he has recounted gives the lie to or shows the inappropriateness of the Government’s position in that we cannot possibly expect children to be treated the same as adults?

**Keir Starmer:** I would put it this way: in this country, we recognise that children cannot access their rights without significant help and the position is exactly the same in Europe, but such help is not in place and that is not happening. The stories that I heard from the four children in Glasgow were typical of those of the thousands of children who are arriving alone, frightened and with absolutely nothing.

There is the chilling statistic—from my point of view, this is a telling statistic—that 10,000 of those children are thought to be missing. That figure comes from Europol. I have done a lot of work, as I recognise have a lot of other people in the House, to try to combat sexual exploitation and trafficking. There is a shared concern that many of these children will become, if they are not already, victims of sexual exploitation or trafficking. That is the real concern driving Lords amendment 87. It is a small but important contribution to dealing with the refugee crisis, which is testing our humanitarianism.

For my part, I have applauded the Government’s resettlement scheme—I have spent time, both in Glasgow and in Colchester, with Syrian families who have arrived under the scheme—but we simply cannot ignore the children who have arrived in Europe. As has been said, they are right here, right now, and they are in a desperate and vulnerable position. The Government are not saying that nothing needs to be done, or that they are perfectly catered for and are not at risk. The Government recognise that something needs to be done and that they are at risk, but the Government are still resisting Lords amendment 87.

The Minister put this in terms of risk and of not encouraging children to take risks. I want to address what is sometimes expressed as the pull factor absolutely fairly and squarely. The first thing to say is that, on

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analysis, there is flimsy evidence to support the pull factor one way or the other. The other thing is that any discussion of a pull factor should be held in a vacuum. We have been here before in relation to rescues in the Mediterranean. On one view, people argue that such rescues are a pull factor, but we all recognise that it would be abhorrent to leave people to their fate in the Mediterranean on the simple proposition that rescues might encourage others to cross the sea.

We therefore have to be absolutely honest with ourselves about what we are saying about the pull factor in relation to the 26,000 children, of whom 10,000 are missing. The pull factor argument is that we must abandon them to their fate on the basis of an unproven theory that if we did something by taking them, others might be encouraged to come. In stark terms, that is the pull factor. I reject it, many Members of the House reject it and we should all, rightly, reject it.

**Mr David Lammy** (Tottenham) (Lab): I hesitate to intervene on my hon. and learned Friend's excellent speech, but does he wonder why we did not hear about the pull factor when this country took in 50,000 Ugandans, 30,000 Cypriots or 20,000 Vietnamese? We now have such a situation in Europe. A child died at the Piraeus camp in Greece when I visited just a few weeks. It was absolutely awful. That this Government are really doing what they are doing for the sake of immigration issues is a scandal. Is that not really why we are discussing the pull factor?

**Keir Starmer:** I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for his very powerful intervention, which puts the pull factor in its proper context. The pull factor argument that has been deployed is not attractive in a country that has been as tolerant as this country has in providing support for those fleeing persecution. In the end, the argument boils down to saying that we will leave people to their fate for fear of encouraging others to follow in their footsteps. The Minister talked about distressed people fleeing war-torn zones. That is the context in which the argument is being applied, but this case is worse because the pull factor is being applied to children. The boy I met in Glasgow was 14 when he made his journey, and he is typical of many in that respect.

**Tim Farron:** The hon. and learned Gentleman is being very generous in giving way. On the pull factor, I agree with him that the evidence is at best mixed. In the sense that I found any kind of pull factor in the camps I visited in northern Greece, in the islands or in Calais and in meeting refugees who have been settled in Cologne, it was that Europe is a peaceful, decent, stable place where people can raise their children without fear of their being killed. We should be proud of such a pull factor.

**Keir Starmer:** The hon. Gentleman makes a very powerful point. I know that he has been very supportive of the campaigns in that respect. Certainly, several people I talked to in Calais and Dunkirk—stuck in camps that were appalling when I saw them—spoke in glowing terms about the rule of law and human rights, and our proud tradition in relation to refugees.

I have listened to the Minister. Not only on this occasion but every time that we have debated this, I have applauded and acknowledged the steps that the Government have taken. I accept that any steps taken must be proper steps within a proper scheme so that they work properly. However, not taking the vulnerable children who are in Europe—right here, right now—is simply not good enough.

This afternoon, an email pinged into my inbox from a rabbi in Kentish Town, one of my constituents, which I want to read to the House:

“As the Jewish community celebrates the...Passover, we remember not only our own journey to freedom, but all those who are not free.”

He urged me to support Lords amendment 87 and other amendments. He certainly speaks for many of my other constituents, as I am sure he does for those of many hon. Members from across the House.

Among those on the Opposition Benches, there is strong support for Lords amendment 87. I know and acknowledge the fact that Conservative Members have real concerns, which they have raised repeatedly, about our not taking in this group of vulnerable children who need our help now.

**Debbie Abrahams** (Oldham East and Saddleworth) (Lab): I was particularly moved by yesterday's article by the former Archbishop, Rowan Williams. He compared the action being taken now with how we responded to the plight of children during the second world war. Does my hon. and learned Friend not agree with him that supporting the Dubs amendment

“is an opportunity for us to live up to the best of our tradition in Britain of reaching out a hand to help the most vulnerable”?

**Keir Starmer:** I speak for Members from across the whole House when I say that history will judge how we respond to this historic crisis, which is of proportions that have not been seen since the second world war. This is the challenge of our time, and whether we rise to it or not will be the measure of us. We have the clear evidence of thousands of vulnerable children, and we now need to act to take 3,000, as proposed in the amendment. I say to Conservative Members who have campaigned and spoken out on this that now is the moment to do something about it to make a real difference by voting with us on amendment 87. I urge all Members to do so.

**Jo Cox** (Batley and Spen) (Lab): We have talked a lot about pull factors, but it is worth remembering for a moment the push factors: the children as young as seven who are being forced on to the frontline in Syria, or the children raped in conflicts that are so horrific that aid workers I have worked with over 10 years are telling me that the situation is the most horrendous they have ever witnessed. These are children in Europe right now. I applaud the Government's record on the humanitarian support they have given to Syrian civilians in the region—in Syria—and some of the efforts we have made in Europe, but tonight is surely the moment that we have to go just that little bit further. I hope my hon. and learned Friend agrees with that point.

**Keir Starmer:** I am grateful for that intervention. It reminds us that applying the “pull factor” argument in relation to refugees is inappropriate because they are,



by definition, people who are fleeing persecution across borders and taking journeys that are treacherous and dangerous. When we see families or children making those journeys, we all think of our own families, and think of the circumstances and the desperation that lie behind those desperate acts. In those circumstances, it is of course very important to take into account the push factors.

**Helen Whately** (Faversham and Mid Kent) (Con): The hon. and learned Gentleman must be aware of the Minister's statement that we will take more children from in and around Syria. He has been arguing, as have others, about the 3,000 children to be taken from within Europe. Clearly, all of us in this House care very strongly about all vulnerable children caught up in these awful situations. Does he believe that there is a choice between taking one category before the other? Should we be taking more from Syria as well as the 3,000? How would we decide, given our ability properly to look after unaccompanied asylum-seeking children?

**Keir Starmer:** I support the statement that was made last week about up to 3,000 children being taken from the region. However, it should not be an either/or when we have a refugee crisis on a scale not seen since the second world war. This is a limited and proportionate number—3,000 children who are in desperate need in Europe right now. I, for my part, do not subscribe to the categorisation of vulnerability. I think that any child alone, fleeing across a border having made a treacherous journey, is vulnerable wherever they have found themselves. Certainly all the children I have spoken to—those in the camps and those who had made it to this country—were very vulnerable, not only when they started those journeys but when they made them. It is not an either/or.

**Nusrat Ghani:** *rose*—

**Keir Starmer:** I will give way, but I am conscious that lots of other people want to get in, and by taking interventions I am holding them up.

**Nusrat Ghani:** This is a very sensitive and difficult issue. The hon. and learned Gentleman mentioned vulnerability. Surely the most vulnerable children, families and communities are not those in Europe but those closest to conflicts.

**Keir Starmer:** I am sorry, but I really do not want to go down this path. One of the 10,000 who has disappeared and may be subject to sexual exploitation or trafficking right now is extremely vulnerable, and I am not going to categorise him or her as being any more or any less vulnerable than a child who may be in a camp elsewhere, vulnerable though they are. Hon. Members across the House have approached this with principle and with humanity, and there has been a shared cause of concern in many of the debates we have had. The “pull factor” argument whereby we leave people to their fate lest others follow, or the idea that we categorise the vulnerability of children, are not points well made in a debate that is usually conducted in a framework of real principle.

7.45 pm

Amendments 84 and 85 deal with indefinite detention and immigration detention of pregnant women. They reflect a growing concern about immigration detention

per se and of pregnant women in particular. That concern has been expressed in this House, in all-party parliamentary groups, in non-governmental organisations, and in charities. From the Labour party point of view, we had a manifesto commitment to end indefinite immigration detention. This matter has been raised throughout the passage of the Bill, and I am proud to rise to speak on it today. The solution in amendment 84 is simple: 28 days' immigration detention with the possibility of judicial extension on exceptional grounds. That strikes the right balance while managing risk. I commend the amendment to the House.

Pregnant women are an especially vulnerable group, as everybody appreciates. Stephen Shaw was tasked to look particularly at vulnerability and, within that category, the position of vulnerable women. He made four very powerful findings. First, he said that it is obvious that detention harms both mother and baby. We start from that reminder of the obvious. Secondly, he said that the current regime for detention in exceptional circumstances is clearly not working. Thirdly, he pointed out that the vast majority of pregnant women in immigration detention are not removed. The idea that immigration detention is for those where there is a realistic prospect of removal is therefore at odds with the evidence as regards pregnant women. That drove Stephen Shaw to the conclusion that the only proper way forward was an absolute ban. I recognise that the Secretary of State has moved on this issue, but it is not enough. I urge all Members to support amendments 84 and 85.

**Richard Fuller:** On the absolute ban on the detention of pregnant women, which I support, I am glad that the hon. and learned Gentleman recognises the tremendous change that the Government have made, and are making. Will he reassure me and others that if pregnant women are made a category for exclusion from detention, that will not create a precedent for other groups to have a similar level of exclusion?

**Keir Starmer:** I hope that I made it clear that I support the Government's changed position and recognise how far they have gone; I simply said that it is not enough. I do not think this sets a precedent. We are talking about a particular group. All those in immigration detention are vulnerable in one way or another, but it has long been recognised that pregnant women are a particularly vulnerable group within that group. This amendment speaks only to them, and therefore should be taken in those terms.

Amendment 60 deals with overseas domestic workers. This is a very important matter because it concerns another very vulnerable group, many of whom are abused by the households who employ them and find it very difficult to escape that abuse. When the Bill that became the Modern Slavery Act 2015 was going through this House, the Government, under pressure, commissioned the Ewins report. That report was clear in its conclusion that overseas domestic workers should be able to change employer and to apply for further leave for up to 30 months, and that they should be informed of their rights. The basis of the amendment is to support the Ewins conclusions. The driving theme behind the report in putting forward those proposals is that Ewins said that they are the only practical way out of abuse for this very vulnerable category of workers. There is more to

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be done on overseas domestic workers, and amendment 60 addresses a very thin slice of the problems they face. However, I urge all Members to support it.

**Stephen Phillips** (Sleaford and North Hykeham) (Con): For me, as a parent, the decision on whether to support the amendment made to the Bill in the other place on the resettlement of unaccompanied children in Europe reduces itself to simple questions. If I were separated from my children—if they were destitute in a foreign country, cold, hungry and far away from home—what would I want for them? Would I be content for them to be at risk of violence and exploitation, often sexual in nature, or would I want them to be offered safe haven with the desire that they be looked after and reunited with family members in due course? Those questions are, to my mind, rhetorical. They admit of sure and certain answers. I greatly regret that those are not answers that—with the best of motives, I accept—the Government appear to be willing to give.

Let us, for a moment, leave out of the equation what seems to me to be the grave inconsistency between arguing, on one hand, that the country has a role at the heart of the EU, and yet refusing, on the other, to shoulder the burden of the fact that Europol estimates that 10,000 unaccompanied refugee children went missing in Europe last year after they had been registered with the authorities in the countries in which they found themselves. Let us leave out of the equation the fact that the true number of minors subjected to abuse, exploitation and violence is, self-evidently, far higher. Let us even leave out of the equation the fact that, as the former Archbishop of Canterbury pointed out in a national newspaper over the weekend, doctors report that as many as half of unaccompanied African boys in the EU require treatment for sexually transmitted diseases—diseases almost certainly acquired from sexual exploitation during their passage to Europe. Let us also forget about those children we do not know about who have died cold and lonely deaths in Europe or the Mediterranean, driven from their homes and separated from their parents and loved ones, usually through no fault of their own.

Let the House instead reflect on our history in this, the greatest migration challenge in my lifetime, and on how we have behaved in the past. In that respect, the contribution that this country has always made to doing the right thing—to providing a home for children who have been driven from theirs by war and conflict—is unmatched. Exceptional times call for exceptional measures. That was the case with the Kindertransport programme, which benefited those who would undoubtedly have lost their lives in the holocaust had this country not acted in the run-up to the second world war. It was the case with those who fled Uganda after Idi Amin decided to expel them. It was the case with those who fled Vietnam and Iran in the late 1970s and the early 1980s. But now, apparently, either we should not act or we cannot act, using our heads as well as our hearts; to do so would simply encourage more children to make the dangerous journey to Europe. So says the Minister, and I accept that he has a point. That point does not, however, answer the point that these children are already in Europe, and that they are at risk as I stand here and speak to the House.

I do not doubt for a moment the Minister's desire, and that of the Government, to do the right thing. I do doubt, based on what I have heard in the House this evening, that that is what we are proposing to do. As I have said, these children are already in Europe. They are alone, and far from their families. They are cold, frightened, hungry and frequently without help or access to those who might help or protect them. Their lives are miserable and brutish, and at least half of them have experienced or seen violence that we can only dream of in our nightmares—or, rather, hope that we do not.

Of course, the announcement last week, welcome as it is, that we will take 3,000 children from Syria and elsewhere who have not already made the dangerous journey to Europe was a good one, in the best traditions of recognising the obligations that this country enjoys in times such as the present—obligations that were recognised in January, and to which the announcement adds. That is no comfort to the children who are already in Europe, who have fled war and conflict that have torn their lives apart, and who need our help now. Those children are in Calais; they are on the Greek-Macedonian border; they are at the Gare du Nord in Paris and Midi station in Brussels; and they are sleeping rough in Berlin, Rome, Skopje and Vienna. Tonight they will sleep in fear, and tomorrow they will wake to the hopelessness to which their position exposes them. Today, in this House, we can do something. We cannot solve all their problems, remove all their troubles, or take from their consciousness the memory of the horrors that they have witnessed and endured, but we can do something.

That something is not to disagree with their Lordships on this amendment. That is the something that I can and will do, by joining the right hon. Member for Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford (Yvette Cooper) and the hon. and learned Member for Holborn and St Pancras (Keir Starmer) in the Opposition Lobby this evening. This is not an easy decision, or one that I have taken lightly, but it is the right decision, made of a conviction that I have reached after searching my conscience, as I pray other right hon. and hon. Members will search theirs. The House should support the Lords in their amendment and vote against the motion to disagree.

**Thangam Debonnaire** (Bristol West) (Lab): I thank hon. Members throughout the House for their generous support as I make a phased return to parliamentary life. I rise to speak to Alf Dubs's amendment 87 to bring to the UK just 3,000 of the 26,000 unaccompanied child refugees in Europe. Although I also support Lords amendments to provide other protections for asylum seekers, others will speak on those.

I speak on behalf of many hundreds of people in Bristol West who have written to me, urging me to help refugees. Many have also donated time, money and practical help in camps and in Bristol, which is a city of sanctuary. I am standing up to speak tonight because this matters more to me than I can possibly say—more than obeying the instructions of my doctor to take more rest.

I understand that there has been uproar in some quarters about a speech made in Saturday's "Shakespeare Live!" by Sir Ian McKellen. To my mind, it was the high point of the night. Nothing else came close to the potency of the language, the power and the feeling of the delivery and the relevance today of Shakespeare's

message, written 400 or so years ago. It was given as a speech by Sir Thomas More, sheriff of London during Henry VIII's reign, addressing rioters who protested against foreigners. He called on them to

“Imagine that you see the wretched strangers,

Their babies at their backs, with their poor luggage,

Plodding to th' ports and coasts for transportation”—

I am no Ian McKellen. That is a vivid description of the current situation for so many children, young people and adults fleeing war today. He asks them to consider what they would do if they were refugees, which country would give them harbour, whether they would go

“to France or Flanders,

To any German province, Spain or Portugal”,

and how they would feel if they were met there by

“a nation of such barbarous temper”.

If the worst happened and our children were alone, fleeing war and persecution, would not every one of us hope that they would receive safe harbour in France or Flanders, Germany, Spain or Portugal? We must support amendment 87 to protect other people's children.

In Bristol West, my caseworkers and I are dealing with many of today's families torn apart by war—with children who are scarred and parents who are desperate. This is one such story. Mrs Djane's family home in Mali was attacked al-Qaeda in December 2012 because her husband was a Christian. Her husband and daughter were shot dead in front of her sons. She was beaten and left unconscious. Her sons believed that she was dead and fled the family home, taking nothing. When she recovered consciousness, her sons were gone and her husband and daughter were dead. She assumed that her sons had been killed or kidnapped by al-Qaeda, and she fled to the UK. On arrival, she was taken from the airport by a man who imprisoned and raped her repeatedly until she escaped from him approximately 20 days later. The police took her to the trafficking charity Unseen, which put her in touch with the Red Cross to see whether her sons could be traced.

Mrs Djane claimed asylum and was granted refugee status, but she spent the next two years searching for her sons. She finally found them in a border town between Mali and Guinea. They are living with strangers who have been kind enough to take them, but who do not have the means to care for them. Her youngest son tragically died last year from an infected snake bite. That death, the murder of her husband and daughter, the loss of her sons and her own imprisonment and rapes devastated Mrs Djane. She suffers from severe depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and panic attacks. We are supporting her with applications for her sons to join her, and I hope for a decision soon.

The amendment we can pass tonight will help other children who are separated from their parents and fleeing war and persecution. We must help them before it is too late. Vulnerable children are going missing now from camps across Europe. I dread to think what they are suffering, whether alone or in the hands of traffickers. We would be failing in our duties if we did not show our leadership, and meet our legal obligations and moral imperatives to those refugees and asylum seekers.

8 pm

Many people concerned about immigration say that it is out of control and that they feel its impact but their concerns are not being heard. They must be heard, but it may be that they do not distinguish between refugees and other migrants. I have had hundreds of emails from people in my constituency urging me to do more for refugees, but there are also worries. Everyone here needs to be concerned about how child refugees are protected on their way to the UK and when they arrive.

The Minister seems to see helping refugees as a pull factor; he then uses that as an argument against bringing children here. That so-called pull factor is often attributed to the assistance given to refugees, but that is misleading. First, it associates them with taking rather than giving. Secondly, it often inflates the numbers to ones vastly above the reality, with headlines about “floods” or “hordes” of migrants in general and refugees in particular.

Let us have a few facts. Refugee children are already on their way. They may have survived a dangerous journey when, tragically, their parents have not. They may have become separated from their parents. There are children in camps in northern France. Sadly, more than 100 have already gone missing, as other hon. Members have said. If we had only taken them, they would be safe. It may already be too late.

The World Bank's 2016 Migration and Remittances Factbook identifies the benefits of migration, including migration of refugees. They fill labour shortages in dangerous, dirty and difficult jobs, or those that others cannot do for other reasons. Migration helps our economy to grow, and helps our country in so many ways. Migrants add skills and knowledge, spend money locally and pay taxes. They are less likely than people born in this country to claim state welfare. Many, including refugees, set up their own businesses or help to run others, creating jobs for local people. They send money back home, £306 billion of it to developing countries—three times as much as state aid. That helps developing countries' economies, and, in turn, benefits us as they trade with us, buy our goods, visit us as tourists or students and further help our economy.

Indeed, the UK's Office for Budget Responsibility's fiscal sustainability report estimates that, as a consequence of the effects I have described, projected levels of immigration will actually help us to reduce Government debt as a proportion of GDP, steadily, and by one third by the middle of this century. Refugees are people, who have skills they want to use, and who have demonstrated their determination, resilience and courage in ways that we can only imagine. Unaccompanied children demonstrate those things even more, but need our protection, love and care to be able to recover.

Many people may feel compassion for refugees, but may also want to know where all the extra public services are going to come from. They may not know the true numbers, or the long-term benefits. They may fear change. That is reasonable.

**Sir Edward Leigh** (Gainsborough) (Con): Does the hon. Lady accept that, although the Government's position sounds tough, the fairest and most humanitarian thing to do is to take children from Syria, which is a thoroughly unsafe country, but not from a safe country like France, as that would simply encourage the people traffickers

[*Sir Edward Leigh*]

and smugglers, and so lead to more and more misery? The Government's position is fair, humanitarian and right.

**Thangam Debbonaire:** I thank the hon. Gentleman for his remarks, but frankly the situation is just not safe. It is only fair to say that we can do both—we can take children from those countries and the children who are already on their way. They are at risk. I urge us to imagine how we would feel if they were our children.

We need to do more to prepare the welcome for refugees so that they are not put in a situation where their neighbours resent them. But the time is right for a better informed public debate about how we treat refugees and asylum seekers overall. That debate should include consideration of allowing asylum seekers to work sooner and of how we can prepare local communities and public services for new arrivals. It will be difficult, and there will be strong feelings and major challenges, but we cannot let what is difficult be the enemy of what is right. Protecting refugees, and child refugees in particular, is right. It is a human right that we would expect if we or our children were fleeing conflict or persecution. It is a human rights obligation that we should be proud to honour, and in the best ways we possibly can. It says something wonderful about our place in the world when we do that. That is why I am pleased to announce this evening, as chair of the all-party parliamentary group on refugees, that we will be holding a public inquiry into this issue later this year.

I also believe that there needs to be a wider, enlightened and respectful debate about how we manage migration in general. That debate needs to take place in our parties and in the public sphere. I will be active in my own party, and wherever else I can be, to listen to and respect people's concerns, but also to help to develop well-informed policy and practice, so that we can give refugees, and children in particular, the welcome that they deserve.

I return to Shakespeare's words, and the decision that hon. Members will make tonight. We can do our part for 3,000 unaccompanied children. We can help to protect those children, who are the same age as our own children, grandchildren, nephews and nieces. These are children who have struggled across the continent unprotected, and perhaps been abused along the way, who are hungry and in desperate need of our protection. Our leadership in our own constituencies can help to ensure that they are not met with the "barbarous temper" that Shakespeare describes and that I fear many of those children are already meeting along their way from people traffickers and others seeking to exploit them. We can welcome them with warmth and care. They will need more, and we must plan, but I hope and believe that we have it in us to manage that. Three thousand children is fewer than five per constituency. Surely we in this House can manage to support our local authorities to find foster carers, psychological support and education for five children in each of our constituencies.

As each hon. Member goes through the Lobby, I urge them to think of this. Today, they could be helping the child they have not met but who in 20 years' time may be the doctor who saves their own child's life, the midwife who helps deliver their grandchild, the teacher

who fires up that grandchild's ambition, the scientist who helps to find a cure for asthma, diabetes or even cancer, the engineer who finds better ways to make vehicles run on clean energy sources, the mechanic who keeps trains going, or the care assistant who will look after one of us when we are old. All of those people are children today. Some are our own children, or our children's friends, but some are waiting in a refugee camp or the back of a lorry, or living in a ditch or worse. They are waiting for us to help them with our vote tonight.

When we are first elected, every one of us hopes that we will make a difference—that our presence here will mean something and be a force for good. Tonight we get to do all that by showing our support for Lords amendment 87, the Alf Dubs amendment to protect unaccompanied child refugees.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**Madam Deputy Speaker (Natascha Engel):** Order. Before I call the next speaker, I remind Members that we have to conclude the debate at 9.26 pm, and there is a very high level of interest.

**Kelly Tolhurst (Rochester and Strood) (Con):** I am pleased to follow the hon. Member for Bristol West (Thangam Debbonaire), and welcome her back to the House.

I have followed this Bill throughout its progress, in Committee and on Report. Today, I will talk about two points. This evening we have heard a lot of talk about the migration crisis that we are seeing across Europe. As a Kent MP, I have seen those troubles more acutely, because of our proximity to the Calais camps. Obviously we have all seen the troubles that have happened across Europe, and find them devastating.

**Mrs Helen Grant (Maidstone and The Weald) (Con):** Does my hon. Friend agree that the new national dispersal system announced by the Minister last week will lead to a much better, fairer and more equitable distribution of needy people around the country?

**Kelly Tolhurst:** Yes, I support the Government's incentives, but I also support the measures that will be a direct outcome of the implementation of this Immigration Bill, which will help counties like mine in the dispersal of some of the unaccompanied asylum seekers we are seeing come to our county.

Last week, I was at the Council of Europe, where the EU migrant crisis was debated. It is interesting today to hear a debate about facilities and the safety of refugees and unaccompanied minors across Europe. Last week in the Council of Europe there was some criticism of EU countries: there was a recognition that they were not always fulfilling their obligations. I have heard a lot of concern about what our European neighbours are doing and I agree, especially after listening to the debate tonight, that we need to raise our concerns with our European partners about the safety of individuals in their countries. I am proud to say that the UK has been meeting its obligations, through its financial commitments and by relocating refugees. We are currently fulfilling the obligations we have committed ourselves to.

On the call to relocate 3,000 children from Europe, I want to make it clear to this House that we are already doing certain things. In Kent, we have received over 1,000 unaccompanied child refugees in the past 12 months. That is not to be taken lightly. We are doing our bit. My county has seen significant financial pressures, which I mention because Kent has a shortage of social workers and foster carers. My concern, as a constituency MP and a proud person of Kent, is to ensure we have the right facilities, the right professionals and the right funding to support the children from my county who are already struggling. It is right that we look after the young people who find themselves in our country after making such a dangerous journey, but we should not underestimate the significant issues these young people face. They may have had traumatic experiences and we need to consider the cost to the county of Kent. Kent has asked other parts of the country to help us in this battle, but we have not received too many offers of support.

The Government are taking additional steps, with the resettlement scheme, which is focused on the most vulnerable children in the middle east and north Africa, and the £10 million fund. I support the Government and I will be voting with them on the Bill.

**Helen Whately:** As a fellow Kent MP, I, too, am well aware of the enormous burden on Kent in trying to look after many hundreds of unaccompanied child asylum seekers, and how badly it needs other parts of the country to help. Only a handful have been taken on by other councils. Does my hon. Friend agree that Opposition Members, as well as calling for more children to be taken in, should be calling on their areas to take their fair share of unaccompanied child asylum seekers?

**Kelly Tolhurst:** Absolutely. My hon. Friend knows that over the past 12 months we have had significant representation from our county council with regard to the pressures it is under, not only in dealing with the domestic situation but the issue we are debating today. I absolutely believe that hon. Members from other parts of the country should encourage their councils to help the counties in the south-east.

**Patrick Grady** (Glasgow North) (SNP): I am sure the hon. Lady is aware that the Scottish Government offered to take, at the very least, Scotland's fair share of refugees. Indeed, the Scottish Government have called for the UK Government to take more, so that our fair share will be greater. Does she accept that many of the unaccompanied children in Europe are trying to get here because their parents or other relatives are already here, and that being reunited with their family is the best option for them?

**Kelly Tolhurst:** I absolutely accept that young people are coming to this country to be reunited with their families. As I have said, Kent has already taken more than 1,000 of them.

8.15 pm

The amendment to allow asylum seekers unrestricted access to the labour market after six months would completely undermine the current system and the measures in the Bill. Last year, I visited the refugee camp in Calais

with my hon. Friends the Members for Faversham and Mid Kent (Helen Whately) and for Gravesham (Mr Holloway). I spoke with a number of young people who wanted to come to the UK. They told me that they were coming to the UK to work and even told me exactly who they would be working for. However, they would be working illegally. In my mind, therefore, a move to allow asylum seekers unrestricted access to work would do nothing but encourage more young vulnerable adults or minors to come to the UK.

**Stella Creasy:** When I was first elected, an Opposition Member told me that there were two divisions in the House of Commons: one between left and right; and one between those who, as a matter of course in their constituency, have to deal with the UK Border Agency and those who do not. The hon. Lady is making a very compelling argument about some of the problems in our immigration and asylum system. Why then does she wish to penalise the young vulnerable people she talks about by not supporting them tonight and by not saying that the problems she identifies are to do with politicians? Let us not penalise these young people. Let us stand with them tonight and get our act together.

**Kelly Tolhurst:** I am a constituency MP and I represent the people of Rochester and Strood. I have had a lot of representations, over an extended period of time, about what people have seen in my constituency and across the county of Kent. I represent what a large proportion of people in my constituency believe on this matter.

To allow asylum seekers unrestricted access to our labour market after six months would encourage more young men to make their way to the camps and make the perilous journey across the channel. Personally, I do not want to support that or be a party to it.

I am sure my hon. Friends will say I have spoken enough already, but I would just like to say that I believe the Bill, as it stands and as I saw it in Committee, is right. I think it is a great step forward for the Government. It addresses what many people in this country have identified as issues and concerns for them. I will therefore be supporting the Government this evening.

**Stuart C. McDonald** (Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East) (SNP): In September 2015, Save the Children released a paper called "The extreme vulnerability of unaccompanied child refugees in Europe - a proposal for managing their relocation to the UK". The paper charted the journey of unaccompanied child refugees to Europe: the war, conflict and violence in their home countries; and the abuse, exploitation, physical and sexual violence experienced during their long journeys to Europe, which often lasted months and years. Even if that was the end of the horror story, surely that would be enough fully to justify Lord Dubs's amendment. In fact, it provides more than enough justification for us to say that we will take our fair share of responsibility for providing not just immediate aid and protection but the stability, education, support and care that these children require when arriving in Europe, bearing the scars of such dreadful experiences. But tragically the horror story does not end there. The scale of the crisis and the lack of co-ordination and solidarity between European countries mean that the arrival here of these children is barely the beginning of their troubles.

[Stuart C. McDonald]

It is important to remind ourselves just how grim the experience in Europe is. The hon. and learned Member for Sleaford and North Hykeham (Stephen Phillips) did that powerfully earlier in the debate. In its paper, Save the Children looked at migrants and refugees on the Greek islands, in Calais and in Hungary and Macedonia. In Greece, it reported a lack of basic services and adequate shelter, toilets, clean water, health facilities and safe spaces, which put children and women at high risk of sexual harassment, physical violence and trafficking.

Unaccompanied minors are at particular risk. Save the Children reported

“a lack of adequate sanitation facilities which means that women and children have to share toilets with men or are forced to defecate in the open. . . . Unaccompanied minors, once in the hands of the authorities, are sometimes placed in detention with adults, again exposing them to risks of sexual and physical harassment. . . . Children interviewed recounted stories of war and death and described the terrifying journey crossing the sea to Greece. Parents reported symptoms like bedwetting, nightmares, fear and extreme attachment. Most of the children had been out of school for years and have a distorted view of what constitutes ‘normality’. Food distributions are limited and erratic . . . whilst more vulnerable individuals . . . often end up unserved. . . . There is limited primary health care coverage across migrant and refugee sites”.

Finally, as a shocking matter of fact, Save the Children recorded that in Athens, in their attempt to leave Greece, women and children sleep in squares and parks that are frequented by drug dealers, traffickers and prostitution rings. During the period of the assessment, a 10-year-old boy was raped in one of these parks.

The fact that this is happening in Europe is not down to one or two European countries. It is a collective failure by all European states, and it is our collective obligation to fix it. As has been argued:

“Under specific criteria and safeguards, relocation is one of the few viable long-term solutions for the protection of the most vulnerable unaccompanied children”.—[*Official Report*, 8 December 2015; Vol. 603, c. 864.]

The need for such a scheme is every bit as great now as it was then, as recent reports by Save the Children and so many other organisations—too many to mention—have shown. I know that many hon. Members present tonight have seen these awful places at first hand and will probably share some of those experiences this evening during the debate.

When I read those reports, and having seen at first hand the situation in Calais and Dunkirk, I am furious—furious about what is happening to these children, and furious also that there is any doubt about whether we will stand by Lord Dubs’s amendment this evening, and I am at a loss to understand why that should be in doubt. A strange phrase has been dropped into the argument recently by the Government—that we need to use our heads as well as our hearts. With all respect to the Minister, who I know generally chooses his words carefully, I find that expression a little bit patronising.

This is not some hare-brained plan dreamed up by well-intentioned but misguided amateurs on the back of an envelope. It is a carefully thought through proposal based on years of professional experience from experts in the field, incorporating carefully considered criteria. It was a modest calculation of our fair share, based on circumstances at the time. It is not those who support

the relocation of 3,000 children from Europe who need to start using their heads. On the contrary, it is the sceptics and cynics who need to start using their eyes and ears so as to understand the full horror, extent and duration of what is going on in our continent.

**Mr Jim Cunningham** (Coventry South) (Lab): We have a proud tradition going back centuries of taking in refugees. In particular, before and during the war we took large numbers of Jewish children in. Why can we not honour that commitment now?

**Stuart C. McDonald:** Absolutely. As we heard earlier, Lord Dubs was one of those who benefited from that very scheme.

I find other arguments against this very modest proposal equally disagreeable. Some have argued that we must not provide an incentive for others to come. Like the shadow Minister, I cannot believe for a second that any hon. Members are really saying that we should not rescue children from abuse and exploitation lest that create an incentive. If that is “using their head”, I have serious concerns for the sanity of those hon. Members. But if they are saying that someone else should rescue those children from abuse and exploitation, not only does the argument about incentives fall to pieces, but the question arises: if not us, then who? If the UK says “Leave it to Greece and Italy”, why should anyone else come to their aid not just in the short term, but in the medium and long term?

Even a child can understand that tens—or almost certainly now hundreds—of thousands of unaccompanied kids shared between 28 member states, although hugely challenging, is infinitely more workable than the same number left as the long-term responsibility of two or three countries. This country should not wash its hands of its responsibilities; it should roll up its sleeves and play its part.

The Government have again tried to win the day with their well-worn trump card—that we should focus on those in the conflict region. In these debates I have always welcomed what deserves to be welcomed. The support provided in the region in the form of aid has been incredibly welcome, as has the resettlement of vulnerable persons scheme and the new proposals for children, but the House of Lords passed this amendment by more than 100 votes, fully aware of all those other Government schemes, including proposals—in principle—to resettle children.

Their lordships were absolutely right to resist the attempt by the Government to set up a false choice. There are refugees in Europe, including children, who are every bit as much in need of our support as those in the conflict region. It is not a question of one or the other. Showing leadership in support of those in the region does not entitle Government to abdicate responsibility for children in Europe.

If we think about what is happening to these children on our doorstep, I shudder to think what it says about this Government and Parliament if we do not support the amendment, but what a positive message if we do. From whatever angle we approach this question, using our head or our heart; from a perspective of faith or of simple human decency; from human rights or common sense, there is only one answer. Lord Dubs’s amendment has the full support of SNP Members.

**Tim Loughton** (East Worthing and Shoreham) (Con): We have heard some passionate speeches about unimaginably difficult conditions, but we talk as if the United Kingdom is the only country capable of doing something about the crisis. We forget that the United Kingdom taxpayer has given more than the rest of the European Union together to help Syrian refugees. Does the hon. Gentleman not think that if these circumstances existed in the United Kingdom, our social services would have taken care of those children? Does he not think that other European countries could be doing a rather better job of looking after those children who happen to be within their borders?

**Stuart C. McDonald:** I do not disagree with very much that the hon. Gentleman, my colleague on the Home Affairs Committee, says. I agree that other European countries must step up to the plate. The Save the Children proposal is based on a calculation of what our fair share as a European Union member would be: it was 11.5% of the total number of unaccompanied children at that time. It fully comprehends that other EU member states have to take their share.

I shall move on now to amendment 60, which gives us the chance to protect yet another vulnerable group, overseas domestic workers. Such workers frequently come from backgrounds of extreme poverty and are dependent on their employer for both accommodation and wages. They are often women with limited formal education. Significant numbers of them suffer from mental illness resulting from past traumas, and many have learned or have been conditioned to distrust authorities.

Again, the Lords amendment is modest. The Government asked for an independent review by James Ewins QC. All we are asking for is that Mr Ewins's recommendations be fully implemented. The Government have moved part of the way, which is very welcome, including what the Minister said today, which is encouraging, but they still have to move further. Their insistence on going through the national referral mechanism as a condition of leave beyond the initial six months is, in our view, wrong, and although provision of information is right and welcome, it is not sufficient in itself.

As well as providing a legal right to change employer, we can and must make that right one that can realistically be exercised by all who are at risk, as Mr Ewins suggested. The right should be dependent not on going through the slow and possibly quite intimidating gamble of the national referral mechanism, but simply on notifying the Home Office, as was said earlier in the debate. As no one will employ an overseas domestic worker with a few weeks or months left on their visa, Mr Ewins was clear that extensions had to be available to all, whether they were going through the mechanism or not, for up to two years beyond the original visa. That was what he described as

“the minimum required to give effective protection to those overseas domestic workers who are being abused while in the UK”.

That is the least we should deliver.

The SNP also fully supports amendment 84, which moves us closer to an effective 28-day time limit on immigration detention. The reasons we need such a limit have been set out at length in recent debates, including an excellent Backbench Business debate, in which Members from both sides of the House spoke

with one voice in support of the conclusions reached by the all-party parliamentary groups on migration and refugees. Compulsory judicial oversight is also welcome. Often those with the most to gain from a legal challenge are the least likely to understand or to be able to access judicial processes, whether because of language, educational or mental health issues.

With due respect, the Government's amendment in lieu is a non-starter. A single, guaranteed bail hearing every six months is simply not an acceptable level of judicial oversight for SNP Members. It is not a worthwhile time limit in any sense of the word, and it seeks to shift the burden of proof back on to the detainee. For these reasons, the Government's amendment in lieu is simply not in the ballpark of what we would consider appropriate.

8.30 pm

The SNP supports without hesitation that part of amendment 85 that excludes absolutely the detention of pregnant women. Once again, this is a modest proposal. As with overseas domestic workers, all we are calling for is that the independent recommendations from a Government-initiated review be fully implemented: this time, the excellent recommendations of Stephen Shaw. They are recommendations that once again mirror the earlier findings of the all-party groups' inquiry into detention. The Shaw review found that

“detention has an incontrovertibly deleterious effect on the health of pregnant women and their unborn children”

and therefore concluded that such detention must end. The Government's amendment in lieu leaves them with an unacceptable power to continue to detain pregnant women for up to a week or to repeatedly detain them, compromising the health and safety of mother and child. Given the Home Office's general record on detention, we take assurances that the powers would be used exceptionally with a healthy dose of scepticism. The Government have not gone far enough.

Stephen Shaw also recommended the introduction of a presumption against detention for several categories of other vulnerable people. A number of groups have expressed concern that the proposed “adults at risk” policy might see the current standards protecting vulnerable people reduced, rather than increased, as the Shaw review proposes. For example, existing safeguards for vulnerable people in detention include case reviews by the Helen Bamber Foundation and Freedom from Torture. As those groups understand it, the proposed “adults at risk” policy does not refer to those two organisations. I look to the Minister for assurances that the existing safeguards for vulnerable people through current policies and judicial decisions will not be reduced from their existing level.

In conclusion, we have made clear our outright opposition to the Bill from the start. These Lords amendments have the ability to add a thin silver lining to an otherwise very dark Bill. I pay tribute to the fantastic organisations that have shone a light on the many problems and dangers lurking in the Bill, in particular to the organisations and volunteers working on the ground across Europe. Without them, the situation facing many of the children we are debating would be even worse. They have played their part; it is now time for Members of Parliament to play their much simpler role.

**Richard Fuller:** It is a pleasure to follow the SNP spokesman, the hon. Member for Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East (Stuart C. McDonald). I shall address my comments not to the substantive area of debate, amendment 87, but to other Lords amendments. As a result, I will try to limit my contribution, given that many people wish to speak to amendment 87.

Two issues of particular importance to me are, first, amendment 84, on the time limit for immigration detention, and the Government's proposal, and secondly, amendment 85, on the detention of pregnant women. On amendment 84, I listened carefully to the Minister earlier and to the announcements by the Home Office last week, and on balance, notwithstanding the limitations just mentioned, the combination of the changes, along with the opportunity for Stephen Shaw to review the time limit, as part of his inquiry, in 12 to 18 months, gives me comfort that the Government, though they have not gone as far as I would have wished, have done enough for me to be generally supportive of their approach and certainly not to vote against them.

Unfortunately, on the detention of pregnant women, it is a different matter. Without a doubt, this is a big and welcome change, but for me it is a matter of principle: we should never detain a pregnant woman when we have the choice not to. It was January 2012 when I asked my first question in Parliament about the detention of pregnant women. I only regret that it took me 18 months as a Member to ask those questions—that it took me 18 months to become aware of a vast estate of incarceration and detention that had built up under the last Labour Government and continued under the coalition, and was detaining people in our name for no other reason than that they came here and had not proven their case to stay. Each of those many people—not just pregnant women, but others who were victims of torture and rape, as the hon. Member for Walthamstow (Stella Creasy) mentioned—should have had a better and more humane alternative.

To those groups such as Medical Justice, Women for Refugee Women, the Refugee Council and so many others that have tried in the intervening period to persuade the Home Office to move its policy away from the default of detention and a culture of disbelief to something that is understanding of each individual circumstance, the Government's announcements over the last few weeks are tremendously welcome. They do not go far enough, however.

I can assure the Minister that we will hold him and the Government to account in respect of all the words he has said and all the frameworks he has put in place to ensure that the objectives of the all-party groups in their inquiry into the use of immigration detention are achieved. There is a better alternative to detention: it is called case management, and it means letting people know what their rights are and not leaving them in the community with no one to talk to for month after month. We must engage with these people so they know that they can remain in this country if they can prove their entitlement, and we must provide them with the best possible support and advice to make that case. As I said, we will hold the Minister to account for that.

The campaign had a hashtag, as is common these days; it was called #setherfree. I regret that I cannot say to the women in Yarl's Wood today that as a result of these changes they will be free. My hope is that we have

started to change the direction, and that we are starting the process of taking that valuable phrase "asylum seeker" out of the gutter where it was left, and putting it where it should be as a place of honour—not for the individual, but for the country to which they come to claim that status. This is a judgment about us as much as it is a judgment about the people who come to this country. Let us take this step forward, but let us pressure the Government to do more.

**Yvette Cooper:** I welcome the speech made by the hon. Member for Bedford (Richard Fuller) and pay tribute to the hon. and learned Member for Sleaford and North Hykeham (Stephen Phillips), whose powerful speech must have been difficult to make. It was a great pleasure, too, to hear the voice of my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol West (Thangam Debbonaire) back in the Chamber this evening.

I shall focus my remarks on amendment 87, proposed in the House of Lords by Lord Alf Dubs. Some 95,000 children and teenagers are alone in Europe as a result of the refugee crisis—four times more than Save the Children thought the figure was for unaccompanied child refugees. This amendment asks Britain to help only 3,000 of them; and that is all. It will not solve the problem, but it will mean we are doing our bit. That is why I think the Government are so wrong to say no. We should do our bit just as we did 70 years ago when Britain supported the Kindertransport that brought Lord Alf Dubs to Britain and saved his life. It had cross-party support at that time. Those survivors of the Kindertransport are asking us to help child refugees again today.

The reason why this amendment is needed is that there are so many children who are disappearing, suffering and dying on our continent today, and other countries do not have the capacity to cope with that alone. This House has the power in its hands to vote for this amendment today.

We should be clear that we all support what the Government have done in providing aid for the region. We all support the 0.7% of GDP that goes in aid, and we also support how much has been done to help the areas affected by the Syrian refugee crisis in particular. We know, too, however, that aid in the regions is not enough, particularly when people are fleeing and need sanctuary, and it is not enough when we need to help children. The lone child and teenage refugees are hugely vulnerable. Thousands are sleeping rough in Europe tonight because there are simply not the places, the sanctuaries and the children's centres that we need to give them shelter.

**Tom Elliott:** The right hon. Lady makes an important point about the number of refugees and the number of young people who are in Europe. The figure of 26,000 has been mentioned several times. I would be interested to know how the figure of 3,000 came about. Is there an explanation for that, and what criteria will be used to bring the 3,000 children here?

**Yvette Cooper:** The 3,000 figure was proposed by Save the Children, at a time when it thought that 26,000 children in Europe were alone. We now know that the figure is much higher, and that 95,000 children are alone and at risk across Europe. It would be for the Government to work with agencies such as Save the Children to



establish the criteria; I think that priority should be given to those with families in Britain who can care for them, but that is something that we can debate.

It is right for us to do our bit to help. Children are sleeping rough tonight because countries across Europe simply do not have the capacity to provide that help. According to UNICEF and Save the Children, 2,000 children are alone in northern Greece, but there are fewer than 500 places for them, and those places are full. In Italy, the agencies found that girls were being exploited by older men, and that half the boys already had sexually transmitted diseases. In Calais, I met 11 and 12-year-olds who were suffering from scabies and bronchitis, and who were sleeping in tents with adult men.

This is the challenge that Europe faces: teenage girls being trafficked into prostitution, teenage boys being abused and raped, children with hypothermia and pneumonia, children who are traumatised because they have lost family along the way, and children who are locked up in detention centres because there are no other places for them to go to—again, often alongside adult men. A Syrian teenager who came to Parliament last week to meet Alf Dubs told me that he had fled the violence and fighting to reach family members who were here in Britain, but the abuse and the suffering that he saw and experienced as a refugee alone in Europe were worse than the violence that he had left behind.

**Andy Slaughter:** As always, my right hon. Friend is speaking passionately. I was at that meeting, and the eyewitness accounts were extremely telling.

Is this not the problem that the Government have tonight? They say that the developed countries of Europe should be able to deal better with refugees, but, as my right hon. Friend has pointed out, those countries are not dealing with it. The fact on the ground, in Calais and in Greece, is that children are at risk and are being brutalised and tormented, in some cases—to their shame—by the authorities who should be looking after them. That, surely, is why we have to do our bit.

**Yvette Cooper:** My hon. Friend is exactly right. Let me make my position clear. I think that other countries should be doing more—I think that it is shocking how little child protection the French authorities have put in place around Calais, and that we need countries across Europe to do far more—but how can we urge them to do more if we are refusing to do anything to help and give sanctuary to those child refugees?

**James Brokenshire:** The right hon. Lady is making an important point about family reunification. Does she accept that the £10 million fund that we are providing through the Department for International Development is intended to help Save the Children and others to support the very thing that I think she is rightly calling for—stronger family reunification, whether in the United Kingdom or in Europe more generally—and that the UK is playing an important part in that respect?

**Yvette Cooper:** The Minister is right to say that we should be supporting family reunion, but, as I said to him in an intervention, that is simply not working in Calais. He and his Department cannot even tell me how many “take charge” requests the Home Office has received. We know that only a dozen of the children from Calais

have actually arrived in the first place. *[Interruption.]* The Minister says that it is 24 now. He has already said that 24 children have been accepted for transfer, but only half of those children have actually arrived in Britain, because the process is simply taking too long.

The Minister is, of course, right to say that we should be trying to assist family reunion from Italy and Greece, but the £10 million that he has announced is funding for charities. It is true that charities can do great work, and they are already doing important work in Calais to help children there. Ultimately, however, it is not enough to ask charities to help if the French and British Governments are refusing to do their bit to speed up the system and provide the legal sanctuary that those children need, and the same applies to the children in Italy and Greece.

Although charities can do great work, they cannot provide the necessary authorities, the legal foster care, the statutory children’s homes, and the statutory child protection. It is Governments who need to do that: the Government in Greece, the Government in Italy, the Government in France, and the Government here in Britain, who should also be doing their bit.

8.45 pm

**James Brokenshire:** This is the last time I shall intervene on the right hon. Lady; I do not want to interrupt her flow. On that last point, does she accept that the Government’s offer to put 75 extra people on the ground in Greece, including specialists with the ability to support the Greek Government, demonstrates the fact that the UK Government are playing their role in supporting Greece to do the things that she is calling for?

**Yvette Cooper:** The Minister knows that I have welcomed many of the things that he has announced at every stage. I welcomed the announcement that the Government made in January, for example, just as I welcomed its re-announcement this week. It is sad that, at each stage, they have had to be pressurised into making those announcements, but I welcome them nevertheless. However, the International Rescue Committee and other agencies are saying that the lack of sufficient staff in Greece and Italy means that there are hugely long delays in processing the cases. With regard to the idea that those 75 people are going to make all the difference, that is still not an alternative to Britain doing its bit to provide sanctuary as well.

The UNHCR reports that there have been instances of

“children engaging in survival sex to pay smugglers to continue their journey, either because they have run out money, or because they have been robbed”.

Europol has warned that children, young women and lone refugees are being targeted for exploitation because there is not sufficient protection when they arrive, and that 10,000 child and teenage refugees have disappeared, often into the arms of criminal gangs. This is modern slavery of the kind that the whole House united to condemn just 12 months ago when we passed the new legislation. It is the same modern slavery that the Home Secretary described as being

“an affront to the dignity and humanity of every one of us”.

The House has the chance today to protect the dignity and humanity of 3,000 children and to stop them falling into modern slavery in Europe, so why is the Home Office still refusing to act?

[ Yvette Cooper ]

I want to deal with the Minister's points in turn. First, he says that we are doing our bit by helping children and families in the middle east and north Africa instead. I welcome what we are doing there. As I understand it, the figure of 3,000 will involve children and families, and not simply children alone, because as a result of UNICEF's advice, the Government have broadened the scope to include children and families. However, this is not an either/or. Just because we are protecting and helping some of those from outside Europe does not mean that we cannot do our bit to help those in Europe as well. Some of the children who are in the detention centres in Greece and the tents in Calais and who are sleeping rough on the streets of Naples now face risks that are greater than those they faced when they were closer to home.

Secondly, the Minister said earlier that this was effectively a matter for the other European countries where the children are right now. The problem is, however, that Italy and Greece are overwhelmed. Germany and Sweden have done much to take in unaccompanied children, but they are struggling to find guardians or places in children's homes and hostels for more. If we want other countries to do more, we also have to be prepared to do our bit. Of course it is not easy. There would have to be proper support, protection and safeguarding, and robust checks would also be needed. Some of the children and teenagers will have profound and complex needs as a result of the trauma and abuse that they have experienced.

It would also be wrong simply to leave this to Kent to cope with alone. I have had local councils and councillors from right across the country contacting me to say that they want to do more to help. I have heard from organisations such as Home for Good, which represents foster families who want to do more to help, as well as from community groups and faith organisations across the country who think that we should act. We especially have a responsibility to those who have family here. I have raised with the Minister my concerns about the failure to apply the Dublin agreement to Calais and about the number of children who are still stuck in the cold and the mud there; 157 cases have been identified by Citizens UK, yet so few have actually come to Britain. We have been raising that with Ministers over many months.

The Minister pointed out the need to do proper safeguarding checks and assessments and to investigate the families that reside here. He is of course right that safeguarding is necessary, but why is he not thinking about safeguarding them in Calais? They are there right now, in tents, at risk of huge abuse, at risk of gangs, at risk of trafficking, and at risk of taking crazy risks, because that is what teenagers do. Lives have been lost as a result. In January, a 15-year-old was killed in the back of a lorry in Dunkirk. His sister lives in west London. In March, a 17-year-old was killed in the wheel arch of a lorry in Oxfordshire. His uncles lives in Manchester. In April, a seven-year-old nearly suffocated in a lorry in Leicester. That he did not was only because an aid worker in Calais had given him a mobile phone and he was able to send a text message saying that he did not have any oxygen. The aid worker was able to alert the police, and they traced him and his older brother, who would otherwise have suffocated in a lorry. No matter how many times the Minister tells us that it

is, the system is not working. He also claims that we are providing support to charities and financial support to the region, but it is not enough. It is not an alternative to Governments acting and providing legal help.

The Minister said that if we take child refugees from Europe, that will encourage more to come, but that argument is deeply wrong. Few of the child refugees in Europe have come because they want to travel to Britain. Many are trying to reach family, which will not change whether or not we take more child refugees. Many are just trying to find somewhere safe anywhere in Europe and that will not change either. Frankly, many do not know where they are going or what they are doing. They may have been trafficked or separated from family along the way.

Action on smugglers, border checks, working with Turkey, a strategy for Libya, or providing alternative safe and legal routes—all of those things may make a difference in preventing people from making a perilous journey in the first place. However, whether Britain takes 3,000 of the 95,000 children who are already in Europe simply will not make a difference to the number who try to come. These children have arrived, they are already here, and they need sanctuary and support. The danger is that the Government are actually saying that it is better to leave them to face those risks and that we should be prepared to abandon thousands of children to a life of exploitation, prostitution and abuse, because that somehow might prevent other children from getting on a boat. That is immoral, because they are children and not only should they have shelter, but they should be in school, where many of them have not been for years. Many of the refugees are a similar age to my children, who are in school and doing exams. It is an age at which children need support and help, not to be turned away.

When the Kindertransport legislation was passed in Parliament, MPs of all parties supported Britain's leadership in helping child refugees. Alongside Alf Dubs, other Kindertransport survivors, such as Rabbi Harry Jacobi, who came across on one of the last boats out of Amsterdam, and Sir Erich Reich, have spoken out to urge us to do more now. All of them have joined with the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Church of England, the House of Lords, Save the Children, the Refugee Council, Citizens UK, the Jewish Council for Racial Equality, local government, community groups and faith groups to urge MPs to do the right thing today. We are rightly proud of what the Kindertransport did and of the cross-party support in Parliament, but will today's vote on child refugees be a similar source of pride for future generations or a source of shame?

We rightly commemorate the Kindertransport and the life of Sir Nicholas Winton, who rescued hundreds of Jewish child refugees. His picture is now on the Royal Mail's first-class stamp. When it was launched, the Home Secretary called him

"an enduring example of the difference that good people can make even in the darkest of times."

She called him a hero of the 20th century. He was. We need heroes for the 21st century, too. It is no good just congratulating ourselves on Britain's past if we are not prepared to show the same support and sanctuary today. It is no good telling children the parable of the good Samaritan if all we in this House are prepared to do is walk on by. This is not the time to walk on by; this is the time to help. Let us not look back in years to come

and be disappointed about how we voted today. Let us all, from all parts of this House, stand together and support the Dubs amendment.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**Mr Speaker:** Order. There is just over half an hour to go and I see probably a dozen people trying to get in to speak. There is no formal time limit, but if each colleague speaks for no more than three minutes, a lot will get in. Otherwise, a lot of people will be disappointed.

**Chloe Smith** (Norwich North) (Con): I shall endeavour to live up to that, Mr Speaker. Like Save the Children, I believe that every child and young person should live in a supportive, protective and caring environment that promotes their full potential. But this Bill, on which I served in Committee, is about the wisest use of resources, and I support the Minister tonight in his position on amendment 87, which is about how best to help unaccompanied children. We all seek to help them, so the question is: how?

We have two large questions about resources before us tonight. The first is: do we help people better in the region or through Europe and, within that, which is more unsafe? The second is: how do we balance such action with supporting children who are already in need? The key point that the Minister has set out, on which I support him, is that of avoiding the encouragement of extra peril and the creation of an extra pull factor. In that position he is supported by the UNHCR representative to this country and the Children's Commissioner.

We have all agreed tonight that other European countries must step up, too. Europe is a place of safety; there are dozens of safe countries between Italy and Greece and the United Kingdom. I note some of the figures provided during the Lords debate on this Bill on the comparison with our European colleagues: we have relocated 1,000 refugees already, as we promised we would do by Christmas, and in that whole period the 27 other countries in Europe have managed to resettle only 650. We should look at the 21 other countries that have not taken in even one Syrian refugee.

The point we must then address is whether we are already doing enough to help the children already in need in this country. Like my hon. Friend the Member for Rochester and Strood (Kelly Tolhurst), I speak as somebody whose local authority does not do well on this count. I cast no aspersions on Kent, but I go on to say that Norfolk has more than 1,000 children who are in care and who need good homes. We must look at that statistic alongside this issue tonight. We must ask ourselves: how are we to provide a supportive, protective and caring environment for these children if we cannot already find enough foster homes and enough long-term homes for those children? We must balance those things tonight.

**Mrs Grant:** Does my hon. Friend agree that children are being trafficked younger and younger, and that they face loneliness and bewilderment? Does she agree that a child advocate support scheme similar to that trialled by the Government could be very useful for local authorities and young children?

**Chloe Smith:** I would be keen to look at that in more detail. I am unsure exactly how it might help in this particular case of Norfolk County Council, but I would

be delighted to hear more if my hon. Friend can tell me about something I should be able to do as a constituency MP on that front.

Given these serious practical reservations, given that we do not already have enough supportive and caring environments for all the children we would wish to help, given the action that we are already taking and will take within those constraints, and given that surely it would be brutal to promise something that we are not currently able to deliver, I support the Minister's position tonight and find it difficult at this time to support Lords amendment 87.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**Mr Speaker:** Order. I am sorry, but to help the House there will have to be a formal three-minute limit on Back-Bench speeches, with immediate effect.

**Stephen Twigg** (Liverpool, West Derby) (Lab/Co-op): First, I should refer to my relevant entry in the Register of Members' Financial Interests: last October, I visited Jordan with Oxfam, making a visit to the Zaatari refugee camp. I join others in paying tribute to my noble Friend Lord Dubs, who is a living success story of how refugees can be resettled successfully and make a major contribution to their new society.

The Government's continued commitment to providing humanitarian support to Syrian refugees is hugely welcome. In all parts of this House we can be proud of the role the Department for International Development has played alongside many non-governmental organisations in the humanitarian effort in the region. I pay tribute also to those countries in the region that have welcomed huge numbers of refugees, notably Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. I welcome the announcement by the Government of an additional 3,000 places for resettlement, on top of the 20,000 they had already announced.

We can all celebrate the positive story about aid, and the positive story about resettlement is welcome. However, I do not accept the Government's contention that this is somehow an either/or matter. It is not a choice between action in the region or action to help child refugees who are in Europe—we can do both.

9 pm

In January the International Development Committee published its first report of this Parliament on the Syrian refugee crisis. In that report we supported Save the Children's recommendation that the Government should resettle 3,000 unaccompanied children, and that is the basis for Lords amendment 87. We have heard powerful speeches, not least from the hon. and learned Member for Sleaford and North Hykeham (Stephen Phillips), my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol West (Thangam Debbonaire) and my right hon. Friend the Member for Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford (Yvette Cooper). I urge colleagues across the House to consider those powerful arguments in favour of Lords amendment 87.

We are talking about unaccompanied children in Europe who face a frightening mixture of pressures: child trafficking, drug trafficking, sex trafficking and, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford said, modern slavery. Those children are facing harsh conditions, and they are facing them on their own. The 3,000 figure is simply about us

as a country taking our fair share. I welcome the fact that this issue has cross-party support. On that basis, let us celebrate our aid and work to resettle people, but let us not see this as a choice. I urge colleagues to reject the Government's motion to disagree, and to keep the Dubs amendment.

**Mr Burrowes:** If ever a debate showed the need not to have a time limit, this is it, especially given the complex issues we are dealing with. The issue of human dignity flows through all the amendments under consideration, whether they deal with child refugees in Syria or Europe, or those who have made their way to this country and need appropriate and fair treatment, and whom we must try to avoid detaining for so long.

There is no monopoly on compassion. The House will be dividing on this amendment, and it is not a binary issue about whether or not someone supports or cares for child refugees. I have been a long-standing campaigner for the Government to provide more refuge, and for such assistance to be based not on arbitrary numbers but on vulnerability. I welcome the Government's move from the 20,000 places announced in September to an additional 3,000 refugees coming from Syria and the region.

As many speeches have highlighted, Europe has the role of providing safety from trafficking, exploitation and abuse—that is distinct from the issue of refuge within Europe. How can we practically deliver that? The number that horrifies me and to which I wish to respond is Europol's estimate that 10,000 children have gone missing. How can we practically ensure that children do not go missing and that there is safety? The arbitrary figure of 3,000 that has been nobly championed by Lord Dubs—he is watching this debate—has provided a focus for the debate and moved the Government to provide details on the commitment that they made at the end of January.

We must consider the practical issues. Seventy-five experts going to Greece is not a good campaign slogan, but it is important because the practical deliverability of the figure of 3,000 in the amendment must lead to a result that sees experts going to Greece or Calais, and properly processing people and ensuring that there is a reception centre. The Government have committed to that, and it is important to recognise that that will provide safety.

History will judge our response to this crisis tomorrow, next month and next year. This is not the only time that we will call on the Government to provide a compassionate response, and I believe that they have done that today. I welcome the Government's actions and look for them to go further. I will be supporting the Government. That is a difficult choice because of the passion and emotion around the Dubs amendment. However, I think that the Government are on the road to providing more safety for people in Europe, including with the groundbreaking decision to provide refuge for children at risk, which other countries must follow. I have run out of time so cannot to speak to the other amendments.

**Tim Farron:** Last autumn, I used my first Prime Minister's questions as party leader to press the Prime Minister to take these 3,000 unaccompanied children—refugees from the camps—in Europe. I had seen the situation for myself in Calais, Lesbos and other places.

As we have heard today, something like a third of those unaccompanied children in Europe go missing. They are now in the hands of child traffickers who exploit them and use them in child prostitution.

The Government have done some good over these past few months, much of it under pressure, but, to date, they are utterly and totally stubborn on the matter of helping even a single person, particularly vulnerable children, in Europe.

I was at the Indomeni camp in northern Greece just a couple of weeks ago. It was the saddest of all the visits that I have made, because of the desperation that I saw and because of the number of children living in squalid and unsafe circumstances. These people are at risk, they are alone, and they are scared, and we could help them.

We have had a series of announcements from the Government, but they all missed the point, which is that those children who are most at risk are the ones who are now in the camps in Europe. Making the argument in favour of doing more for refugees and of taking refugees from Europe is difficult when there is a narrative out there that says that most refugees are coming to Europe. That is not true. Perhaps one in five from the region is coming to Europe. People will say that they are not really refugees, but economic migrants. Well, 95% of them are deemed to be refugees by any objective standard. Perhaps that is where the Government's reluctance comes from. They fear unpopularity, but is this not the time for this Government not to follow, but to lead and to do the right thing? There are always reasons not to do the right thing.

When I was in Greece and Macedonia two weeks ago, a fence had been erected by the Macedonian Government in 36 hours. If a country has the political will, they can do these things. We can take these children. The blueprint that I produced over the past three or four months in consultation with Save the Children, Home for Good and local authorities gives the Government all the ammunition they need to show how they would put such a scheme into practice, and I refer the Minister to that blueprint. We need to stop the excuses and do the right thing.

This is the biggest humanitarian disaster, or crisis, facing Europe since the second world war, and this Government choose to turn their back not just on geo-political reality and on our neighbours, but on the desperate children somehow existing in the camps and in the ditches up and down Europe. This proposal before us today, amendment 87, is not the most we can do; it is the least we can do.

**Heidi Allen:** I wish to speak on the Dubs amendment. May I start by thanking the Minister for Immigration and the Under-Secretary of State for Refugees for their genuine commitment to this cause? I know that, in this matter, they have tried to use both their head and their heart.

Having seen the desperate scenes in the refugees camps in Lesbos and Calais, I have had a very brief window on the world of families fleeing war and persecution, and it is those memories that give me a very, very heavy heart today. Many of us from all parts of the House always felt that our initial offer to resettle 20,000 refugees was not enough. Although our financial aid to the region has been nothing short of heroic, we

have sensed that the British people, generous to the end, wanted to offer a home to more. The announcement last week that we would take another 3,000 filled me with renewed pride, not least because we were focusing on children at risk, but when did pride get to feel so numb? It was the dawning realisation that, by focusing on the camps in the region once again, we would be turning our backs on the thousands of unaccompanied children already in Europe. The argument for not helping them has always been the pull factor. If we take them, more will make that perilous journey. I know that the boats are overcrowded and not seaworthy because I saw them.

If the deal between the EU, Turkey and Greece is so fantastic in stopping the tide of daily arrivals, as we are told, then that means that the pull has stopped pulling. That can mean only one thing: these children are trapped. They cannot go forward, and they cannot go back. They are lost in Europe, lost in the chaos, but not, and never, lost on our conscience.

The confirmation that we will send 75 Home Office experts to the Greek islands is very welcome, but it has taken from the announcement in January to achieve that. We call the Greek islands hotspots. There are hotspots all over Europe: hotspots for trafficking, hotspots for abuse and hotspots for child prostitution on the Macedonian border, Italy and on our very own doorstep in Calais.

When part of the jungle was demolished, 120 children went missing. Right now there are 157 lone children with family in the UK, but there are no friendly faces, no child protection and no sign saying, "This way to be looked after." Children cannot be expected to find the system without help. In one case, an 11-month-old baby separated from its mother was expected to claim asylum in France before any steps could be taken to reunite them—an 11-month-old baby. This is civilized Europe?

I will hear the whole debate. I had planned to abstain in the vote, because I must acknowledge the offer to take 3,000 more, and I would be playing fast and loose with their opportunity for sanctuary if I did not support the Government. But how can I forget the faces of the children I have seen in Europe? Abstention is a pathetic offering, really. Is it enough? Is it good enough?

If the Dubs amendment does not succeed tonight, I urge the Lords to continue fighting with us. We must seek to achieve a compromise amendment; something different, and perhaps less sweeping, but something that—

**Mr Speaker:** Order. Alison McGovern.

**Alison McGovern:** The speech that I follow was a fine one. There have been many fine speeches on both sides of the House. This is a cross-party campaign on a cross-party amendment with cross-party support from all parts of this Parliament. I want to say a few words about something the Minister said earlier. He said that this problem arose because of a situation "in which families see an advantage".

I cannot but argue against those words, because I do not see what possible advantage there could be for the refugee families affected. The unaccompanied children we are talking about are just that: children.

I think that the Minister's words demonstrate what the Government feel to be the cause of this situation. We are used to debating this analysis in terms of push

and pull factors. Well, I think that is a strange kind of argument that bears very little scrutiny. We all know that, fine though this country is, it is the push of conflict that has caused the problem, and the answer to the conflict is peace. We have been trying for peace for months and months, but there is none, so what then?

The Under-Secretary of State for Refugees and I served together on the International Development Committee, and I have every respect for him. I ask him to read the report produced by our former colleagues, which asks the Government to take account of this request from Save the Children. *[Interruption.]* He is looking at me and I know that he will read it and look again at the request. Bringing people from the region was the correct approach, but it was too slow, and unfortunately the announcement last week that sought to spike this debate today was another classic almost U-turn, but it did not go far enough.

Therefore, as others Members have said, in the knowledge that there are children who need our protection, what can we do? This is our continent. It is our job to take care of those children. We know it, and that is why we must vote for the Dubs amendment.

**Dr Tania Mathias** (Twickenham) (Con): I absolutely support much of the Government's programme on refugees, what they are doing with £2.3 billion in aid, what they are doing to resettle vulnerable people, and what they are doing in the camps on the borders of Syria and in the region. However, I believe that we currently have an acute crisis in Europe. I believe that any unaccompanied child who is not safe tonight is part of our problem. I do not believe that any of us would be go to France or Greece and just say, "This is not my problem." I believe that the reason we can lead on this is that right now we have excellence in our refugee programme, in DFID and in our Home Office Ministers, and especially in the Under-Secretary of State for Refugees.

Dambisa Moyo, in her book "Dead Aid", cited the tragic story of two teenage girls from Guinea who died while travelling from Africa to Europe. On the body of one of the girls was a note saying, "We want to study. We ask you to help us study so that we can be like you in Africa." A lot of these children who come to this country may choose to stay here as adults, but many will choose to go home, if their home is at peace. I believe that voting for Lords Dubs's amendment is the right thing to do tonight to give those children a safe haven.

9.15 pm

**Jo Cox:** We all know that the vast majority of the terrified, friendless and profoundly vulnerable child refugees scattered across Europe tonight came from Syria. We also know that, as that conflict enters its sixth barbaric year, desperate Syrian families are being forced to make an impossible decision: stay and face starvation, rape, persecution and death, or make a perilous journey to find sanctuary elsewhere. Who can blame desperate parents for wanting to escape the horror that their families are experiencing? Children are being killed on their way to school, children as young as seven are being forcibly recruited to the frontline and one in three children have grown up knowing nothing but fear and war. Those children have been exposed to things no child should ever witness, and I know I would risk life and limb to get my two precious babies out of that hellhole.

[Jo Cox]

I am deeply proud of the Government for leading the way internationally on providing humanitarian support to Syrian civilians. Their commitment in terms of finances and policy to help people in the region, and across the middle east and north Africa, will save lives. However, in the chaos caused by the Syrian conflict and many other conflicts, many thousands of already deeply scarred children have become separated from their parents and carers, and they are already in Europe. The Government's generosity to date has not extended to those vulnerable children.

We know that identifying the exact number of unaccompanied minors is difficult, but the latest estimates suggest that there could be up to 95,000 such children in Europe tonight—four times the number we thought. That means that, if we decide tonight to take 3,000 of them, that will be just 3% of the total. That is our continent's challenge, and we must rise to it.

I recognise that this is not easy, but tonight we are being asked to make a decision that transcends party politics. Any Member who has seen the desperation and fear on the faces of children trapped in inhospitable camps across Europe must surely feel compelled to act. I urge them tonight to be brave and bold, and I applaud the hon. and learned Member for Sleaford and North Hykeham (Stephen Phillips) for an incredibly principled, personal speech.

In the shanty towns of Calais and Dunkirk, the aid workers I spent a decade with on the frontline as an aid worker myself tell me that the children there face some of the most horrific circumstances in the world. Surely we have to do the right thing tonight and support the Dubs amendment.

**Caroline Ansell** (Eastbourne) (Con): We are approaching the last moments of the debate, so I will confine my remarks to one amendment and to one argument within it—the pull factor some have expressed concerned about.

Let me share just something of my experience when I went to Lesbos with Save the Children. I was struck by many things, but one was the extraordinary contrast between the almost biblical scene of men, women and children travelling on foot and in numbers across the country, and the fact that they were carrying mobile phones. All over the camps, people were huddled not around fires, but around charging stations, desperate to keep connected. One worker described to me how any change in border access or the availability of places in the camps would be communicated by mobile to friends and families following on, and shared over and over, inspiring immediate and dramatic change on the ground.

This 21st century migration through Europe is like nothing that has come before. In the light of that, how can we say with confidence that announcing 3,000 open places for minors in the UK would not affect the decisions desperate people would make and would not create risk? I share the hopes and the fears for the vulnerable children who have been mentioned in this debate, but we must look to the long term. It has previously been said that this will not solve the problem, so we must be very clear that we are not exacerbating the situation. There is a body of anecdotal evidence that families separate when they can find only enough money to pay traffickers for one place in a boat. Knowing, as

we do, that children's best chances for the long term are with their parents, every effort must be made to keep families together, and where they have been separated, to reunite them.

To finish, it was said during my time in Lesbos that the time it took to work with lone young people to establish their identity and ask all the right questions when they presented at the camps was one of the main reasons that many left to risk the perilous journey that so many Members have described this evening. We must therefore build the infrastructure, the systems and the confidence of young people that reception centres across the continent, not the open road, are their best route. This is vital work and it will, in the coming weeks and months, see increasing numbers of the children and young people already in Europe resettled with us in the UK.

**Mr Speaker:** Two minutes each would be better.

**Naz Shah** (Bradford West) (Lab): This evening, we have had lots of passionate speeches about children from Members on both sides of the House. I will speak about my experience as a former foster carer, and somebody who has provided supported lodgings to minors who have presented themselves unaccompanied. Ikram was 15 when we fostered him in my home and my children were very young, and Hazrat was one of the boys we also looked after.

Hazrat told me in his own words how, when they were trying to get on to the back of a lorry, there was only one space for the two boys who needed it and one killed the other for that space. He witnessed that barbaric act, and he told me about it in person. It will haunt me for the rest of my life. It will haunt me when I look at my children; my daughter was young and I only had two children at the time.

Given the stories that these boys sat down and told us, I cannot begin to imagine the mental health trauma that they went through. Yet these boys wanted to work, to get an education and to leave that behind, so desperate were they to leave the horrors that they experienced while getting to this country for sanctuary. These children did not want to come to this country for our jobs, our benefits or anything else. These children's mothers told them, "You have a better chance of making it past the traffickers and past the exploitation. You have a better chance of making it outside here, so go, my son, go." Those were the words their mothers spoke to these young people.

I am proud to come from Bradford West. Bradford is a city of sanctuary, in which 169 organisations have signed up to support refugees and asylum seekers. When the Minister visited, we had a conversation about Bradford being seen as a trailblazer for integrated health and social care, education and so on. Bradford could lead the way, and we would support other areas. The hon. Member for Rochester and Strood (Kelly Tolhurst) said that Kent does not get such help, but we would help: Bradford will help.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol West (Thangam Debbonaire) said, this amounts to five children per constituency. Is that really an ask? Is a debate about five children per constituency really one we should have to have today? Can Great Britain really not extend such support, as one of the greatest nations on earth? It is a

shame if we do not sign up for and accept the Dubs amendment. I will do so, and I would welcome Conservative Members joining us in the Lobby tonight.

**Mr Speaker:** There are two minutes to go.

**Byron Davies (Gower) (Con):** I would have liked to have more of an opportunity to speak, as I was a member of the Immigration Public Bill Committee, but I will confine myself to the Lords amendment calling on the Government to relocate 3,000 refugee children. I am sure that there is no one who could possibly disagree with that. It would be morally wrong and would not befit our nation, which has supported many different religions, races and nationalities in their hour of greatest need, if we did not reunite these children with their families. We must work along with other EU states to make sure that utmost priority is given to ensuring that children are not left unaccompanied and in danger. Along with other countries such as Spain, Greece, Italy and France, we must provide the very best protection and support for these children until they can be reunited with their families. The right hon. Member for Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford (Yvette Cooper) was absolutely right: it can take the French authorities up to nine months to pass on applications to the Home Office. Although all authorities are under huge pressure on these matters, this delay cannot be tolerated, and an application cannot be accepted as just another application when it relates to an unaccompanied child.

In 2015, over 3,000 asylum applications were received from unaccompanied asylum-seeking children—a rise of 56% on 2014 and 141% on 2013. That puts unprecedented pressure on our system and our local authorities, as detailed by my hon. Friend the Member for Rochester and Strood (Kelly Tolhurst). These numbers raise serious questions as to whether other EU countries are fulfilling their child protection obligations. It is vital that we continue to do what we are doing now, and more, but this must not stop us raising and tackling these issues with our European partners on a wider scale.

We need to ensure that we support these children and others who make the journey in the best way possible, using our heads and our hearts. While all may not agree, I think the actions that the Government are taking—

9.26 pm

*Three hours having elapsed since the commencement of proceedings on consideration of Lords amendments, the debate was interrupted (Programme Order, this day).*

*The Speaker put forthwith the Question already proposed from the Chair (Standing Order No. 83F). That this House disagrees with Lords amendment 87.*

*The House divided: Ayes 294, Noes 276.*

**Division No. 246]**

**[9.26 pm**

**AYES**

Adams, Nigel	Baker, Mr Steve
Afriyie, Adam	Baldwin, Harriett
Aldous, Peter	Barclay, Stephen
Allan, Lucy	Baron, Mr John
Amess, Sir David	Barwell, Gavin
Andrew, Stuart	Bebb, Guto
Ansell, Caroline	Bellingham, Sir Henry
Argar, Edward	Benyon, Richard
Atkins, Victoria	Beresford, Sir Paul
Bacon, Mr Richard	Berry, Jake

Berry, James	Gauke, Mr David
Bingham, Andrew	Ghani, Nusrat
Blunt, Crispin	Gibb, Mr Nick
Bone, Mr Peter	Gillan, rh Mrs Cheryl
Borwick, Victoria	Glen, John
Bottomley, Sir Peter	Goodwill, Mr Robert
Bradley, Karen	Gove, rh Michael
Brady, Mr Graham	Graham, Richard
Brazier, Mr Julian	Grant, Mrs Helen
Brine, Steve	Grayling, rh Chris
Brokenshire, rh James	Green, Chris
Bruce, Fiona	Green, rh Damian
Buckland, Robert	Grieve, rh Mr Dominic
Burns, Conor	Griffiths, Andrew
Burns, rh Sir Simon	Gummer, Ben
Burrowes, Mr David	Gyimah, Mr Sam
Burt, rh Alistair	Halfon, rh Robert
Campbell, Mr Gregory	Hall, Luke
Carmichael, Neil	Hammond, Stephen
Carswell, Mr Douglas	Hancock, rh Matthew
Cartlidge, James	Hands, rh Greg
Cash, Sir William	Harper, rh Mr Mark
Caulfield, Maria	Harrington, Richard
Chalk, Alex	Harris, Rebecca
Chishti, Rehman	Hart, Simon
Chope, Mr Christopher	Haselhurst, rh Sir Alan
Churchill, Jo	Heald, Sir Oliver
Clark, rh Greg	Heapey, James
Clarke, rh Mr Kenneth	Heaton-Harris, Chris
Cleverly, James	Heaton-Jones, Peter
Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey	Henderson, Gordon
Coffey, Dr Thérèse	Herbert, rh Nick
Collins, Damian	Hinds, Damian
Colvile, Oliver	Hollobone, Mr Philip
Costa, Alberto	Holloway, Mr Adam
Crabb, rh Stephen	Hopkins, Kris
Davies, Byron	Howarth, Sir Gerald
Davies, Glyn	Howell, John
Davies, Mims	Howlett, Ben
Davies, Philip	Huddleston, Nigel
Dinenage, Caroline	Hunt, rh Mr Jeremy
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan	Hurd, Mr Nick
Donelan, Michelle	Jackson, Mr Stewart
Double, Steve	Javid, rh Sajid
Dowden, Oliver	Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
Doyle-Price, Jackie	Jenkin, Mr Bernard
Drax, Richard	Jenkyns, Andrea
Drummond, Mrs Flick	Jenrick, Robert
Duddridge, James	Johnson, Boris
Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain	Johnson, Gareth
Dunne, Mr Philip	Johnson, Joseph
Elliott, Tom	Jones, Andrew
Ellis, Michael	Jones, rh Mr David
Ellison, Jane	Jones, Mr Marcus
Ellwood, Mr Tobias	Kawczynski, Daniel
Elphicke, Charlie	Kennedy, Seema
Eustice, George	Kinahan, Danny
Evans, Graham	Kirby, Simon
Evans, Mr Nigel	Knight, rh Sir Greg
Evennett, rh Mr David	Knight, Julian
Fabricant, Michael	Kwarteng, Kwasi
Fallon, rh Michael	Lancaster, Mark
Fernandes, Suella	Latham, Pauline
Field, rh Mark	Leadsom, Andrea
Foster, Kevin	Lee, Dr Phillip
Fox, rh Dr Liam	Lefroy, Jeremy
Frazer, Lucy	Leigh, Sir Edward
Freeman, George	Leslie, Charlotte
Freer, Mike	Letwin, rh Mr Oliver
Gale, Sir Roger	Lewis, Brandon
Garnier, rh Sir Edward	Lewis, rh Dr Julian
Garnier, Mark	Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian

Lidington, rh Mr David  
 Lilley, rh Mr Peter  
 Lopresti, Jack  
 Lord, Jonathan  
 Loughton, Tim  
 Lumley, Karen  
 Mackinlay, Craig  
 Mackintosh, David  
 Main, Mrs Anne  
 Mak, Mr Alan  
 Malthouse, Kit  
 Mann, Scott  
 May, rh Mrs Theresa  
 Maynard, Paul  
 McCartney, Karl  
 McLoughlin, rh Mr Patrick  
 McPartland, Stephen  
 Menzies, Mark  
 Merriman, Huw  
 Metcalfe, Stephen  
 Miller, rh Mrs Maria  
 Milling, Amanda  
 Mills, Nigel  
 Milton, rh Anne  
 Mordaunt, Penny  
 Morgan, rh Nicky  
 Morris, Anne Marie  
 Morris, David  
 Morris, James  
 Morton, Wendy  
 Mowat, David  
 Murray, Mrs Sheryll  
 Murrison, Dr Andrew  
 Newton, Sarah  
 Nokes, Caroline  
 Norman, Jesse  
 Nuttall, Mr David  
 Offord, Dr Matthew  
 Opperman, Guy  
 Parish, Neil  
 Patel, rh Priti  
 Paterson, rh Mr Owen  
 Pawsey, Mark  
 Penning, rh Mike  
 Penrose, John  
 Percy, Andrew  
 Perry, Claire  
 Philp, Chris  
 Pickles, rh Sir Eric  
 Pincher, Christopher  
 Poulter, Dr Daniel  
 Pow, Rebecca  
 Prentis, Victoria  
 Prisk, Mr Mark  
 Pritchard, Mark  
 Pursglove, Tom  
 Quin, Jeremy  
 Raab, Mr Dominic  
 Redwood, rh John  
 Rees-Mogg, Mr Jacob  
 Robertson, Mr Laurence  
 Robinson, Mary  
 Rosindell, Andrew  
 Rudd, rh Amber  
 Rutley, David  
 Sandbach, Antoinette  
 Scully, Paul

Selous, Andrew  
 Shannon, Jim  
 Shapps, rh Grant  
 Sharma, Alok  
 Shelbrooke, Alec  
 Simpson, rh Mr Keith  
 Skidmore, Chris  
 Smith, Chloe  
 Smith, Henry  
 Smith, Julian  
 Smith, Royston  
 Soames, rh Sir Nicholas  
 Solloway, Amanda  
 Soubry, rh Anna  
 Spelman, rh Mrs Caroline  
 Spencer, Mark  
 Stephenson, Andrew  
 Stevenson, John  
 Stewart, Bob  
 Stewart, Iain  
 Stewart, Rory  
 Streeter, Mr Gary  
 Stride, Mel  
 Stuart, Graham  
 Sturdy, Julian  
 Sunak, Rishi  
 Swayne, rh Mr Desmond  
 Swire, rh Mr Hugo  
 Syms, Mr Robert  
 Thomas, Derek  
 Throup, Maggie  
 Timpson, Edward  
 Tolhurst, Kelly  
 Tomlinson, Justin  
 Tomlinson, Michael  
 Tracey, Craig  
 Tredinnick, David  
 Trevelyan, Mrs Anne-Marie  
 Truss, rh Elizabeth  
 Tugendhat, Tom  
 Turner, Mr Andrew  
 Tyrie, rh Mr Andrew  
 Vaizey, Mr Edward  
 Vara, Mr Shailesh  
 Vickers, Martin  
 Villiers, rh Mrs Theresa  
 Walker, Mr Charles  
 Walker, Mr Robin  
 Warman, Matt  
 Watkinson, Dame Angela  
 Whately, Helen  
 Wheeler, Heather  
 White, Chris  
 Whittaker, Craig  
 Whittingdale, rh Mr John  
 Wiggin, Bill  
 Williams, Craig  
 Williamson, rh Gavin  
 Wilson, Mr Rob  
 Wollaston, Dr Sarah  
 Wood, Mike  
 Wragg, William  
 Wright, rh Jeremy

**Tellers for the Ayes:**  
**George Hollingbery and**  
**Margot James**

#### NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane  
 Abrahams, Debbie

Ahmed-Sheikh, Ms Tasmina  
 Alexander, Heidi

Ali, Rushanara  
 Allen, Mr Graham  
 Anderson, Mr David  
 Ashworth, Jonathan  
 Austin, Ian  
 Bailey, Mr Adrian  
 Bardell, Hannah  
 Barron, rh Kevin  
 Benn, rh Hilary  
 Black, Mhairi  
 Blackford, Ian  
 Blackman, Kirsty  
 Blenkinsop, Tom  
 Blomfield, Paul  
 Boswell, Philip  
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben  
 Brennan, Kevin  
 Brock, Deidre  
 Brown, Lyn  
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas  
 Bryant, Chris  
 Buck, Ms Karen  
 Burden, Richard  
 Burgon, Richard  
 Butler, Dawn  
 Byrne, rh Liam  
 Cadbury, Ruth  
 Cameron, Dr Lisa  
 Campbell, rh Mr Alan  
 Campbell, Mr Gregory  
 Campbell, Mr Ronnie  
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair  
 Chapman, Jenny  
 Cherry, Joanna  
 Clegg, rh Mr Nick  
 Clwyd, rh Ann  
 Coaker, Vernon  
 Coffey, Ann  
 Cooper, Julie  
 Cooper, rh Yvette  
 Corbyn, rh Jeremy  
 Cowan, Ronnie  
 Cox, Mr Geoffrey  
 Cox, Jo  
 Coyle, Neil  
 Crausby, Mr David  
 Crawley, Angela  
 Creasy, Stella  
 Cruddas, Jon  
 Cryer, John  
 Cummins, Judith  
 Cunningham, Alex  
 Cunningham, Mr Jim  
 Dakin, Nic  
 Danczuk, Simon  
 David, Wayne  
 Davies, Geraint  
 Day, Martyn  
 De Piero, Gloria  
 Debbonaire, Thangam  
 Docherty-Hughes, Martin  
 Donaldson, Stuart Blair  
 Doughty, Stephen  
 Dowd, Jim  
 Dowd, Peter  
 Dromey, Jack  
 Dugher, Michael  
 Durkan, Mark  
 Eagle, Ms Angela  
 Eagle, Maria  
 Edwards, Jonathan  
 Efford, Clive

Elliott, Julie  
 Ellman, Mrs Louise  
 Evans, Chris  
 Farrelly, Paul  
 Farron, Tim  
 Fellows, Marion  
 Ferrier, Margaret  
 Fitzpatrick, Jim  
 Ffello, Robert  
 Fletcher, Colleen  
 Flint, rh Caroline  
 Flynn, Paul  
 Fovargue, Yvonne  
 Foxcroft, Vicky  
 Gapes, Mike  
 Gardiner, Barry  
 Gethins, Stephen  
 Gibson, Patricia  
 Glass, Pat  
 Glindon, Mary  
 Godsiff, Mr Roger  
 Goodman, Helen  
 Grady, Patrick  
 Grant, Peter  
 Gray, Neil  
 Green, Kate  
 Greenwood, Lilian  
 Greenwood, Margaret  
 Griffith, Nia  
 Gwynne, Andrew  
 Haigh, Louise  
 Hamilton, Fabian  
 Hanson, rh Mr David  
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet  
 Harris, Carolyn  
 Hayes, Helen  
 Healey, rh John  
 Hendrick, Mr Mark  
 Hendry, Drew  
 Hepburn, Mr Stephen  
 Hermon, Lady  
 Hillier, Meg  
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret  
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon  
 Hoey, Kate  
 Hollern, Kate  
 Hopkins, Kelvin  
 Hosie, Stewart  
 Howarth, rh Mr George  
 Hunt, Tristram  
 Huq, Dr Rupa  
 Hussain, Imran  
 Jarvis, Dan  
 Johnson, rh Alan  
 Johnson, Diana  
 Jones, Gerald  
 Jones, Graham  
 Jones, Helen  
 Jones, Susan Elan  
 Kane, Mike  
 Kaufman, rh Sir Gerald  
 Keeley, Barbara  
 Kendall, Liz  
 Kerevan, George  
 Kerr, Calum  
 Khan, rh Sadiq  
 Kinnock, Stephen  
 Kyle, Peter  
 Lamb, rh Norman  
 Lammy, rh Mr David  
 Lavery, Ian  
 Law, Chris



Leslie, Chris  
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma  
 Lewis, Clive  
 Long Bailey, Rebecca  
 Lucas, Caroline  
 Lucas, Ian C.  
 Lynch, Holly  
 MacNeil, Mr Angus Brendan  
 Mactaggart, rh Fiona  
 Madders, Justin  
 Mahmood, Mr Khalid  
 Mahmood, Shabana  
 Malhotra, Seema  
 Mann, John  
 Marris, Rob  
 Marsden, Mr Gordon  
 Maskell, Rachael  
 Matheson, Christian  
 Mathias, Dr Tania  
 Mc Nally, John  
 McCabe, Steve  
 McCaig, Callum  
 McCarthy, Kerry  
 McDonald, Andy  
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm  
 McDonald, Stuart C.  
 McDonnell, John  
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat  
 McGarry, Natalie  
 McGinn, Conor  
 McGovern, Alison  
 McInnes, Liz  
 McKinnell, Catherine  
 McLaughlin, Anne  
 McMahon, Jim  
 Meale, Sir Alan  
 Mearns, Ian  
 Miliband, rh Edward  
 Monaghan, Carol  
 Monaghan, Dr Paul  
 Morden, Jessica  
 Morris, Grahame M.  
 Mulholland, Greg  
 Mullin, Roger  
 Murray, Ian  
 Nandy, Lisa  
 Newlands, Gavin  
 Nicolson, John  
 O'Hara, Brendan  
 Onn, Melanie  
 Onwurah, Chi  
 Osamor, Kate  
 Oswald, Kirsten  
 Paterson, Steven  
 Pearce, Teresa  
 Pennycook, Matthew  
 Perkins, Toby  
 Phillips, Jess  
 Phillips, Stephen  
 Phillipson, Bridget  
 Pound, Stephen  
 Powell, Lucy  
 Pugh, John  
 Quince, Will  
 Qureshi, Yasmin  
 Rayner, Angela

Reed, Mr Jamie  
 Reed, Mr Steve  
 Rees, Christina  
 Reeves, Rachel  
 Reynolds, Emma  
 Reynolds, Jonathan  
 Rimmer, Marie  
 Robertson, rh Angus  
 Robinson, Mr Geoffrey  
 Ryan, rh Joan  
 Salmond, rh Alex  
 Shah, Naz  
 Shannon, Jim  
 Sharma, Mr Virendra  
 Sheerman, Mr Barry  
 Sheppard, Tommy  
 Sherriff, Paula  
 Shuker, Mr Gavin  
 Skinner, Mr Dennis  
 Slaughter, Andy  
 Smith, rh Mr Andrew  
 Smith, Angela  
 Smith, Cat  
 Smith, Nick  
 Smith, Owen  
 Smyth, Karin  
 Starmer, Keir  
 Stephens, Chris  
 Stevens, Jo  
 Streeting, Wes  
 Stringer, Graham  
 Stuart, rh Ms Gisela  
 Tami, Mark  
 Thewliss, Alison  
 Thomas, Mr Gareth  
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick  
 Thompson, Owen  
 Thomson, Michelle  
 Thornberry, Emily  
 Timms, rh Stephen  
 Trickett, Jon  
 Turley, Anna  
 Twigg, Stephen  
 Umunna, Mr Chuka  
 Vaz, Valerie  
 Warburton, David  
 Watson, Mr Tom  
 Weir, Mike  
 West, Catherine  
 Whiteford, Dr Eilidh  
 Whitehead, Dr Alan  
 Whitford, Dr Philippa  
 Williams, Hywel  
 Williams, Mr Mark  
 Wilson, Corri  
 Wilson, Phil  
 Winnick, Mr David  
 Winterton, rh Dame Rosie  
 Wishart, Pete  
 Woodcock, John  
 Wright, Mr Iain  
 Zeichner, Daniel

**Tellers for the Noes:**  
**Sue Hayman and**  
**Jeff Smith**

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

### After Clause 12

#### OVERSEAS DOMESTIC WORKERS

*Motion made, and Question put, That this House disagrees with Lords amendment 60.—(James Brokenshire.)*

*The House divided: Ayes 304, Noes 268.*

### Division No. 247]

[9.42 pm

#### AYES

Adams, Nigel  
 Afriyie, Adam  
 Aldous, Peter  
 Allan, Lucy  
 Allen, Heidi  
 Amess, Sir David  
 Andrew, Stuart  
 Ansell, Caroline  
 Argar, Edward  
 Atkins, Victoria  
 Bacon, Mr Richard  
 Baker, Mr Steve  
 Baldwin, Harriett  
 Barclay, Stephen  
 Baron, Mr John  
 Barwell, Gavin  
 Bebb, Guto  
 Bellingham, Sir Henry  
 Benyon, Richard  
 Beresford, Sir Paul  
 Berry, Jake  
 Berry, James  
 Bingham, Andrew  
 Blunt, Crispin  
 Bone, Mr Peter  
 Borwick, Victoria  
 Bottomley, Sir Peter  
 Bradley, Karen  
 Brady, Mr Graham  
 Brazier, Mr Julian  
 Brine, Steve  
 Brokenshire, rh James  
 Bruce, Fiona  
 Buckland, Robert  
 Burns, Conor  
 Burns, rh Sir Simon  
 Burrowes, Mr David  
 Burt, rh Alistair  
 Campbell, Mr Gregory  
 Carmichael, Neil  
 Carswell, Mr Douglas  
 Cartledge, James  
 Cash, Sir William  
 Caulfield, Maria  
 Chalk, Alex  
 Chishti, Rehman  
 Chope, Mr Christopher  
 Churchill, Jo  
 Clark, rh Greg  
 Clarke, rh Mr Kenneth  
 Cleverly, James  
 Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey  
 Coffey, Dr Thérèse  
 Collins, Damian  
 Colville, Oliver  
 Costa, Alberto

Cox, Mr Geoffrey  
 Crabb, rh Stephen  
 Davies, Byron  
 Davies, Glyn  
 Davies, Mims  
 Davies, Philip  
 Dinenage, Caroline  
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan  
 Donelan, Michelle  
 Double, Steve  
 Dowden, Oliver  
 Doyle-Price, Jackie  
 Drax, Richard  
 Drummond, Mrs Flick  
 Duddridge, James  
 Duncan, rh Sir Alan  
 Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain  
 Dunne, Mr Philip  
 Elliott, Tom  
 Ellis, Michael  
 Ellison, Jane  
 Ellwood, Mr Tobias  
 Elphicke, Charlie  
 Eustice, George  
 Evans, Graham  
 Evans, Mr Nigel  
 Evennett, rh Mr David  
 Fabricant, Michael  
 Fallon, rh Michael  
 Fernandes, Suella  
 Field, rh Mark  
 Foster, Kevin  
 Fox, rh Dr Liam  
 Frazer, Lucy  
 Freeman, George  
 Freer, Mike  
 Fysh, Marcus  
 Gale, Sir Roger  
 Garnier, rh Sir Edward  
 Garnier, Mark  
 Gauke, Mr David  
 Ghani, Nusrat  
 Gibb, Mr Nick  
 Gillan, rh Mrs Cheryl  
 Glen, John  
 Goodwill, Mr Robert  
 Gove, rh Michael  
 Graham, Richard  
 Grant, Mrs Helen  
 Grayling, rh Chris  
 Green, Chris  
 Green, rh Damian  
 Grieve, rh Mr Dominic  
 Griffiths, Andrew  
 Gummer, Ben  
 Gyimah, Mr Sam

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Lords amendment 87 disagreed to.*

Halfon, rh Robert  
Hall, Luke  
Hammond, Stephen  
Hancock, rh Matthew  
Hands, rh Greg  
Harper, rh Mr Mark  
Harrington, Richard  
Harris, Rebecca  
Hart, Simon  
Haselhurst, rh Sir Alan  
Heald, Sir Oliver  
Heappey, James  
Heaton-Harris, Chris  
Heaton-Jones, Peter  
Henderson, Gordon  
Herbert, rh Nick  
Hinds, Damian  
Hollobone, Mr Philip  
Holloway, Mr Adam  
Hopkins, Kris  
Howarth, Sir Gerald  
Howell, John  
Howlett, Ben  
Huddleston, Nigel  
Hunt, rh Mr Jeremy  
Hurd, Mr Nick  
Jackson, Mr Stewart  
Javid, rh Sajid  
Jayawardena, Mr Ranil  
Jenkin, Mr Bernard  
Jenkyns, Andrea  
Jenrick, Robert  
Johnson, Boris  
Johnson, Gareth  
Johnson, Joseph  
Jones, Andrew  
Jones, rh Mr David  
Jones, Mr Marcus  
Kawczynski, Daniel  
Kennedy, Seema  
Kinahan, Danny  
Kirby, Simon  
Knight, rh Sir Greg  
Knight, Julian  
Kwarteng, Kwasi  
Lancaster, Mark  
Latham, Pauline  
Leadsom, Andrea  
Lee, Dr Phillip  
Lefroy, Jeremy  
Leigh, Sir Edward  
Leslie, Charlotte  
Letwin, rh Mr Oliver  
Lewis, Brandon  
Lewis, rh Dr Julian  
Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian  
Lidington, rh Mr David  
Lilley, rh Mr Peter  
Lopresti, Jack  
Lord, Jonathan  
Loughton, Tim  
Lumley, Karen  
Mackinlay, Craig  
Mackintosh, David  
Main, Mrs Anne  
Mak, Mr Alan  
Malthouse, Kit  
Mann, Scott  
Mathias, Dr Tania  
May, rh Mrs Theresa  
Maynard, Paul  
McCartney, Jason

McCartney, Karl  
McLoughlin, rh Mr Patrick  
McPartland, Stephen  
Menzies, Mark  
Merriman, Huw  
Metcalfe, Stephen  
Miller, rh Mrs Maria  
Milling, Amanda  
Mills, Nigel  
Milton, rh Anne  
Mordaunt, Penny  
Morgan, rh Nicky  
Morris, Anne Marie  
Morris, David  
Morris, James  
Morton, Wendy  
Mowat, David  
Murray, Mrs Sheryll  
Murrison, Dr Andrew  
Neill, Robert  
Newton, Sarah  
Nokes, Caroline  
Norman, Jesse  
Nuttall, Mr David  
Offord, Dr Matthew  
Opperman, Guy  
Parish, Neil  
Patel, rh Priti  
Paterson, rh Mr Owen  
Pawsey, Mark  
Penning, rh Mike  
Penrose, John  
Percy, Andrew  
Perry, Claire  
Phillips, Stephen  
Philp, Chris  
Pickles, rh Sir Eric  
Pincher, Christopher  
Poulter, Dr Daniel  
Pow, Rebecca  
Prentis, Victoria  
Prisk, Mr Mark  
Pritchard, Mark  
Pursglove, Tom  
Quin, Jeremy  
Quince, Will  
Raab, Mr Dominic  
Redwood, rh John  
Rees-Mogg, Mr Jacob  
Robertson, Mr Laurence  
Robinson, Mary  
Rosindell, Andrew  
Rudd, rh Amber  
Rutley, David  
Sandbach, Antoinette  
Scully, Paul  
Selous, Andrew  
Shannon, Jim  
Shapps, rh Grant  
Sharma, Alok  
Shelbrooke, Alec  
Simpson, rh Mr Keith  
Skidmore, Chris  
Smith, Chloe  
Smith, Henry  
Smith, Julian  
Smith, Royston  
Soames, rh Sir Nicholas  
Solloway, Amanda  
Soubry, rh Anna  
Spelman, rh Mrs Caroline  
Spencer, Mark

Stephenson, Andrew  
Stevenson, John  
Stewart, Bob  
Stewart, Iain  
Stewart, Rory  
Streeter, Mr Gary  
Stride, Mel  
Stuart, Graham  
Sturdy, Julian  
Sunak, Rishi  
Swayne, rh Mr Desmond  
Swire, rh Mr Hugo  
Syms, Mr Robert  
Thomas, Derek  
Throup, Maggie  
Timpson, Edward  
Tolhurst, Kelly  
Tomlinson, Justin  
Tomlinson, Michael  
Tracey, Craig  
Tredinnick, David  
Trevelyan, Mrs Anne-Marie  
Truss, rh Elizabeth  
Tugendhat, Tom  
Turner, Mr Andrew  
Tyrie, rh Mr Andrew

Abbott, Ms Diane  
Abrahams, Debbie  
Ahmed-Sheikh, Ms Tasmina  
Alexander, Heidi  
Ali, Rushanara  
Allen, Mr Graham  
Anderson, Mr David  
Ashworth, Jonathan  
Austin, Ian  
Bailey, Mr Adrian  
Bardell, Hannah  
Barron, rh Kevin  
Benn, rh Hilary  
Black, Mhairi  
Blackford, Ian  
Blackman, Kirsty  
Blomfield, Paul  
Boswell, Philip  
Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben  
Brennan, Kevin  
Brock, Deidre  
Brown, Lyn  
Brown, rh Mr Nicholas  
Bryant, Chris  
Buck, Ms Karen  
Burden, Richard  
Burgon, Richard  
Butler, Dawn  
Byrne, rh Liam  
Cadbury, Ruth  
Cameron, Dr Lisa  
Campbell, rh Mr Alan  
Campbell, Mr Gregory  
Campbell, Mr Ronnie  
Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair  
Chapman, Jenny  
Cherry, Joanna  
Clegg, rh Mr Nick  
Clwyd, rh Ann  
Coaker, Vernon  
Coffey, Ann  
Cooper, Julie  
Cooper, rh Yvette

Vaizey, Mr Edward  
Vara, Mr Shailesh  
Vickers, Martin  
Villiers, rh Mrs Theresa  
Walker, Mr Charles  
Walker, Mr Robin  
Warburton, David  
Warman, Matt  
Watkinson, Dame Angela  
Whately, Helen  
Wheeler, Heather  
White, Chris  
Whittaker, Craig  
Whittingdale, rh Mr John  
Wiggin, Bill  
Williams, Craig  
Williamson, rh Gavin  
Wilson, Mr Rob  
Wollaston, Dr Sarah  
Wood, Mike  
Wragg, William  
Wright, rh Jeremy

**Tellers for the Ayes:**  
**George Hollingbery and**  
**Margot James**

#### NOES

Corbyn, rh Jeremy  
Cowan, Ronnie  
Cox, Jo  
Coyle, Neil  
Crausby, Mr David  
Crawley, Angela  
Creasy, Stella  
Cruddas, Jon  
Cryer, John  
Cummins, Judith  
Cunningham, Alex  
Cunningham, Mr Jim  
Dakin, Nic  
Danczuk, Simon  
David, Wayne  
Davies, Geraint  
Day, Martyn  
De Piero, Gloria  
Debbonaire, Thangam  
Docherty-Hughes, Martin  
Donaldson, Stuart Blair  
Doughty, Stephen  
Dowd, Jim  
Dowd, Peter  
Dromey, Jack  
Dugher, Michael  
Durkan, Mark  
Eagle, Ms Angela  
Eagle, Maria  
Edwards, Jonathan  
Efford, Clive  
Elliott, Julie  
Ellman, Mrs Louise  
Evans, Chris  
Farrelly, Paul  
Farron, Tim  
Fellows, Marion  
Ferrier, Margaret  
Fitzpatrick, Jim  
Ffello, Robert  
Fletcher, Colleen  
Flint, rh Caroline  
Flynn, Paul

Fovargue, Yvonne  
 Foxcroft, Vicky  
 Gapes, Mike  
 Gardiner, Barry  
 Gethins, Stephen  
 Gibson, Patricia  
 Glass, Pat  
 Glindon, Mary  
 Godsiff, Mr Roger  
 Goodman, Helen  
 Grady, Patrick  
 Grant, Peter  
 Gray, Neil  
 Green, Kate  
 Greenwood, Lilian  
 Greenwood, Margaret  
 Griffith, Nia  
 Gwynne, Andrew  
 Haigh, Louise  
 Hamilton, Fabian  
 Hanson, rh Mr David  
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet  
 Harris, Carolyn  
 Hayes, Helen  
 Healey, rh John  
 Hendrick, Mr Mark  
 Hendry, Drew  
 Hepburn, Mr Stephen  
 Hermon, Lady  
 Hillier, Meg  
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret  
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon  
 Hoey, Kate  
 Hollern, Kate  
 Hopkins, Kelvin  
 Hosie, Stewart  
 Howarth, rh Mr George  
 Hunt, Tristram  
 Huq, Dr Rupa  
 Hussain, Imran  
 Jarvis, Dan  
 Johnson, Diana  
 Jones, Gerald  
 Jones, Graham  
 Jones, Helen  
 Jones, Susan Elan  
 Kane, Mike  
 Kaufman, rh Sir Gerald  
 Keeley, Barbara  
 Kendall, Liz  
 Kerevan, George  
 Kerr, Calum  
 Khan, rh Sadiq  
 Kinnock, Stephen  
 Kyle, Peter  
 Lamb, rh Norman  
 Lammy, rh Mr David  
 Lavery, Ian  
 Law, Chris  
 Leslie, Chris  
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma  
 Lewis, Clive  
 Long Bailey, Rebecca  
 Lucas, Caroline  
 Lucas, Ian C.  
 Lynch, Holly  
 MacNeil, Mr Angus Brendan  
 Mactaggart, rh Fiona  
 Madders, Justin  
 Mahmood, Mr Khalid  
 Mahmood, Shabana  
 Malhotra, Seema

Mann, John  
 Marris, Rob  
 Marsden, Mr Gordon  
 Maskell, Rachael  
 Matheson, Christian  
 Mc Nally, John  
 McCabe, Steve  
 McCaig, Callum  
 McCarthy, Kerry  
 McDonald, Andy  
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm  
 McDonald, Stuart C.  
 McDonnell, John  
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat  
 McGarry, Natalie  
 McGinn, Conor  
 McInnes, Liz  
 McKinnell, Catherine  
 McLaughlin, Anne  
 McMahan, Jim  
 Meale, Sir Alan  
 Mearns, Ian  
 Miliband, rh Edward  
 Monaghan, Carol  
 Monaghan, Dr Paul  
 Morden, Jessica  
 Morris, Grahame M.  
 Mulholland, Greg  
 Mullin, Roger  
 Murray, Ian  
 Nandy, Lisa  
 Newlands, Gavin  
 Nicolson, John  
 O'Hara, Brendan  
 Onn, Melanie  
 Onwurah, Chi  
 Osamor, Kate  
 Oswald, Kirsten  
 Paterson, Steven  
 Pearce, Teresa  
 Pennycook, Matthew  
 Perkins, Toby  
 Phillips, Jess  
 Phillipson, Bridget  
 Pound, Stephen  
 Powell, Lucy  
 Pugh, John  
 Qureshi, Yasmin  
 Rayner, Angela  
 Reed, Mr Jamie  
 Reed, Mr Steve  
 Rees, Christina  
 Reeves, Rachel  
 Reynolds, Emma  
 Reynolds, Jonathan  
 Rimmer, Marie  
 Robertson, rh Angus  
 Robinson, Mr Geoffrey  
 Ryan, rh Joan  
 Salmond, rh Alex  
 Shah, Naz  
 Shannon, Jim  
 Sharma, Mr Virendra  
 Sheerman, Mr Barry  
 Sheppard, Tommy  
 Sherriff, Paula  
 Shuker, Mr Gavin  
 Skinner, Mr Dennis  
 Slaughter, Andy  
 Smith, rh Mr Andrew  
 Smith, Angela  
 Smith, Cat

Smith, Nick  
 Smith, Owen  
 Smyth, Karin  
 Starmer, Keir  
 Stephenson, Chris  
 Stevens, Jo  
 Streeting, Wes  
 Stringer, Graham  
 Stuart, rh Ms Gisela  
 Tami, Mark  
 Thewliss, Alison  
 Thomas, Mr Gareth  
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick  
 Thompson, Owen  
 Thomson, Michelle  
 Thornberry, Emily  
 Timms, rh Stephen  
 Trickett, Jon  
 Turley, Anna  
 Twigg, Stephen  
 Umunna, Mr Chuka

Vaz, Valerie  
 Watson, Mr Tom  
 Weir, Mike  
 West, Catherine  
 Whiteford, Dr Eilidh  
 Whitehead, Dr Alan  
 Whitford, Dr Philippa  
 Williams, Hywel  
 Williams, Mr Mark  
 Wilson, Corri  
 Wilson, Phil  
 Winnick, Mr David  
 Winterton, rh Dame Rosie  
 Wishart, Pete  
 Woodcock, John  
 Wright, Mr Iain  
 Zeichner, Daniel

#### Tellers for the Noes:

Sue Hayman and  
 Jeff Smith

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Lords amendment 60 disagreed to.*

#### After Clause 30

IMMIGRATION DETENTION: TIME LIMIT AND JUDICIAL  
 OVERSIGHT

*Motion made, and Question put, That this House disagrees  
 with Lords amendment 84.—(James Brokenshire.)*

*The House divided: Ayes 302, Noes 266.*

#### Division No. 248]

[9.57 pm

#### AYES

Adams, Nigel  
 Afriyie, Adam  
 Aldous, Peter  
 Allan, Lucy  
 Allen, Heidi  
 Amess, Sir David  
 Andrew, Stuart  
 Ansell, Caroline  
 Argar, Edward  
 Atkins, Victoria  
 Bacon, Mr Richard  
 Baker, Mr Steve  
 Baldwin, Harriett  
 Barclay, Stephen  
 Baron, Mr John  
 Barwell, Gavin  
 Bebb, Guto  
 Bellingham, Sir Henry  
 Benyon, Richard  
 Beresford, Sir Paul  
 Berry, Jake  
 Berry, James  
 Bingham, Andrew  
 Blunt, Crispin  
 Bone, Mr Peter  
 Borwick, Victoria  
 Bottomley, Sir Peter  
 Bradley, Karen  
 Brady, Mr Graham  
 Brazier, Mr Julian  
 Brine, Steve  
 Brokenshire, rh James  
 Bruce, Fiona

Buckland, Robert  
 Burns, Conor  
 Burns, rh Sir Simon  
 Burrowes, Mr David  
 Burt, rh Alistair  
 Campbell, Mr Gregory  
 Carmichael, Neil  
 Cartledge, James  
 Cash, Sir William  
 Caulfield, Maria  
 Chalk, Alex  
 Chishti, Rehman  
 Chope, Mr Christopher  
 Churchill, Jo  
 Clark, rh Greg  
 Clarke, rh Mr Kenneth  
 Cleverly, James  
 Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey  
 Coffey, Dr Thérèse  
 Collins, Damian  
 Colville, Oliver  
 Costa, Alberto  
 Cox, Mr Geoffrey  
 Crabb, rh Stephen  
 Davies, Byron  
 Davies, Glyn  
 Davies, Mims  
 Davies, Philip  
 Dinéage, Caroline  
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan  
 Donelan, Michelle  
 Double, Steve  
 Dowden, Oliver

Doyle-Price, Jackie  
 Drax, Richard  
 Drummond, Mrs Flick  
 Duddridge, James  
 Duncan, rh Sir Alan  
 Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain  
 Dunne, Mr Philip  
 Elliott, Tom  
 Ellis, Michael  
 Ellison, Jane  
 Ellwood, Mr Tobias  
 Elphicke, Charlie  
 Eustice, George  
 Evans, Graham  
 Evans, Mr Nigel  
 Evennett, rh Mr David  
 Fabricant, Michael  
 Fallon, rh Michael  
 Fernandes, Suella  
 Field, rh Mark  
 Foster, Kevin  
 Fox, rh Dr Liam  
 Frazer, Lucy  
 Freeman, George  
 Freer, Mike  
 Fysh, Marcus  
 Gale, Sir Roger  
 Garnier, rh Sir Edward  
 Garnier, Mark  
 Gauke, Mr David  
 Ghani, Nusrat  
 Gibb, Mr Nick  
 Gillan, rh Mrs Cheryl  
 Glen, John  
 Goodwill, Mr Robert  
 Gove, rh Michael  
 Graham, Richard  
 Grant, Mrs Helen  
 Grayling, rh Chris  
 Green, Chris  
 Green, rh Damian  
 Grieve, rh Mr Dominic  
 Griffiths, Andrew  
 Gummer, Ben  
 Gyimah, Mr Sam  
 Halfon, rh Robert  
 Hall, Luke  
 Hammond, Stephen  
 Hancock, rh Matthew  
 Hands, rh Greg  
 Harper, rh Mr Mark  
 Harrington, Richard  
 Harris, Rebecca  
 Hart, Simon  
 Haselhurst, rh Sir Alan  
 Heald, Sir Oliver  
 Heappey, James  
 Heaton-Harris, Chris  
 Heaton-Jones, Peter  
 Henderson, Gordon  
 Herbert, rh Nick  
 Hinds, Damian  
 Hollobone, Mr Philip  
 Holloway, Mr Adam  
 Hopkins, Kris  
 Howarth, Sir Gerald  
 Howell, John  
 Howlett, Ben  
 Huddleston, Nigel  
 Hunt, rh Mr Jeremy  
 Hurd, Mr Nick  
 Jackson, Mr Stewart

Javid, rh Sajid  
 Jayawardena, Mr Ranil  
 Jenkin, Mr Bernard  
 Jenkyns, Andrea  
 Jenrick, Robert  
 Johnson, Boris  
 Johnson, Gareth  
 Johnson, Joseph  
 Jones, Andrew  
 Jones, rh Mr David  
 Jones, Mr Marcus  
 Kawczynski, Daniel  
 Kennedy, Seema  
 Kinahan, Danny  
 Kirby, Simon  
 Knight, rh Sir Greg  
 Knight, Julian  
 Kwarteng, Kwasi  
 Lancaster, Mark  
 Latham, Pauline  
 Leadsom, Andrea  
 Lee, Dr Phillip  
 Lefroy, Jeremy  
 Leigh, Sir Edward  
 Leslie, Charlotte  
 Letwin, rh Mr Oliver  
 Lewis, Brandon  
 Lewis, rh Dr Julian  
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian  
 Lidington, rh Mr David  
 Lilley, rh Mr Peter  
 Lopresti, Jack  
 Lord, Jonathan  
 Loughton, Tim  
 Lumley, Karen  
 Mackinlay, Craig  
 Mackintosh, David  
 Main, Mrs Anne  
 Mak, Mr Alan  
 Malthouse, Kit  
 Mann, Scott  
 Mathias, Dr Tania  
 May, rh Mrs Theresa  
 Maynard, Paul  
 McCartney, Jason  
 McCartney, Karl  
 McLoughlin, rh Mr Patrick  
 McPartland, Stephen  
 Menzies, Mark  
 Merriman, Huw  
 Metcalfe, Stephen  
 Miller, rh Mrs Maria  
 Milling, Amanda  
 Mills, Nigel  
 Milton, rh Anne  
 Mordaunt, Penny  
 Morgan, rh Nicky  
 Morris, Anne Marie  
 Morris, David  
 Morris, James  
 Morton, Wendy  
 Mowat, David  
 Murray, Mrs Sheryll  
 Murrison, Dr Andrew  
 Neill, Robert  
 Newton, Sarah  
 Nokes, Caroline  
 Norman, Jesse  
 Nuttall, Mr David  
 Offord, Dr Matthew  
 Opperman, Guy  
 Parish, Neil

Patel, rh Priti  
 Paterson, rh Mr Owen  
 Pawsey, Mark  
 Penning, rh Mike  
 Penrose, John  
 Percy, Andrew  
 Perry, Claire  
 Phillips, Stephen  
 Philp, Chris  
 Pickles, rh Sir Eric  
 Pincher, Christopher  
 Poulter, Dr Daniel  
 Pow, Rebecca  
 Prentis, Victoria  
 Prisk, Mr Mark  
 Pritchard, Mark  
 Pursglove, Tom  
 Quin, Jeremy  
 Quince, Will  
 Raab, Mr Dominic  
 Redwood, rh John  
 Rees-Mogg, Mr Jacob  
 Robertson, Mr Laurence  
 Robinson, Mary  
 Rosindell, Andrew  
 Rudd, rh Amber  
 Rutley, David  
 Sandbach, Antoinette  
 Scully, Paul  
 Selous, Andrew  
 Shapps, rh Grant  
 Sharma, Alok  
 Shelbrooke, Alec  
 Simpson, rh Mr Keith  
 Skidmore, Chris  
 Smith, Chloe  
 Smith, Henry  
 Smith, Julian  
 Smith, Royston  
 Soames, rh Sir Nicholas  
 Solloway, Amanda  
 Soubry, rh Anna  
 Spelman, rh Mrs Caroline  
 Spencer, Mark  
 Stephenson, Andrew  
 Stevenson, John  
 Stewart, Bob  
 Stewart, Iain

Stewart, Rory  
 Streeter, Mr Gary  
 Stride, Mel  
 Stuart, Graham  
 Sturdy, Julian  
 Sunak, Rishi  
 Swayne, rh Mr Desmond  
 Swire, rh Mr Hugo  
 Syms, Mr Robert  
 Thomas, Derek  
 Throup, Maggie  
 Timpson, Edward  
 Tolhurst, Kelly  
 Tomlinson, Justin  
 Tomlinson, Michael  
 Tracey, Craig  
 Tredinnick, David  
 Trevelyan, Mrs Anne-Marie  
 Truss, rh Elizabeth  
 Tugendhat, Tom  
 Turner, Mr Andrew  
 Tyrie, rh Mr Andrew  
 Vaizey, Mr Edward  
 Vara, Mr Shailesh  
 Vickers, Martin  
 Villiers, rh Mrs Theresa  
 Walker, Mr Charles  
 Walker, Mr Robin  
 Warburton, David  
 Warman, Matt  
 Watkinson, Dame Angela  
 Whately, Helen  
 Wheeler, Heather  
 White, Chris  
 Whittaker, Craig  
 Whittingdale, rh Mr John  
 Wiggin, Bill  
 Williams, Craig  
 Williamson, rh Gavin  
 Wilson, Mr Rob  
 Wollaston, Dr Sarah  
 Wood, Mike  
 Wragg, William  
 Wright, rh Jeremy

**Tellers for the Ayes:**  
**George Hollingbery and**  
**Margot James**

#### NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane  
 Abrahams, Debbie  
 Ahmed-Sheikh, Ms Tasmina  
 Alexander, Heidi  
 Ali, Rushanara  
 Allen, Mr Graham  
 Anderson, Mr David  
 Ashworth, Jonathan  
 Austin, Iain  
 Bailey, Mr Adrian  
 Bardell, Hannah  
 Barron, rh Kevin  
 Benn, rh Hilary  
 Black, Mhairi  
 Blackford, Iain  
 Blomfield, Paul  
 Boswell, Philip  
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben  
 Brennan, Kevin  
 Brock, Deidre  
 Brown, Lyn

Brown, rh Mr Nicholas  
 Bryant, Chris  
 Buck, Ms Karen  
 Burden, Richard  
 Burgon, Richard  
 Butler, Dawn  
 Byrne, rh Liam  
 Cadbury, Ruth  
 Cameron, Dr Lisa  
 Campbell, rh Mr Alan  
 Campbell, Mr Gregory  
 Campbell, Mr Ronnie  
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair  
 Chapman, Jenny  
 Cherry, Joanna  
 Clegg, rh Mr Nick  
 Coaker, Vernon  
 Coffey, Ann  
 Cooper, Julie  
 Cooper, rh Yvette  
 Corbyn, rh Jeremy

Cowan, Ronnie  
 Cox, Jo  
 Coyle, Neil  
 Crausby, Mr David  
 Crawley, Angela  
 Creasy, Stella  
 Cruddas, Jon  
 Cryer, John  
 Cummins, Judith  
 Cunningham, Alex  
 Cunningham, Mr Jim  
 Dakin, Nic  
 Danczuk, Simon  
 David, Wayne  
 Davies, Geraint  
 Day, Martyn  
 De Piero, Gloria  
 Debbonaire, Thangam  
 Docherty-Hughes, Martin  
 Donaldson, Stuart Blair  
 Doughty, Stephen  
 Dowd, Jim  
 Dowd, Peter  
 Dromey, Jack  
 Dugher, Michael  
 Durkan, Mark  
 Eagle, Ms Angela  
 Eagle, Maria  
 Edwards, Jonathan  
 Efford, Clive  
 Elliott, Julie  
 Ellman, Mrs Louise  
 Evans, Chris  
 Farrelly, Paul  
 Farron, Tim  
 Fellows, Marion  
 Ferrier, Margaret  
 Fitzpatrick, Jim  
 Ffello, Robert  
 Fletcher, Colleen  
 Flint, rh Caroline  
 Flynn, Paul  
 Fovargue, Yvonne  
 Foxcroft, Vicky  
 Gapes, Mike  
 Gardiner, Barry  
 Gethins, Stephen  
 Gibson, Patricia  
 Glass, Pat  
 Glindon, Mary  
 Godsiff, Mr Roger  
 Goodman, Helen  
 Grady, Patrick  
 Grant, Peter  
 Gray, Neil  
 Green, Kate  
 Greenwood, Lilian  
 Greenwood, Margaret  
 Griffith, Nia  
 Gwynne, Andrew  
 Haigh, Louise  
 Hamilton, Fabian  
 Hanson, rh Mr David  
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet  
 Harris, Carolyn  
 Hayes, Helen  
 Healey, rh John  
 Hendrick, Mr Mark  
 Hendry, Drew  
 Hepburn, Mr Stephen

Hermon, Lady  
 Hillier, Meg  
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret  
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon  
 Hoey, Kate  
 Hollern, Kate  
 Hopkins, Kelvin  
 Hosie, Stewart  
 Howarth, rh Mr George  
 Hunt, Tristram  
 Huq, Dr Rupa  
 Hussain, Imran  
 Jarvis, Dan  
 Johnson, Diana  
 Jones, Gerald  
 Jones, Graham  
 Jones, Helen  
 Jones, Susan Elan  
 Kane, Mike  
 Kaufman, rh Sir Gerald  
 Keeley, Barbara  
 Kendall, Liz  
 Kerevan, George  
 Kerr, Calum  
 Khan, rh Sadiq  
 Kinnock, Stephen  
 Kyle, Peter  
 Lamb, rh Norman  
 Lammy, rh Mr David  
 Lavery, Ian  
 Law, Chris  
 Leslie, Chris  
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma  
 Lewis, Clive  
 Long Bailey, Rebecca  
 Lucas, Caroline  
 Lucas, Ian C.  
 Lynch, Holly  
 MacNeil, Mr Angus Brendan  
 Mactaggart, rh Fiona  
 Madders, Justin  
 Mahmood, Mr Khalid  
 Mahmood, Shabana  
 Malhotra, Seema  
 Mann, John  
 Marris, Rob  
 Marsden, Mr Gordon  
 Maskell, Rachael  
 Matheson, Christian  
 Mc Nally, John  
 McCabe, Steve  
 McCaig, Callum  
 McCarthy, Kerry  
 McDonald, Andy  
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm  
 McDonald, Stuart C.  
 McDonnell, John  
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat  
 McGarry, Natalie  
 McGinn, Conor  
 McInnes, Liz  
 McKinnell, Catherine  
 McLaughlin, Anne  
 McMahan, Jim  
 Meale, Sir Alan  
 Mearns, Ian  
 Miliband, rh Edward  
 Monaghan, Carol  
 Monaghan, Dr Paul  
 Morden, Jessica

Morris, Grahame M.  
 Mulholland, Greg  
 Mullin, Roger  
 Murray, Ian  
 Nandy, Lisa  
 Newlands, Gavin  
 Nicolson, John  
 O'Hara, Brendan  
 Onn, Melanie  
 Onwurah, Chi  
 Osamor, Kate  
 Oswald, Kirsten  
 Paterson, Steven  
 Pearce, Teresa  
 Pennycook, Matthew  
 Perkins, Toby  
 Phillips, Jess  
 Phillipson, Bridget  
 Pound, Stephen  
 Powell, Lucy  
 Pugh, John  
 Qureshi, Yasmin  
 Rayner, Angela  
 Reed, Mr Jamie  
 Reed, Mr Steve  
 Rees, Christina  
 Reeves, Rachel  
 Reynolds, Emma  
 Reynolds, Jonathan  
 Rimmer, Marie  
 Robertson, rh Angus  
 Robinson, Mr Geoffrey  
 Ryan, rh Joan  
 Salmond, rh Alex  
 Shah, Naz  
 Sharma, Mr Virendra  
 Sheerman, Mr Barry  
 Sheppard, Tommy  
 Sherriff, Paula  
 Shuker, Mr Gavin  
 Skinner, Mr Dennis  
 Slaughter, Andy  
 Smith, rh Mr Andrew  
 Smith, Angela

Smith, Cat  
 Smith, Nick  
 Smith, Owen  
 Smyth, Karin  
 Starmer, Keir  
 Stephens, Chris  
 Stevens, Jo  
 Streeting, Wes  
 Stringer, Graham  
 Stuart, rh Ms Gisela  
 Tami, Mark  
 Thewliss, Alison  
 Thomas, Mr Gareth  
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick  
 Thompson, Owen  
 Thomson, Michelle  
 Thornberry, Emily  
 Timms, rh Stephen  
 Trickett, Jon  
 Turley, Anna  
 Twigg, Stephen  
 Umunna, Mr Chuka  
 Vaz, Valerie  
 Watson, Mr Tom  
 Weir, Mike  
 West, Catherine  
 Whiteford, Dr Eilidh  
 Whitehead, Dr Alan  
 Whitford, Dr Philippa  
 Williams, Hywel  
 Williams, Mr Mark  
 Wilson, Corri  
 Wilson, Phil  
 Winnick, Mr David  
 Winterton, rh Dame Rosie  
 Wishart, Pete  
 Woodcock, John  
 Wright, Mr Iain  
 Zeichner, Daniel

#### Tellers for the Noes:

Sue Hayman and  
 Jeff Smith

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Lords amendment 84 disagreed to.*

*Government amendment (a) made in lieu of Lords amendment 84.*

#### After Clause 31

#### GUIDANCE ON DETENTION OF VULNERABLE PERSONS

*Motion made, and Question put, That this House disagrees with Lords amendment 85.—(James Brokenshire.)*

*The House divided: Ayes 302, Noes 266.*

**Division No. 249]**

**[10.11 pm**

#### AYES

Adams, Nigel  
 Afriyie, Adam  
 Aldous, Peter  
 Allan, Lucy  
 Allen, Heidi  
 Amess, Sir David  
 Andrew, Stuart  
 Ansell, Caroline  
 Argar, Edward  
 Atkins, Victoria  
 Bacon, Mr Richard  
 Baker, Mr Steve  
 Baldwin, Harriett  
 Barclay, Stephen  
 Baron, Mr John  
 Barwell, Gavin  
 Bebb, Guto  
 Bellingham, Sir Henry

Benyon, Richard  
 Beresford, Sir Paul  
 Berry, Jake  
 Berry, James  
 Bingham, Andrew  
 Blunt, Crispin  
 Bone, Mr Peter  
 Borwick, Victoria  
 Bottomley, Sir Peter  
 Bradley, Karen  
 Brady, Mr Graham  
 Brazier, Mr Julian  
 Brine, Steve  
 Brokenshire, rh James  
 Bruce, Fiona  
 Buckland, Robert  
 Burns, Conor  
 Burns, rh Sir Simon  
 Burrowes, Mr David  
 Burt, rh Alistair  
 Carmichael, Neil  
 Cartlidge, James  
 Cash, Sir William  
 Caulfield, Maria  
 Chalk, Alex  
 Chishti, Rehman  
 Chope, Mr Christopher  
 Churchill, Jo  
 Clark, rh Greg  
 Clarke, rh Mr Kenneth  
 Cleverly, James  
 Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey  
 Coffey, Dr Thérèse  
 Collins, Damian  
 Colvile, Oliver  
 Costa, Alberto  
 Cox, Mr Geoffrey  
 Crabb, rh Stephen  
 Davies, Byron  
 Davies, Glyn  
 Davies, Mims  
 Davies, Philip  
 Dinenage, Caroline  
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan  
 Donelan, Michelle  
 Double, Steve  
 Dowden, Oliver  
 Doyle-Price, Jackie  
 Drax, Richard  
 Drummond, Mrs Flick  
 Duddridge, James  
 Duncan, rh Sir Alan  
 Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain  
 Dunne, Mr Philip  
 Elliott, Tom  
 Ellis, Michael  
 Ellison, Jane  
 Ellwood, Mr Tobias  
 Elphicke, Charlie  
 Eustice, George  
 Evans, Graham  
 Evans, Mr Nigel  
 Evennett, rh Mr David  
 Fabricant, Michael  
 Fallon, rh Michael  
 Fernandes, Suella  
 Field, rh Mark  
 Foster, Kevin  
 Fox, rh Dr Liam  
 Frazer, Lucy  
 Freeman, George  
 Freer, Mike

Fysh, Marcus  
 Gale, Sir Roger  
 Garnier, rh Sir Edward  
 Garnier, Mark  
 Gauke, Mr David  
 Ghani, Nusrat  
 Gibb, Mr Nick  
 Gillan, rh Mrs Cheryl  
 Glen, John  
 Goodwill, Mr Robert  
 Gove, rh Michael  
 Graham, Richard  
 Grant, Mrs Helen  
 Grayling, rh Chris  
 Green, Chris  
 Green, rh Damian  
 Grieve, rh Mr Dominic  
 Griffiths, Andrew  
 Gummer, Ben  
 Gyimah, Mr Sam  
 Halfon, rh Robert  
 Hall, Luke  
 Hammond, Stephen  
 Hancock, rh Matthew  
 Hands, rh Greg  
 Harper, rh Mr Mark  
 Harrington, Richard  
 Harris, Rebecca  
 Hart, Simon  
 Haselhurst, rh Sir Alan  
 Heald, Sir Oliver  
 Heapey, James  
 Heaton-Harris, Chris  
 Heaton-Jones, Peter  
 Henderson, Gordon  
 Herbert, rh Nick  
 Hinds, Damian  
 Hollobone, Mr Philip  
 Holloway, Mr Adam  
 Hopkins, Kris  
 Howarth, Sir Gerald  
 Howell, John  
 Howlett, Ben  
 Huddleston, Nigel  
 Hunt, rh Mr Jeremy  
 Hurd, Mr Nick  
 Jackson, Mr Stewart  
 Javid, rh Sajid  
 Jayawardena, Mr Ranil  
 Jenkin, Mr Bernard  
 Jenkyns, Andrea  
 Jenrick, Robert  
 Johnson, Boris  
 Johnson, Gareth  
 Johnson, Joseph  
 Jones, Andrew  
 Jones, rh Mr David  
 Jones, Mr Marcus  
 Kawczynski, Daniel  
 Kennedy, Seema  
 Kinahan, Danny  
 Kirby, Simon  
 Knight, rh Sir Greg  
 Knight, Julian  
 Kwarteng, Kwasi  
 Lancaster, Mark  
 Latham, Pauline  
 Leadsom, Andrea  
 Lee, Dr Phillip  
 Lefroy, Jeremy  
 Leigh, Sir Edward  
 Leslie, Charlotte

Letwin, rh Mr Oliver  
 Lewis, Brandon  
 Lewis, rh Dr Julian  
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian  
 Lidington, rh Mr David  
 Lilley, rh Mr Peter  
 Lopresti, Jack  
 Lord, Jonathan  
 Loughton, Tim  
 Lumley, Karen  
 Mackinlay, Craig  
 Mackintosh, David  
 Main, Mrs Anne  
 Mak, Mr Alan  
 Malthouse, Kit  
 Mann, Scott  
 Mathias, Dr Tania  
 May, rh Mrs Theresa  
 Maynard, Paul  
 McCartney, Jason  
 McCartney, Karl  
 McLoughlin, rh Mr Patrick  
 McPartland, Stephen  
 Menzies, Mark  
 Merriman, Huw  
 Metcalfe, Stephen  
 Miller, rh Mrs Maria  
 Milling, Amanda  
 Mills, Nigel  
 Milton, rh Anne  
 Mordaunt, Penny  
 Morgan, rh Nicky  
 Morris, Anne Marie  
 Morris, David  
 Morris, James  
 Morton, Wendy  
 Mowat, David  
 Murray, Mrs Sheryll  
 Murrison, Dr Andrew  
 Neill, Robert  
 Newton, Sarah  
 Nokes, Caroline  
 Norman, Jesse  
 Nuttall, Mr David  
 Offord, Dr Matthew  
 Opperman, Guy  
 Parish, Neil  
 Patel, rh Priti  
 Paterson, rh Mr Owen  
 Pawsey, Mark  
 Penning, rh Mike  
 Penrose, John  
 Percy, Andrew  
 Perry, Claire  
 Phillips, Stephen  
 Philp, Chris  
 Pickles, rh Sir Eric  
 Pincher, Christopher  
 Poulter, Dr Daniel  
 Pow, Rebecca  
 Prentis, Victoria  
 Prisk, Mr Mark  
 Pritchard, Mark  
 Pursglove, Tom  
 Quin, Jeremy  
 Quince, Will  
 Raab, Mr Dominic  
 Redwood, rh John  
 Rees-Mogg, Mr Jacob  
 Robertson, Mr Laurence  
 Robinson, Mary  
 Rosindell, Andrew

Rudd, rh Amber  
 Rutley, David  
 Sandbach, Antoinette  
 Scully, Paul  
 Selous, Andrew  
 Shannon, Jim  
 Shapps, rh Grant  
 Sharma, Alok  
 Shelbrooke, Alec  
 Simpson, rh Mr Keith  
 Skidmore, Chris  
 Smith, Chloe  
 Smith, Henry  
 Smith, Julian  
 Smith, Royston  
 Soames, rh Sir Nicholas  
 Solloway, Amanda  
 Soubry, rh Anna  
 Spelman, rh Mrs Caroline  
 Spencer, Mark  
 Stephenson, Andrew  
 Stevenson, John  
 Stewart, Bob  
 Stewart, Iain  
 Stewart, Rory  
 Streeter, Mr Gary  
 Stride, Mel  
 Stuart, Graham  
 Sturdy, Julian  
 Sunak, Rishi  
 Swayne, rh Mr Desmond  
 Swire, rh Mr Hugo  
 Syms, Mr Robert  
 Thomas, Derek  
 Throup, Maggie  
 Timpson, Edward  
 Tolhurst, Kelly  
 Tomlinson, Justin  
 Tomlinson, Michael  
 Tracey, Craig  
 Tredinnick, David  
 Trevelyan, Mrs Anne-Marie  
 Truss, rh Elizabeth  
 Tugendhat, Tom  
 Turner, Mr Andrew  
 Tyrie, rh Mr Andrew  
 Vaizey, Mr Edward  
 Vara, Mr Shailesh  
 Vickers, Martin  
 Villiers, rh Mrs Theresa  
 Walker, Mr Charles  
 Walker, Mr Robin  
 Warburton, David  
 Warman, Matt  
 Watkinson, Dame Angela  
 Whately, Helen  
 Wheeler, Heather  
 White, Chris  
 Whittaker, Craig  
 Whittingdale, rh Mr John  
 Wiggin, Bill  
 Williams, Craig  
 Williamson, rh Gavin  
 Wilson, Mr Rob  
 Wollaston, Dr Sarah  
 Wood, Mike  
 Wragg, William  
 Wright, rh Jeremy

**Tellers for the Ayes:**  
 Margot James and  
 George Hollingbery

## NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane  
 Abrahams, Debbie  
 Ahmed-Sheikh, Ms Tasmina  
 Ali, Rushanara  
 Allen, Mr Graham  
 Anderson, Mr David  
 Ashworth, Jonathan  
 Austin, Ian  
 Bailey, Mr Adrian  
 Bardell, Hannah  
 Barron, rh Kevin  
 Benn, rh Hilary  
 Black, Mhairi  
 Blackford, Ian  
 Blackman, Kirsty  
 Blomfield, Paul  
 Boswell, Philip  
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben  
 Brennan, Kevin  
 Brock, Deidre  
 Brown, Lyn  
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas  
 Bryant, Chris  
 Buck, Ms Karen  
 Burden, Richard  
 Burgon, Richard  
 Butler, Dawn  
 Byrne, rh Liam  
 Cadbury, Ruth  
 Cameron, Dr Lisa  
 Campbell, rh Mr Alan  
 Campbell, Mr Gregory  
 Campbell, Mr Ronnie  
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair  
 Chapman, Jenny  
 Cherry, Joanna  
 Clegg, rh Mr Nick  
 Clwyd, rh Ann  
 Coaker, Vernon  
 Coffey, Ann  
 Cooper, Julie  
 Cooper, rh Yvette  
 Corbyn, rh Jeremy  
 Cowan, Ronnie  
 Cox, Jo  
 Coyle, Neil  
 Crausby, Mr David  
 Crawley, Angela  
 Creasy, Stella  
 Cruddas, Jon  
 Cryer, John  
 Cummins, Judith  
 Cunningham, Alex  
 Cunningham, Mr Jim  
 Dakin, Nic  
 Danczuk, Simon  
 David, Wayne  
 Davies, Geraint  
 Day, Martyn  
 De Piero, Gloria  
 Debbonaire, Thangam  
 Docherty-Hughes, Martin  
 Donaldson, Stuart Blair  
 Doughty, Stephen  
 Dowd, Jim  
 Dowd, Peter  
 Dromey, Jack  
 Dugher, Michael  
 Durkan, Mark  
 Eagle, Ms Angela  
 Eagle, Maria

Edwards, Jonathan  
 Efford, Clive  
 Elliott, Julie  
 Ellman, Mrs Louise  
 Evans, Chris  
 Farrelly, Paul  
 Farron, Tim  
 Fellows, Marion  
 Ferrier, Margaret  
 Fitzpatrick, Jim  
 Ffello, Robert  
 Fletcher, Colleen  
 Flint, rh Caroline  
 Flynn, Paul  
 Fovargue, Yvonne  
 Foxcroft, Vicky  
 Fuller, Richard  
 Gapes, Mike  
 Gardiner, Barry  
 Gethins, Stephen  
 Gibson, Patricia  
 Glass, Pat  
 Glindon, Mary  
 Godsiff, Mr Roger  
 Goodman, Helen  
 Grady, Patrick  
 Grant, Peter  
 Gray, Neil  
 Green, Kate  
 Greenwood, Lilian  
 Greenwood, Margaret  
 Griffith, Nia  
 Gwynne, Andrew  
 Haigh, Louise  
 Hamilton, Fabian  
 Hanson, rh Mr David  
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet  
 Harris, Carolyn  
 Hayes, Helen  
 Healey, rh John  
 Hendrick, Mr Mark  
 Hendry, Drew  
 Hepburn, Mr Stephen  
 Hermon, Lady  
 Hillier, Meg  
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret  
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon  
 Hoey, Kate  
 Hollern, Kate  
 Hopkins, Kelvin  
 Hosie, Stewart  
 Howarth, rh Mr George  
 Hunt, Tristram  
 Huq, Dr Rupa  
 Hussain, Imran  
 Jarvis, Dan  
 Johnson, Diana  
 Jones, Gerald  
 Jones, Graham  
 Jones, Helen  
 Jones, Susan Elan  
 Kane, Mike  
 Kaufman, rh Sir Gerald  
 Keeley, Barbara  
 Kendall, Liz  
 Kerevan, George  
 Kerr, Calum  
 Khan, rh Sadiq  
 Kinnock, Stephen  
 Kyle, Peter  
 Lamb, rh Norman

Lammy, rh Mr David  
 Lavery, Ian  
 Law, Chris  
 Leslie, Chris  
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma  
 Lewis, Clive  
 Long Bailey, Rebecca  
 Lucas, Caroline  
 Lucas, Ian C.  
 Lynch, Holly  
 MacNeil, Mr Angus Brendan  
 Madders, Justin  
 Mahmood, Mr Khalid  
 Mahmood, Shabana  
 Malhotra, Seema  
 Mann, John  
 Marris, Rob  
 Marsden, Mr Gordon  
 Maskell, Rachael  
 Matheson, Christian  
 Mc Nally, John  
 McCabe, Steve  
 McCaig, Callum  
 McCarthy, Kerry  
 McDonald, Andy  
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm  
 McDonald, Stuart C.  
 McDonnell, John  
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat  
 McGarry, Natalie  
 McGinn, Conor  
 McInnes, Liz  
 McKinnell, Catherine  
 McLaughlin, Anne  
 McMahan, Jim  
 Meale, Sir Alan  
 Mearns, Ian  
 Miliband, rh Edward  
 Monaghan, Carol  
 Monaghan, Dr Paul  
 Morden, Jessica  
 Morris, Grahame M.  
 Mulholland, Greg  
 Mullin, Roger  
 Murray, Ian  
 Nandy, Lisa  
 Newlands, Gavin  
 Nicolson, John  
 O'Hara, Brendan  
 Onn, Melanie  
 Onwurah, Chi  
 Osamor, Kate  
 Oswald, Kirsten  
 Paterson, Steven  
 Pearce, Teresa  
 Pennycook, Matthew  
 Perkins, Toby  
 Phillips, Jess  
 Pound, Stephen  
 Powell, Lucy  
 Pugh, John  
 Qureshi, Yasmin  
 Rayner, Angela  
 Reed, Mr Jamie

Reed, Mr Steve  
 Rees, Christina  
 Reeves, Rachel  
 Reynolds, Emma  
 Reynolds, Jonathan  
 Rimmer, Marie  
 Robertson, rh Angus  
 Robinson, Mr Geoffrey  
 Ryan, rh Joan  
 Salmond, rh Alex  
 Shah, Naz  
 Shannon, Jim  
 Sharma, Mr Virendra  
 Sheerman, Mr Barry  
 Sheppard, Tommy  
 Sherriff, Paula  
 Shuker, Mr Gavin  
 Skinner, Mr Dennis  
 Slaughter, Andy  
 Smith, rh Mr Andrew  
 Smith, Angela  
 Smith, Cat  
 Smith, Nick  
 Smith, Owen  
 Smyth, Karin  
 Starmer, Keir  
 Stephens, Chris  
 Stevens, Jo  
 Streeting, Wes  
 Stringer, Graham  
 Stuart, rh Ms Gisela  
 Tami, Mark  
 Thewliss, Alison  
 Thomas, Mr Gareth  
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick  
 Thompson, Owen  
 Thomson, Michelle  
 Thornberry, Emily  
 Timms, rh Stephen  
 Trickett, Jon  
 Turley, Anna  
 Twigg, Stephen  
 Umunna, Mr Chuka  
 Vaz, Valerie  
 Watson, Mr Tom  
 Weir, Mike  
 West, Catherine  
 Whiteford, Dr Eilidh  
 Whitehead, Dr Alan  
 Whitford, Dr Philippa  
 Williams, Hywel  
 Williams, Mr Mark  
 Wilson, Corri  
 Wilson, Phil  
 Winnick, Mr David  
 Winterton, rh Dame Rosie  
 Wishart, Pete  
 Woodcock, John  
 Wright, Mr Iain  
 Zeichner, Daniel

**Tellers for the Noes:**

**Sue Hayman and  
 Jeff Smith**

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Lords amendment 85 disagreed to.*

*Government amendments (a) and (b) made in lieu of  
 Lords amendment 85.*

### After Clause 12

ASYLUM SEEKERS: PERMISSION TO WORK AFTER SIX MONTHS

*Motion made, and Question put, That this House disagrees with Lords amendment 59.—(James Brokenshire.)*

*The House divided: Ayes 303, Noes 60.*

**Division No. 250]**

**[10.24 pm**

#### AYES

Adams, Nigel  
 Afriyie, Adam  
 Aldous, Peter  
 Allan, Lucy  
 Allen, Heidi  
 Amess, Sir David  
 Andrew, Stuart  
 Ansell, Caroline  
 Argar, Edward  
 Atkins, Victoria  
 Bacon, Mr Richard  
 Baker, Mr Steve  
 Baldwin, Harriett  
 Barclay, Stephen  
 Baron, Mr John  
 Barwell, Gavin  
 Bebb, Guto  
 Bellingham, Sir Henry  
 Benyon, Richard  
 Beresford, Sir Paul  
 Berry, Jake  
 Berry, James  
 Bingham, Andrew  
 Blunt, Crispin  
 Bone, Mr Peter  
 Borwick, Victoria  
 Bottomley, Sir Peter  
 Bradley, Karen  
 Brady, Mr Graham  
 Brazier, Mr Julian  
 Brine, Steve  
 Brokenshire, rh James  
 Bruce, Fiona  
 Buckland, Robert  
 Burns, Conor  
 Burns, rh Sir Simon  
 Burrowes, Mr David  
 Burt, rh Alistair  
 Campbell, Mr Gregory  
 Carmichael, Neil  
 Cartlidge, James  
 Cash, Sir William  
 Caulfield, Maria  
 Chalk, Alex  
 Chishti, Rehman  
 Chope, Mr Christopher  
 Churchill, Jo  
 Clark, rh Greg  
 Clarke, rh Mr Kenneth  
 Cleverly, James  
 Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey  
 Coffey, Dr Thérèse  
 Collins, Damian  
 Colvile, Oliver  
 Costa, Alberto  
 Cox, Mr Geoffrey  
 Crabb, rh Stephen  
 Davies, Byron  
 Davies, Glyn  
 Davies, Mims

Davies, Philip  
 Dinenage, Caroline  
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan  
 Donelan, Michelle  
 Double, Steve  
 Dowden, Oliver  
 Doyle-Price, Jackie  
 Drax, Richard  
 Drummond, Mrs Flick  
 Duddridge, James  
 Duncan, rh Sir Alan  
 Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain  
 Dunne, Mr Philip  
 Elliott, Tom  
 Ellis, Michael  
 Ellison, Jane  
 Ellwood, Mr Tobias  
 Elphicke, Charlie  
 Eustice, George  
 Evans, Graham  
 Evans, Mr Nigel  
 Evennett, rh Mr David  
 Fabricant, Michael  
 Fallon, rh Michael  
 Fernandes, Suella  
 Field, rh Mark  
 Foster, Kevin  
 Fox, rh Dr Liam  
 Frazer, Lucy  
 Freeman, George  
 Freer, Mike  
 Fysh, Marcus  
 Gale, Sir Roger  
 Garnier, rh Sir Edward  
 Garnier, Mark  
 Gauke, Mr David  
 Ghani, Nusrat  
 Gibb, Mr Nick  
 Gillan, rh Mrs Cheryl  
 Glen, John  
 Goodwill, Mr Robert  
 Gove, rh Michael  
 Graham, Richard  
 Grant, Mrs Helen  
 Grayling, rh Chris  
 Green, Chris  
 Green, rh Damian  
 Grieve, rh Mr Dominic  
 Griffiths, Andrew  
 Gummer, Ben  
 Gyimah, Mr Sam  
 Halfon, rh Robert  
 Hall, Luke  
 Hammond, Stephen  
 Hancock, rh Matthew  
 Hands, rh Greg  
 Harper, rh Mr Mark  
 Harrington, Richard  
 Harris, Rebecca  
 Hart, Simon

Haselhurst, rh Sir Alan  
 Heald, Sir Oliver  
 Heapey, James  
 Heaton-Harris, Chris  
 Heaton-Jones, Peter  
 Henderson, Gordon  
 Herbert, rh Nick  
 Hinds, Damian  
 Hollobone, Mr Philip  
 Holloway, Mr Adam  
 Hopkins, Kris  
 Howarth, Sir Gerald  
 Howell, John  
 Howlett, Ben  
 Huddleston, Nigel  
 Hunt, rh Mr Jeremy  
 Hurd, Mr Nick  
 Jackson, Mr Stewart  
 Javid, rh Sajid  
 Jayawardena, Mr Ranil  
 Jenkin, Mr Bernard  
 Jenkyns, Andrea  
 Jenrick, Robert  
 Johnson, Boris  
 Johnson, Gareth  
 Johnson, Joseph  
 Jones, Andrew  
 Jones, rh Mr David  
 Jones, Mr Marcus  
 Kawczynski, Daniel  
 Kennedy, Seema  
 Kinahan, Danny  
 Kirby, Simon  
 Knight, rh Sir Greg  
 Knight, Julian  
 Kwarteng, Kwasi  
 Lancaster, Mark  
 Latham, Pauline  
 Leadsom, Andrea  
 Lee, Dr Phillip  
 Lefroy, Jeremy  
 Leigh, Sir Edward  
 Leslie, Charlotte  
 Letwin, rh Mr Oliver  
 Lewis, Brandon  
 Lewis, rh Dr Julian  
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian  
 Lidington, rh Mr David  
 Lilley, rh Mr Peter  
 Lopresti, Jack  
 Lord, Jonathan  
 Loughton, Tim  
 Lumley, Karen  
 Mackinlay, Craig  
 Mackintosh, David  
 Main, Mrs Anne  
 Mak, Mr Alan  
 Malthouse, Kit  
 Mann, Scott  
 Mathias, Dr Tania  
 May, rh Mrs Theresa  
 Maynard, Paul  
 McCartney, Jason  
 McCartney, Karl  
 McLoughlin, rh Mr Patrick  
 McPartland, Stephen  
 Menzies, Mark  
 Merriman, Huw  
 Metcalfe, Stephen  
 Miller, rh Mrs Maria  
 Milling, Amanda  
 Mills, Nigel

Milton, rh Anne  
 Mordaunt, Penny  
 Morgan, rh Nicky  
 Morris, Anne Marie  
 Morris, David  
 Morris, James  
 Morton, Wendy  
 Mowat, David  
 Murray, Mrs Sheryll  
 Murrison, Dr Andrew  
 Neill, Robert  
 Newton, Sarah  
 Nokes, Caroline  
 Norman, Jesse  
 Nuttall, Mr David  
 Offord, Dr Matthew  
 Opperman, Guy  
 Parish, Neil  
 Patel, rh Priti  
 Paterson, rh Mr Owen  
 Pawsey, Mark  
 Penning, rh Mike  
 Penrose, John  
 Percy, Andrew  
 Perry, Claire  
 Phillips, Stephen  
 Philp, Chris  
 Pickles, rh Sir Eric  
 Pincher, Christopher  
 Poulter, Dr Daniel  
 Pow, Rebecca  
 Prentis, Victoria  
 Prisk, Mr Mark  
 Pritchard, Mark  
 Pursglove, Tom  
 Quin, Jeremy  
 Quince, Will  
 Raab, Mr Dominic  
 Redwood, rh John  
 Rees-Mogg, Mr Jacob  
 Robertson, Mr Laurence  
 Robinson, Mary  
 Rosindell, Andrew  
 Rudd, rh Amber  
 Rutley, David  
 Sandbach, Antoinette  
 Scully, Paul  
 Selous, Andrew  
 Shannon, Jim  
 Shapps, rh Grant  
 Sharma, Alok  
 Shelbrooke, Alec  
 Simpson, rh Mr Keith  
 Skidmore, Chris  
 Smith, Chloe  
 Smith, Henry  
 Smith, Julian  
 Smith, Royston  
 Soames, rh Sir Nicholas  
 Solloway, Amanda  
 Soubry, rh Anna  
 Spelman, rh Mrs Caroline  
 Spencer, Mark  
 Stephenson, Andrew  
 Stevenson, John  
 Stewart, Bob  
 Stewart, Iain  
 Stewart, Rory  
 Streeter, Mr Gary  
 Stride, Mel  
 Stuart, Graham  
 Sturdy, Julian



Sunak, Rishi  
 Swayne, rh Mr Desmond  
 Swire, rh Mr Hugo  
 Syms, Mr Robert  
 Thomas, Derek  
 Throup, Maggie  
 Timpson, Edward  
 Tolhurst, Kelly  
 Tomlinson, Justin  
 Tomlinson, Michael  
 Tracey, Craig  
 Tredinnick, David  
 Trevelyan, Mrs Anne-Marie  
 Truss, rh Elizabeth  
 Tugendhat, Tom  
 Turner, Mr Andrew  
 Tyrie, rh Mr Andrew  
 Vaizey, Mr Edward  
 Vara, Mr Shailesh  
 Vickers, Martin  
 Villiers, rh Mrs Theresa

Walker, Mr Charles  
 Walker, Mr Robin  
 Warburton, David  
 Warman, Matt  
 Watkinson, Dame Angela  
 Whately, Helen  
 Wheeler, Heather  
 White, Chris  
 Whittaker, Craig  
 Whittingdale, rh Mr John  
 Wiggin, Bill  
 Williams, Craig  
 Williamson, rh Gavin  
 Wilson, Mr Rob  
 Wollaston, Dr Sarah  
 Wood, Mike  
 Wragg, William  
 Wright, rh Jeremy

**Tellers for the Ayes:**  
**George Hollingbery and**  
**Margot James**

#### NOES

Ahmed-Sheikh, Ms Tasmina  
 Bardell, Hannah  
 Black, Mhairi  
 Blackford, Ian  
 Blackman, Kirsty  
 Boswell, Philip  
 Brock, Deidre  
 Cameron, Dr Lisa  
 Campbell, Mr Gregory  
 Cherry, Joanna  
 Cowan, Ronnie  
 Crawley, Angela  
 Day, Martyn  
 Docherty-Hughes, Martin  
 Donaldson, Stuart Blair  
 Durkan, Mark  
 Edwards, Jonathan  
 Farron, Tim  
 Ferrier, Margaret  
 Gethins, Stephen  
 Gibson, Patricia  
 Grady, Patrick  
 Grant, Peter  
 Gray, Neil  
 Hendry, Drew  
 Hosie, Stewart  
 Kerevan, George  
 Kerr, Calum  
 Lamb, rh Norman  
 Law, Chris  
 Lucas, Caroline  
 MacNeil, Mr Angus Brendan

Mc Nally, John  
 McCaig, Callum  
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm  
 McDonald, Stuart C.  
 McGarry, Natalie  
 McLaughlin, Anne  
 Monaghan, Carol  
 Monaghan, Dr Paul  
 Mulholland, Greg  
 Mullin, Roger  
 Newlands, Gavin  
 Nicolson, John  
 O'Hara, Brendan  
 Oswald, Kirsten  
 Paterson, Steven  
 Robertson, rh Angus  
 Salmond, rh Alex  
 Shannon, Jim  
 Sheppard, Tommy  
 Stephens, Chris  
 Thewliss, Alison  
 Thompson, Owen  
 Thomson, Michelle  
 Whiteford, Dr Eilidh  
 Whitford, Dr Philippa  
 Williams, Hywel  
 Wilson, Corri  
 Wishart, Pete

**Tellers for the Noes:**  
**Mike Weir and**  
**Marion Fellows**

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Lords amendment 59 disagreed to.*

*Lords amendments 1 to 58, 61 to 83, 86 and 88 to 254 agreed to, with Commons financial privileges waived in respect of Lords amendments 1, 11 to 13, 15 to 18, 24, 25, 27 to 45, 89, 117, 121, 125, 126, 158, 166, 227, 229, 235, 237, 239 and 243.*

**Mrs Helen Grant:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker. I would like to declare an interest as a trustee of the Human Trafficking Foundation, which I should have

done prior to my earlier intervention. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to make that clear now.

**Mr Speaker:** I am extremely grateful to the hon. Lady for her characteristic grace and courtesy in raising that point of order. Her interest, of course, is a non-pecuniary one. Nevertheless, it is most prudent to declare it. I am sure that the House will appreciate the fact that she has now done so.

*Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 83H),* That a Committee be appointed to draw up Reasons to be assigned to the Lords for disagreeing to their amendments 59, 60 and 87;

That James Brokenshire, Charlie Elphicke, Rebecca Harris, Sue Hayman, Stuart C. McDonald, Keir Starmer and Craig Whittaker be members of the Committee;

That James Brokenshire be the Chair of the Committee;

That three be the quorum of the Committee;

That the Committee do withdraw immediately.—(*Charlie Elphicke.*)

*Question agreed to.*

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

## Business without Debate

### DELEGATED LEGISLATION

*Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),*

#### LIMITED LIABILITY PARTNERSHIPS

That the draft Limited Liability Partnerships, Partnerships and Groups (Accounts and Audit) Regulations 2016, which were laid before this House on 7 March, be approved.—(*Gavin Barwell.*)

*Question agreed to.*

*Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),*

#### IMMIGRATION

That the draft Immigration (Leave to Enter and Remain) (Amendment) Order 2016, which was laid before this House on 15 March, be approved.—(*Gavin Barwell.*)

*Question agreed to.*

*Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),*

#### EDUCATION

That the draft Education (Repeal of Arrangements for Vocational Qualifications Awarded or Authenticated in Northern Ireland) Order 2016, which was laid before this House on 11 March, be approved.—(*Gavin Barwell.*)

*Question agreed to.*

## WELSH AFFAIRS

*Ordered,*

That Antoinette Sandbach be discharged from the Welsh Affairs Committee and Glyn Davies be added.—(*Bill Wiggin, on behalf of the Committee of Selection.*)

## Nepal Earthquake: First Anniversary

*Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—(Gavin Barwell.)*

10.39 pm

**Mr Gareth Thomas** (Harrow West) (Lab/Co-op): Nepal is one of the most beautiful countries in the world, and it has deep and long-established links to the United Kingdom. The Himalayas, Everest and the continuing story of the sacrifice and courage of the Gurkhas hides a deeper truth about the fragility of life for many Nepalese people. Some 7 million to 8 million people out of Nepal's population of 19 million live in absolute poverty. Malnutrition rates in Nepal are among the highest in the world. More than 2 million people in Nepal do not have access to a safe water supply, and more than half the population do not have access to a proper toilet. Many families see their menfolk forced to migrate for some of each year—usually, but not always, to India—to earn a living for their families as incomes are simply too low in Nepal.

At midday on Saturday 25 April 2015, an earthquake struck Barpak in the historic district of Gorkha, about 76 km north-west of Kathmandu. More than 300 aftershocks—four of them registering over 6.0 on the Richter scale, including one measuring 6.8—followed. Almost 9,000 people were killed and 23,000 injured. One million homes were destroyed, and an estimated one third of the population of Nepal has been impacted by the earthquake. Some 31 of the country's 75 districts have been affected, with 14 declared crisis-hit, and another 17 partially affected.

**Jim Shannon** (Strangford) (DUP): I asked the hon. Gentleman earlier whether it would be okay to intervene on him, and I thank him for allowing me to do so. He mentions the homes that were destroyed and the people who died. Some £2.87 billion has been set aside by a number of countries to help the rebuilding work, but none of that has been spent yet. Does he share my concern, and the concern of those in this House and those outside it, that not £1 of the £2.87 billion set aside has yet been spent? Is it not time that the Government and the Nepalese Government together ensured that the money is spent, houses rebuilt and people sorted out?

**Mr Thomas:** I want to come in a few moments specifically to the issue of money that has been pledged for reconstruction, but which has not actually been committed.

**Stephen Pound** (Ealing North) (Lab): On that point, my hon. Friend will be aware that, within days of the earthquake striking, Rotary International delivered to Nepal a huge number of shelter boxes, which was the first western aid to reach Nepal. The Rotarians, particularly those in Ealing and Greenford, seldom get thanked for that. Will he take the opportunity of doing so this evening?

**Mr Thomas:** Absolutely. I am very aware of my hon. Friend's support for the excellent work Rotary International does, not just in Ealing if he will forgive me for saying so, but in many constituencies, including mine. I want to touch on its reaction, along with that of other non-governmental organisations, in a few moments.

**Sir Gerald Howarth** (Aldershot) (Con): I endorse everything that the hon. Gentleman has said. The Rushmoor Rotary and the Farnborough Rotary moved into action immediately to raise money on the streets of Aldershot and Farnborough. As he knows, I have 10,000 Nepalese in my constituency. The response from the local community was fantastic, as was that of the Nepalese community itself. Kapil Rijal, who is a dentist in my constituency, not only has raised money but has gone out to Nepal and is actually spending the money on reconstruction work. Whatever the Government are failing to do, the private sector is doing some good work.

**Mr Thomas:** I echo the tribute the hon. Gentleman pays to the people in his constituency who have donated to the earthquake appeal. Many people across the UK, not least because of their awareness of the contribution that the Gurkhas have made to the British Army down the years, were very generous in their support for the response to the earthquake. I suspect they share the concern, which I suspect is shared across the House, at the slow pace of reconstruction.

When the earthquake struck, residential and Government buildings were destroyed, and schools, health centres, roads, bridges, water and hydropower supplies were all affected in many areas. In the worst hit areas, entire settlements were swept away by landslides and avalanches triggered by the earthquake. Hundreds of historical and cultural monuments at least a century old were either destroyed or badly damaged.

The damage exposed the weaknesses of homes that did not have any seismic-resistant features or had not been built in line with proper building codes. Poorer rural areas were hardest hit owing to the inferior quality of the homes. More women and girls died than men and boys. The death toll, bad enough as it was, could have been much worse. As it was the weekly holiday—Saturday—schools were shut, and considering that nearly 7,000 schools were completely or significantly destroyed, there could have been a far heavier loss of children.

As it is, the earthquake and the many aftershocks have had a profound impact on the Nepalese people. Twelve months on, the consequences of the earthquake are becoming clearer, and the pace—or rather lack of pace—of reconstruction is a major concern.

**Roger Mullin** (Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath) (SNP): I thank the hon. Gentleman for securing this fine debate. Two of my constituents, Thomas and Elke Weston, have very strong links with the Tibetan Buddhist community in Nepal, and over the past year they have taught me a great deal about the work that local charities are doing. They have not been slow to put in the effort and put in their money. Does the hon. Gentleman agree that at this time, not least given the imminent monsoon period, we need to encourage all local charities, as well as Governments, to assist?

**Mr Thomas:** I join the hon. Gentleman in paying tribute to the many charities, small and large, that have assisted. I want to draw particular attention to the contribution that many from Britain made to the search and rescue effort once reports of the earthquake had become clear, and to pay tribute to the work of NGOs such as the excellent Oxfam, Save the Children, VSO

and Christian Aid, which have responded. CAFOD is another strong example of an international NGO operating in Nepal.

**Seema Malhotra** (Feltham and Heston) (Lab/Co-op): This is indeed a very important day to remember what happened last year. A few weeks ago, I visited Nepal with my constituent Bishnu Gurung, who raised a significant amount of funds in Hounslow, along with fellow Councillor Hanif Khan, to support the work of Humanity First. Does my hon. Friend agree that, as well as looking at the reconstruction, it is absolutely vital to rebuild the economy of Nepal—its GDP growth dropped to about 1.5% rather than the forecast 4%—and we need to do much more to open up trade relations and to build Britain-Nepal trade opportunities?

**Mr Thomas:** My hon. Friend makes a good point about trade links. Encouraging economic growth within Nepal was important before the earthquake, given the fragility of life for many Nepalese people, but it is particularly urgent now in the wake of the earthquake. World Bank and Government of Nepal analysts estimate that the total cost of the damage from the earthquake is roughly \$7 billion, or 706 billion Nepalese rupees.

With the exception of the Kathmandu valley, the central and western regions that have been affected by the earthquake are essentially rural and heavily dependent on agriculture. The quake destroyed the stockpile of stored grains and killed almost 60,000 farm animals. These districts have tended to see larger numbers of households reliant on livestock as their main, or one of their main, sources of income. The widespread loss of that livestock has caused a severe income shock in the short term for many already very poor families. Sadly, inevitably for vulnerable families with fewer assets, limited access to economic resources and a lack of alternative livelihoods, there is a heightened risk of sexual and gender-based violence, human trafficking, child marriage, and child labour. Indeed, I have had representations from Nepalese constituents of mine worried about an increase in the trafficking of young earthquake victims.

If a major earthquake was not tough enough on its own for a country to negotiate, there has been a major cross-party effort to agree a new federal constitution for Nepal. That was finally agreed in January, but it led to a 135-day unofficial blockade of food and fuel across the India-Nepal border, which has made the reconstruction effort even more difficult. It would be helpful to hear the Minister's assessment of the level of political stability in Nepal and the strength, or otherwise, of its relationships with its two big neighbours. The tensions have, I understand, eased recently. Crucially, the Nepal Reconstruction Authority has been established, which began its work on 16 January.

**Mr Virendra Sharma** (Ealing, Southall) (Lab): I congratulate my hon. Friend on securing this timely debate, one year after the disaster happened. As hon. Members have said, many faith groups and other charity organisations have raised funds and contributed their knowledge and know-how to help to rebuild the country. Does he agree that tourism, which was the main source of income, was also affected by the earthquake disaster? This is the right time for the Government and other institutions to learn from the disaster that investment in building resilience against future disasters should increase from 6% to 10% of humanitarian aid.

**Mr Thomas:** My hon. Friend is absolutely right to say that we need to do what we can in the UK to support the Nepalese authorities to build back better. I will come on to his point about the proportion of humanitarian aid that is used to support countries to become more resistant to earthquakes.

I want to touch on comments made by Sushil Gyawali, the chief executive of the NRA, on his appointment in January. He made it clear that the real task of reconstruction and rehabilitation could begin only in mid-April—about now—because a detailed damage assessment and a full list of genuine victims were needed to formulate a national action plan. Although emergency relief eventually reached most people, thanks to a combination of Government, aid donors and NGO efforts, as colleagues have made clear, the next stage of rebuilding and long-term reconstruction has barely begun.

There is a series of concerns about why we are in the state we are in, which I want to put to the Minister. In doing so, let me first acknowledge the considerable ongoing support—£70 million, I understand, and counting—that the Department for International Development has provided, and the personal interest the Secretary of State and her ministerial team have taken in the earthquake response.

The NRA is reportedly heavily understaffed, and the village development committees with which the NRA needs to work at local level in the affected areas often struggle to recruit enough people of sufficient calibre to co-ordinate the considerable work that is required. Some reports suggest that as many as 75% of positions at the NRA are not yet filled. What is the Minister's assessment of the progress that has been made in staffing the NRA and village development committees, and in the preparation of a detailed damage assessment? Has the Department placed, or at least offered to place, people in the NRA to help to build its capacity?

I understand that, as the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath (Roger Mullin) made clear in his intervention, hundreds of thousands of people are bracing themselves for their second monsoon season in temporary shelters, because the Nepalese Government have admitted that they will not be able to finish, or in many cases even to begin, the construction of permanent housing in many districts before the rains hit. Does the Minister share that assessment? If so, what steps is the Department taking to support families in temporary shelters to prepare again for the monsoon season?

At last year's donor conference, international donors pledged, I understand, some \$4.1 billion for reconstruction, of which only \$1 billion has been committed. Does the Minister recognise those figures? If he does, what further action can the Department take to galvanise agreements between donors such as the World Bank, India, China, the Asian Development Bank, the European Commission and the Japan International Cooperation Agency with the Nepalese NRA to help to speed up the financing of the rebuilding process? Given the lack of an ongoing media profile for Nepal's reconstruction challenge, and the concern about whether aid pledges will actually materialise, is it now time for Britain to help Nepal to convene, through the UN, a friends of Nepal group of countries to help maintain the political will and so turn the aid pledges of last year into actual aid commitments, and then homes on the ground?

Some NGOs have complained that they have been prevented from building new homes that do not fit with

[Mr Gareth Thomas]

NRA rules and designs for future earthquake-resistant homes. I understand the need for strong co-ordination and enforcement of sensible planning rules, but again I would welcome the Minister's assessment of the extent to which those difficulties have been ironed out.

The scale of reconstruction activity needed provides an opportunity to challenge some of the long-term social problems in Nepal and, for example, ensure rebuilding programmes are inclusive of women and those who are landless—some of the poorest and most marginalised people in the country.

**Fiona Bruce** (Congleton) (Con): I thank the hon. Gentleman for bringing forward this debate. Does he agree that it is critical for the longer-term sustainable redevelopment of Nepal that local democratic institutions—locally elected councils and provisional councils—are put in place and that the UK Government are uniquely placed to support that through their local governance programme?

**Mr Thomas:** I share the hon. Lady's view. As I understand it, the village development committees that I alluded to fulfil that role, and there are real concerns about the staff available to those committees. As I said earlier, it would be good to hear the Minister's assessment of their effectiveness.

Women in Nepal have traditionally had limited land rights and access to entitlements. Recent new legislation and policies have begun to change that, but entrenched culture can mean that although policy might be good in principle it does not actually change things on the ground. NGOs, including Oxfam, have put it to me that the lack of rights and access to land ownership faced by many women in Nepal have been exacerbated by the earthquake, as their lack of documentation, or the fact that they are not named on documentation, means they have to rely on local advocates to put their case forward to the authorities. Similar issues affect those who are landless. It would be good to hear how the Minister's Department is thinking through those issues and responding to them on the ground.

The Minister will know that shortly after the earthquake the International Development Committee raised a series of concerns about corruption in Nepal. What is his assessment of the progress being made to tackle those issues?

Lastly, I would welcome hearing from the Minister about the extent to which donors and the Nepalese Government are planning for future possible earthquakes and other national disasters in their reconstruction work. As my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Southall (Mr Sharma) made clear, Christian Aid argues that investment in building resilience to future disasters needs to increase from 6% to 10% of humanitarian aid. Will the Minister comment on that point?

I was lucky to visit Nepal as a Minister in the Department for International Development; I am lucky now, as a constituency MP, to have a strong, articulate Nepalese community who are proud to be British, but proud too of their Nepalese roots. They look to us as Nepal's oldest friend to stay with them on the journey of reconstruction, and I look forward to the Minister's response.

10.58 pm

**The Minister of State, Department for International Development (Mr Desmond Swayne):** I thank the hon. Member for Harrow West (Mr Thomas) for bringing this issue to the House in such a timely fashion, on the anniversary of the earthquake. I will endeavour to deal with the issues he has raised in the short time available, but first I want to emphasise the success of the relief effort. We have already heard about the tremendous interventions by, for example, Rotary International. The response to the Disasters Emergency Committee was tremendous—DEC raised £85 million. In addition to all that fundraising, through a number of independent organisations, I anticipate that the contribution from British people's own pockets was in excess of £100 million; we should add to that the £70 million that the Government provided.

In the time available, I will not go into itemised detail about the relief effort that we provided—hon. Members can read the book—but I will draw attention to the effort made specifically on behalf of women. Thousands of dignity packs were provided for women in difficult circumstances, as were safe spaces, psychological advice and counselling.

The one piece of international development effort that the popular press actually approves of is disaster relief for this sort of emergency, but the hon. Gentleman was right to identify the need to build in resilience beforehand. The lesson of the success of the relief effort in Nepal is that it was built on the millions of pounds spent—including by DFID when he was the Minister responsible—in advance over the years. Let us face it: an earthquake in Kathmandu was no surprise to anyone, but the success was based on the fact that we prepositioned supplies and rehearsed volunteers in their distribution. We trained people to be first responders and for search and rescue. We put a blood bank in place. We created the logistical space, equipment and warehousing at the airport, so that seven weeks of cumulative effort could be saved to respond to what happened. People imagine that after an earthquake all of a sudden from nowhere come resources, with highly trained people with sniffer dogs and so on, but clearly there has to be effort and investment in the core costs of organisations throughout the year so they are ready when there is an earthquake. As the hon. Gentleman so rightly said, we need to spend significantly more on building resilience beforehand.

The relief effort was a success and I share the hon. Gentleman's frustration—frustration evident in the House tonight—and the clear frustration of the people of Nepal that after that initial effort the pace of reconstruction was so slow. Clearly, in a country with difficult terrain, the remoteness of the areas most affected, monsoons, and a long winter and therefore a short building season, there should be a greater sense of urgency than would normally apply. That was not my perception when I visited Nepal last summer. The Government's attitude was: "No, no, it's over. Nepal is open for business. Let's get the tourist trade going again." I entirely understand that attitude and the importance of reopening the tourist trade, but I felt—it was my prejudice—that the determination to show that Nepal was back in business came at the expense of concentration on the continuing need for humanitarian relief, particularly in outlying areas.

The hon. Gentleman mentioned the constitution. To be fair, we have been pressing for progress on the constitution for months and months and years and years. To an extent, the earthquake galvanised the political class to push on with the constitution. Unfortunately, what happened thereafter—infighting, the problems in the Terai region and the blockade—led to a very substantial slowing up in any kind of relief effort. We in DFID were actually commissioning mules to carry our relief supplies into the mountains because of the fuel problem arising as a consequence of the blockade. The earthquake put some 600,000 people into poverty, but the blockade drove 800,000 people into poverty. The Nepal chamber of commerce estimated that the blockade did more harm to the economy of Nepal than the earthquake.

The hon. Gentleman said that the reconstruction authority, as of 6 January, has now started, well behind what we could have anticipated. It is understaffed, as he says, but nevertheless work has begun. The surveying of needs is supposed to be concluded by the end of this month. Grants have started to be issued. We have issued cash to 100,000 people already. Of the £70 million that we committed, £35 million has been spent and a further £35 million is committed.

We are concentrating on providing technical assistance and training. We have trained 600 masons in earthquake-resistant building techniques and 150 sub-engineers in the same disciplines. We are concentrating on the worst-affected areas and the more remote areas. We are prioritising the need for police stations and healthcare facilities. We are back in business in healthcare, which was always our main effort, restoring the services to 5.6 million people.

**Jim Shannon:** Helicopters are one way of restoring contact with remote areas. What helicopter supplies have been given to the Nepalese army to ensure that aid gets to the areas where it is needed?

**Mr Swayne:** DFID commissioned some 2,000 hours of helicopter flights. We provided Chinooks, which were not used. I am very disappointed that that was the case. We never quite got to the bottom of it, but I would rather stand in this House and say that we believed that helicopters were desperately needed and we provided them, even if they were not used, than find myself standing in this House knowing that helicopters were desperately needed and we did not send them. I think the right decision was made. It cost some £3 million, but emergencies demand such commitments.

The reconstruction effort continues. The problem, as I see it, going forward—the hon. Member for Harrow West alluded to it—is that there remain significant political problems in Nepal. Although there has been an easing recently of the problem in the Terai, I do not believe for one moment that it has gone away. The hon.

Gentleman rightly referred to the problem of endemic corruption and the problems with governance and bureaucracy. Nepal must transform its investment environment if there is to be any significant prospect of recovery in the long term. It has huge assets in respect of hydropower—

**Mr Thomas:** I welcome what the Minister has said and the support of my hon. Friend the Member for Greenwich and Woolwich (Matthew Pennycook) and of the shadow Chancellor, my hon. Friend the Member for Hayes and Harlington (John McDonnell). May I press the Minister on conversations with other donors about fulfilling their pledges and turning them into commitments, which the Nepalese Reconstruction Authority can use to speed up progress on the ground?

**Mr Swayne:** We are having conversations all the time with other donors, the Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the UN agencies. The hon. Gentleman is right that we need to press for a greater sense of urgency, but frustration has been evidenced in the donor community as well. There is a question of our ability to spend while the specifications of the reconstruction authority about how things are to be done have yet to be delivered. That has been part of the problem and I can understand the frustration of the donor community in that respect. I accept the hon. Gentleman's challenge to do more to galvanise and take a leadership role in driving that forward.

**Fiona Bruce:** Does the Minister agree that now that the constitution has been agreed, it is vital that Nepal presses forward and has elections for the provincial governments and the local councils, so that there are appropriate democratic structures through which reconstruction aid and sustainable provision can be delivered?

**Mr Swayne:** Indeed. That is very important, but equally the focus has to be on reconstruction and on building back better. Principally, the Nepalese must deal with their stifling bureaucracy and the problems that stand in the way of foreign investment. That is the only long-term solution for Nepal. It must deal with the problems of governance and endemic corruption.

I see that time is nearly up. I thank the hon. Member for Harrow West again for concentrating the mind of the House on this important issue, and for having so forensically identified the very problems that are holding up progress in Nepal.

*Question put and agreed to.*

11.10 pm

*House adjourned.*



# Westminster Hall

Monday 25 April 2016

[MARK PRITCHARD *in the Chair*]

## Meningitis B Vaccine

[*Relevant document: Oral and written evidence from the Petitions and Health Committees, Petition on the meningitis B vaccine, HC 900.*]

4.30 pm

**Ben Howlett** (Bath) (Con): I beg to move,

That this House has considered e-petition 108072 relating to the meningitis B vaccine.

As ever, it is a great pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Pritchard, and it is also a pleasure to see such a high level of interest in this debate from colleagues from all parts of the House. The petition that sparked this debate gathered over 820,000 signatures and received widespread media attention. Someone from every one of our 650 constituencies signed this petition; that shows just how horrifying meningitis B is, and gives a very strong indication of the level of public support for efforts to eradicate this disease.

Before today's debate, the Petitions Committee and the Health Committee undertook joint oral evidence sessions, during which we heard from families who have been affected by meningitis B, as well as from charities and experts in the field. Some of those families are here today; I thank them for taking the time to share their stories with us. I also thank the charities that came along to the evidence sessions. The evidence that we heard will undoubtedly inform today's very important debate.

Meningitis B is an evil disease that kills or maims hundreds of children in the UK every year. Finding out that their child has contracted this dreadful disease is clearly one of the worst things that can ever happen to a parent. We need to eradicate it as soon as possible, and I hope that this debate and the attention that it brings to the topic will lead to a new action plan from the Government.

**Nick Thomas-Symonds** (Torfaen) (Lab): The hon. Gentleman has talked about the need for action soon. I got a sense of urgency from the constituents who contacted me. Does he agree that that sense of urgency needs to be reflected by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation when reviewing the position with regard to meningitis B?

**Ben Howlett:** I thank the hon. Gentleman for his intervention; as ever, he is fast off the mark in intervening. I agree that urgent action is needed and I will come on to give the reasons why. From the evidence that we heard, there is, in effect, a two-year window for a vaccine's shelf life, so I hope that when the Minister sums up, she will make that case clear. Previous campaigns on this issue have brought about change, and I can only hope that this campaign has gathered enough momentum to follow in their path.

Before I turn to the evidence that we heard in the joint sessions, I will mention a constituent of mine from Bath. I am sure that many hon. Members here have seen

for themselves, as I have, the effects of this awful disease and what it does to those who suffer from it. One case that has particularly moved me is that of my constituent, Harmonie-Rose. She contracted meningitis B when she was just 10 months old. Just a few days after she had taken her first steps, she was taken into hospital with one of the worst cases of the disease that her doctors had ever seen. As she battled to survive, the toxins in her body spread to her limbs. The disease attacked and destroyed the tissue in her arms and legs, meaning that they had to be amputated in order to save her life.

Although Harmonie-Rose eventually recovered, she now lives as a quadruple amputee. Harmonie-Rose is a lovely, bubbly young child, living her life to the absolute full. She is beginning to adapt to her prosthetics; one day, she will have the freedom to move around that we all enjoy.

**Mr Jim Cunningham** (Coventry South) (Lab): I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on securing this debate, and I also congratulate all the people who signed the petition. While this debate in Parliament is very timely, meningitis has in fact been around for a very long time. A constituent wrote to me to say that they were having difficulty getting the vaccination. More importantly, if they had gone private, it could have cost them something like £700, which is very expensive for any family, for any treatment. I wonder what the hon. Gentleman thinks about that.

**Ben Howlett:** I thank the hon. Gentleman for his intervention. He is quite right to pick up on the fact that the long-term costs to families need to be taken into account when the JCVI makes its decision about whether to extend vaccinations; I will come on to that issue later. It is quite clear that without the support of many of our constituents—those who fundraise and do so much work to help support families in need—those families would be in a much more challenging situation.

**Catherine McKinnell** (Newcastle upon Tyne North) (Lab): I commend the hon. Gentleman on leading this debate. He gave the very powerful constituency example of Harmonie-Rose. We heard evidence from the parents of Faye Burdett, who made it very clear how fast the disease can strike, and how vital it is that meningitis is treated as quickly as possible to minimise damage. Does the hon. Gentleman agree that, as we heard in evidence, children under the age of five have difficulty communicating the symptoms that they are experiencing, and that is one of the factors that should be taken into account very carefully when considering extending the vaccination programme to those in that age group? They cannot communicate, which delays the delivery of the medical treatment that they so vitally need.

**Ben Howlett:** I thank the hon. Lady for her intervention, and I agree. Without giving away what I am about to say, I think that the evidence is quite clear on that, and I hope that the JCVI will look at that in due course. The fact is that Harmonie-Rose and many other children see their lives dramatically changed, or even cut short, by this tragic and awful disease, and it is time that we did something about it, here and now.

The petition that led to the debate was started by Lee Booth, who was told that his eight-month-old child was too old to qualify for the meningitis B vaccine. Lee was

[Ben Howlett]

quite rightly uneasy about that, as the group most susceptible to contracting the disease are babies under the age of one. I am sure that we were all pleased when the Government made the unprecedented announcement that from September 2015 all newborn babies would be given the vaccine, making the UK the first country in the world to make that provision.

**Michael Dugher** (Barnsley East) (Lab): On behalf of colleagues from all parties in the House, I thank the hon. Gentleman for the eloquent and passionate way that he is leading this important debate. He is aware of the heartbreaking case of Mia Barton, who tragically passed away last month after contracting meningitis B. Her courageous parents, my constituents Rebecca Barton and Matthew Bright, are campaigning incredibly hard, even in the midst of such awful grief. Does the hon. Gentleman agree that, at the very least, the JCVI should be open to reviewing its recommendations to the Government, and that the tragic death of Mia Barton underlines the need to look again at the age requirement for the national vaccination programme?

**Ben Howlett:** I thank the hon. Gentleman for his intervention, and my condolences go to Mia's family, because obviously anybody who is lost to this tragic disease is a loss overall, and it is horrendous what Mia's family have had to go through; I have seen that with the family of my own constituent, and as MPs no doubt we have all seen that. There is a question around age, and I will come on to that shortly. Like Mia's family, Lee Booth is calling for the Government to extend vaccinations up to the age of 11, and I think that we need to review some of the evidence today.

**Geoffrey Clifton-Brown** (The Cotswolds) (Con): I congratulate my hon. Friend on leading this very important debate. I have been involved in this campaign for a considerable while. Does he agree that there is not an issue about the safety of the drug, because it is very safe—we know that because it has been used very safely on students in American universities—and that it is simply an issue of cost?

**Ben Howlett:** I thank my hon. Friend for his intervention; I am aware of his work in championing this cause, which he has done for a while. I very much hope that the Minister will consider that point when she makes her summation.

Although it is quite difficult for all of us as MPs to say this, throughout this debate we must of course keep at the back of our minds the fact that the NHS has finite resources. Everything that the NHS provides has an element of cost to it, and a life cost-benefit, too. However, along with many other Members, I worry that the long-term benefits of childhood vaccination and the life chances that vaccination can give to so many children are not being considered as much as they should be.

**Mrs Helen Grant** (Maidstone and The Weald) (Con): I, too, congratulate my hon. Friend on leading this debate, and on speaking so passionately but in a measured way about this awful, awful disease. GlaxoSmithKline reported annual profits of £10.3 billion in 2013. Its website devotes several pages to corporate social

responsibility. Does my hon. Friend agree that the company would show real leadership and great responsibility if it was prepared to relax further the price of the Bexsero vaccine?

**Ben Howlett:** I met GlaxoSmithKline and we had a conversation on the issue. There needs to be a long-term conversation in the here and now with GlaxoSmithKline about the pricing of a catch-up programme. We heard an awful lot of evidence about that, and JCVI needs to take it into consideration. As part of that, I lend my support to those campaigning for a full review of the cost-effectiveness methodology for immunisation programmes and procurements, or CEMIPP, its understanding of life benefit, and what it takes into consideration when making a judgment call on life benefit. That has a huge impact on how JCVI makes its decisions. I hope that a review would have a wider benefit for all those children who might be put at risk.

From September 2017, we will start to receive information from the current vaccination programme of babies under the age of one, and we can begin to assess the success of the new approach. In September 2016, we will get early preliminary data on the early introduction of the vaccine. That will hopefully help JCVI readdress its decision on extending the vaccine to those aged up to five. As the UK is the first country to use the meningitis B vaccine, it is understandably difficult to predict its effects when administered on a large scale. The data will be incredibly useful in helping to formulate a plan from September 2017, but it is important to remember that while we sit waiting for the data, children are contracting the disease, with life-changing consequences. Sadly, in some cases they are dying. Families going through that trauma will not be comforted by the fact that from 2017 we will have a better idea of what to do.

It is the opinion of many research organisations that while we wait for the data, we should prioritise protecting the most vulnerable from contracting the disease through a one-off catch-up programme for children under the age of five. They are the age group at the next highest risk of meningitis B infection. That one-off campaign would put many minds at ease and help the future eradication of the disease. The current vaccine only has a two-year shelf life, so it makes sense for the UK to use the vaccines while it can, to catch all those under the age of five. The evidence that we heard showed that the number of cases falls substantially after the age of five. While it is always uncomfortable to set a cut-off age, that would be a sensible one to introduce in the here and now.

At the heart of every successful immunisation campaign is uptake of the offer. Information shows that uptake for the under-ones is strong; that is unsurprising given what the papers are publishing, and the sad stories of families who have suffered the devastating effects of their child contracting the disease. We must ensure that uptake is continually high and does not negatively affect the uptake of any other vaccinations, especially if a one-off catch-up programme is undertaken.

**Catherine McKinnell:** This is an opportune moment to highlight one of the other points that came out of the evidence we took in Committee: while vaccination is vital, public awareness is a huge concern for everyone.



It is not only parents who need the best possible awareness of the symptoms; medical staff need it, too. Perhaps that awareness is not high enough. It would be good to hear from the Minister what the Government will do to ensure that public awareness and awareness among medical personnel is the best it can be, to ensure that the disease can be treated as quickly as possible.

**Ben Howlett:** We both heard the evidence that we need to increase awareness of meningitis B. Just because someone has had the vaccination, it does not mean that they are 100% certain not to contract the virus. We have to ensure wider awareness, not just among clinicians, but in nurseries and schools. That will ensure that the issue is higher up their agenda. I have seen some of the highly successful campaigns run by the Department of Health, and I hope we can support the Department in pushing more of those campaigns in the future.

We heard evidence about the importance of vaccinating young children, but Meningitis Now and the Meningitis Research Foundation point out that vaccinating teenagers could be the key to protecting the whole population from meningitis B, knocking out the infection at source before it can spread. That is because teenagers may be responsible for a high proportion of disease carriage. During our evidence sessions, we discussed at length the evidence to back that up. Vinny Smith, the chief executive officer of the Meningitis Research Foundation, explained that the bug lives in the noses and throats of people, particularly teenagers, but it does not live in everybody. The idea is that the key carrier group is targeted with a vaccination campaign that would hopefully protect the most at risk groups.

That targeted immunisation programme could be the solution when it comes to eradicating the disease. However, in-depth research has not yet been done on how effective that would be. It is hoped that the programme would severely reduce contraction of the disease, but it is unclear. What is clear is that a better understanding is at least three years away. We need to get the research process started as quickly as possible. It could benefit those young children who have not been vaccinated by reducing the chances of exposure. It is clearly too soon to advocate the immunisation of all teenagers, given that evidence is still unclear about the effects of immunisation beyond prevention in adolescents. When the research process is under way—I repeat that I hope it starts sooner, rather than later—a short-term option would be to extend the vaccination programme to under-fives who are at a higher risk of contracting the disease.

GlaxoSmithKline, which produces the vaccine, has said that it is prepared to work with the Government to ensure that there are enough vaccines for the catch-up period. The company will be under pressure from other nations looking to focus on their vaccination programmes. The Government need to place an urgent and vocal emphasis on vaccinations, as well as prevention. They would be an important voice in encouraging vaccination producers to have greater confidence in investing in the UK. All the families in the UK who want the reassurance a vaccination would bring would much rather we had a stockpile of vaccinations used in a one-off catch-up programme than for our country to miss out because we were slower on the uptake than our competitors. I hope that the urgency of the discussion is at the forefront of the Minister's mind.

**Nick Thomas-Symonds:** I think the hon. Gentleman spoke about the benefits of reassurance. Does he agree that it is important that peace of mind is taken into account in evaluating the spreading of the vaccination programme?

**Ben Howlett:** Yes. I do not think JCVI gives as much consideration to peace of mind as it should. From speaking to the parents of Harmonie-Rose and others, I know that that sense of reassurance is in many instances unquantifiable, which makes it difficult for the JCVI to base a decision on peace of mind, but at the end of the day, my opinion, from the evidence we heard in the Committee hearings, is that we need a review of these matters.

As was highlighted repeatedly during the evidence sessions, the exact effect of the vaccine is still unknown, and parents should not ignore any potential signs of the disease just because their child has been immunised. They may still contract the disease, although the chance is much smaller. As ever, early identification is key. The families and experts we heard from stressed the need for strengthened education campaigns highlighting the symptoms of meningitis B, which include a rash that spreads quickly across the body, a high temperature with ice-cold feet and hands, and babies who are agitated and refusing to feed. While it is important that all parents receive that information, it also needs to be targeted at all those with responsibility for children, including childminders, teachers and nurses.

**Mr Jim Cunningham:** One of the things that struck me was that there has always been difficulty negotiating the price of drugs with manufacturers. Has the hon. Gentleman come across any evidence that in this case that could contribute to any delays with progress?

**Ben Howlett:** I have not yet seen that evidence, because we are a couple of stages away from that point. Compared with some of the other long-term battles in this place to get access to particular drugs, the conversations that were had with GlaxoSmithKline when the immunisation programme went up to the age of one were particularly small. Longer term, there is obviously a wider conversation that we need to have around access to medicines, if we are going into a world where everybody will, effectively, have a rare disease. We know even more now about genetics and the genome. The system is not set up to help the 68 million people in our country to access medicines in a quick way. That system needs to be created, and the work that the Under-Secretary of State for Life Sciences is doing is leading the way on that. I call on all Members in the Chamber to help speed up that process, and to put pressure on the Government to come up with an accelerated access to medicines review as quickly as possible to help the people that the hon. Member for Coventry South (Mr Cunningham) identified.

While we decide what needs to be done, we need to be thankful to the public for raising so much money to support the families living with the reality of a child having meningitis B, and thankful to the charities that provide them with financial, emotional and practical support. Only yesterday, some of the London marathon runners, including seven Members of Parliament, raised thousands of pounds to support such families. Such efforts are vital to providing support, and I know that

[Ben Howlett]

families are thankful for those efforts. I am tremendously proud to represent a constituency where thousands of pounds have been donated and fundraised for Harmonie-Rose. I know the family are immensely grateful for all the support.

In summary, I am honoured to have been able to open today's debate on behalf of the Petitions Committee. It is unsurprising that this campaign has gathered so much attention following the sad stories in the media. I hope that the Government listen to the widespread calls for a change in policy, and I hope that they have a one-off catch-up vaccination programme for those up to the age of five to put parents' minds at rest while research is conducted into the impact on adolescents and the spread of this horrendous disease.

4.51 pm

**Mr David Winnick** (Walsall North) (Lab): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Bath (Ben Howlett), who has given a comprehensive account of this important subject. The debate was initiated by those who signed the petition, which received more signatures than any other petition that has reached the House of Commons, so it is obviously right and proper that we should have this debate.

I rise to speak about one of my constituents. I want to briefly mention what happened in a tragedy experienced by my constituents Mr and Mrs Timmins, who lost their beloved son, Mason, at the age of seven. Mason had been vaccinated against meningitis C, but in 2013 he tragically contracted meningitis B. The red rashes that I understand are usually associated with this disease did not appear. Mrs Timmins said she heard her son coughing and then he started to be sick. He fell seriously ill that day and, tragically, by midnight he was brain dead.

That day, the parents had rushed their son to the doctor, who immediately recognised that he had meningitis B and gave injections accordingly, and then he was taken to hospital. I do not think there is any criticism of the health service, but Mr and Mrs Timmins, understandably, are of the very strong view that all children should have the meningitis B vaccination. Indeed, Mrs Timmins arranged for her three-year-old daughter to be vaccinated privately. The family are of the view that had Mason had the vaccination earlier, he would have survived. We do not know that—there is no guarantee about anything—but I am speaking because of their strong feeling that that would have been the case.

Afterwards, to publicise what had occurred and so that it would not be a one-off obscure case that no one knew about, the parents released pictures of their son in his final moments, which can be found online. In the circumstances, I believe they were right to do so.

I am not a medical person. I do not have the medical knowledge to know whether what is being urged by Mr and Mrs Timmins and so many other parents is right. I do not know whether the reluctance to give the vaccination is because of cost, so I shall listen carefully to the Minister. However, I do know—I do not think there is any disagreement among Members of Parliament—that if children can be saved from the fate suffered by Mr and Mrs Timmins' son, action should be taken along the lines that they urge.

So I shall listen carefully to the arguments, but I—and I believe many hon. Members—cannot accept the view that no action should be taken for reasons of cost. The debate is very important. Children have lost their lives and parents are grieving. We want to know what can be done to avoid the situation so tragically faced by my constituents.

4.56 pm

**Helen Whately** (Faversham and Mid Kent) (Con): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Pritchard. I thank the hon. Member for Walsall North (Mr Winnick) for his powerful contribution and my hon. Friend the Member for Bath (Ben Howlett) for his comprehensive opening speech.

I want to start by paying tribute to my constituents, Neil and Jenny Burdett, who are with us this afternoon. Their two-year-old daughter, Faye, died on Valentine's day this year after an 11-day battle against meningitis B. It is their determination that something good should come of their loss that has brought us all here today. More than 800,000 people signed the petition after they published a picture of their daughter gravely ill in hospital. They have shown incredible courage over the past few weeks and months since her death. They did not expect to receive this much attention; they just wanted to prevent other families from suffering as they have. The scale of the response to the petition shows how strongly people in this country feel about meningitis and the level of fear and concern that there is out there among parents.

I am proud that Britain was the first country in the world to vaccinate the most at-risk group of babies against meningitis B. In this debate, we should not overlook the important fact that the rest of the world is watching our vaccination programme and seeing how it fares. In the evidence sessions prior to this debate, we heard Britain's immunisation programme described by one expert as

"the envy of the world",

but that does not mean we cannot do more.

It feels cold-hearted to talk about cost-effectiveness, but we have to introduce that to the debate because we know that NHS resources are limited, and we must recognise that money spent on meningitis cannot be used to fight other diseases. After extensive research and the work that was done to make the case for the vaccination to be introduced, costs were included that would not normally be included in such a case for vaccination. For instance, litigation costs and health losses to family members were included. The JCVI, which makes the recommendations, concluded that it would be cost-effective to vaccinate babies up to 12 months, but not older children. If I understand it correctly, the Government are legally bound by that decision. I am sure the Minister will confirm this, but I do not know whether we can simply call for that decision to be overturned and an instant change in the programme introduced. But questions can be asked, particularly as a group is looking at the moment into how the cost-effectiveness calculation is carried out.

**Mrs Helen Grant:** Does my hon. Friend agree that we should not ignore things simply because they are hard to measure, especially in a situation such as

this? Issues that have already been mentioned such as peace of mind and public preference are really important.

**Helen Whately:** I completely agree with my hon. Friend and neighbour in Maidstone. I know she has been contacted by many of her constituents about this issue. We need to ensure that the formula used to calculate whether the vaccine should be introduced includes things such as peace of mind and the level of fear about meningitis. It should also take into account the public preference for protecting children from illness.

**Catherine McKinnell:** The hon. Lady is making an important point. My understanding—I would be grateful if the Minister would clarify this in her response—is that in calculating the cost-effectiveness of the meningitis B vaccination, the JCVI has not fully considered the potential outcome for those children who contract meningitis but survive and the long-term costs for them and their families for the rest of their lives. Such costs are often borne by the state, so, along with the factors that the hon. Lady is outlining, there are other financial costs that have perhaps not been considered fully.

**Helen Whately:** I thank the hon. Lady for that comment. We may well hear from the Minister that some of those extra costs have been taken into account, but when the Select Committee took evidence a few weeks ago we heard from the Meningitis Research Foundation and others that the cost-effectiveness model tends to privilege near-term costs over long-term costs and benefits. It does not look at the long-term lifetime health impacts, positive or negative, from a person having had or not had meningitis.

That brings me to something called the discount rate, which is applied at 3.5%. I have been told that, as a result of that discount rate, the benefits of a vaccine reach zero by the time somebody is 27. People clearly live for much longer than that, so is enough account being taken of the long-term benefits of a vaccination programme when cost-effectiveness is calculated? For instance, it has been calculated that if a 1.5% discount rate were used instead of the 3.5% rate, the answer would be different and a catch-up programme for under-fives would be cost-effective. The NICE guidance states that a 1.5% discount rate can be applied if health benefits would be attained over long periods and for public health interventions. Surely vaccinations should fall under those categories?

**Mims Davies (Eastleigh) (Con):** Given my hon. Friend's experience in the NHS and the clear point she is making, does she think we are missing a trick if we do not listen to that argument now?

**Helen Whately:** The arguments I am putting forward should certainly be looked into, and it is timely to consider them now, because a working group is currently looking at the cost-effectiveness calculation. We need a real sense of urgency about the report on the calculation and it should be published as soon as possible. According to the conversations I have had, there seems to be uncertainty about how it is progressing and when we will be able to discuss the findings.

In the meantime, ever greater awareness of meningitis is important, particularly as it strikes so quickly. Parents need to trust their instincts if a child seems unusually ill, and it is critical for health professionals to listen to them. We have heard many tragic cases of children getting meningitis in which the parents had suspicions that their child was really sick. They have gone to hospital and seen doctors, but they have been sent home with instructions to give the child Calpol or something similar. We know that meningitis is very difficult to diagnose, but it is worrying that there is such variability in how children are treated when they turn up with potential symptoms.

**Mrs Helen Grant:** During the Select Committee's evidence sessions it was suggested that information about the disease could be put in babies' red books to raise parents' awareness. Does my hon. Friend think that that is a good idea that should be considered?

**Helen Whately:** It should most certainly be considered. The Government should look into all possible avenues for raising awareness. Charities such as Meningitis Now are working very hard and have some excellent leaflets, but parents are often still not aware. I have three young children and I have worried about meningitis. I would look out for a rash, but through being involved in this petition I now know that the rash comes so late in the process that it can be too late by the time it is seen. Parents have to be ready to spot a whole host of other symptoms and, when they speak to doctors, to be really confident that they think their child is more sick than usual and that it does not feel like a case for just Calpol. Parents have an instinct. We need to encourage them to trust it, and health professionals need to encourage them to speak up about it.

I know that other colleagues want to speak, so I shall conclude my remarks. We need a much greater sense of urgency about the work on the cost-effectiveness of vaccination. Bearing in mind the points I have made about the discount rate and the value that society attributes to the life of a child, a case could be made for extending the vaccination programme to more children. Work should be done on how health professionals deal with possible cases of meningitis B. Whether or not the NICE guidance is still right, it is certainly confusing. We also need more transparency about doctors' reactions to possible cases of meningitis B, because it is hard to see the difference in the data—we only have anecdotes about how doctors and others respond when they see a possible case.

The Government must do all they can to raise awareness. Whatever the outcome of the debate, I thank Neil and Jenny very much for all that they have done. The petition and debate have surely raised awareness of meningitis B throughout the country, which in itself will have saved lives.

**Several hon. Members rose—**

**Mark Pritchard (in the Chair):** Order. Before I call Mark Durkan, may I ask everybody to check that their mobile phones are on silent mode? It affects the broadcasting equipment—[*Interruption.*] I rest my case—somebody does have their phone on.

[Mark Pritchard (in the Chair)]

Secondly, I am aware that there was an important health statement in the House today. Some colleagues wrote to say that they would arrive late, and I thank them for that courtesy. If Members stand, they will be called, subject to the order of speakers given to me by the Speaker's office.

5.7 pm

**Mark Durkan** (Foyle) (SDLP): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Pritchard, and to follow the hon. Member for Faversham and Mid Kent (Helen Whately). She spoke so strongly on behalf of the Burdett family, whom she represents, and about the tragedy they have faced, and she also spoke to the wider issues raised by the petition following Faye's death.

I thank the hon. Member for Bath (Ben Howlett) for introducing the debate in the way he did, and I also thank the members of the Petitions Committee for the great service they provided to not only the House but the public by holding hearings in conjunction with the Health Committee. These petitions are a new way for Parliament to engage with the public on important issues, and I hope we will learn from this debate that there is also a new way for Members to engage with Ministers to deal with questions that are not always as easy to address as we might want them to be.

Over the past few years, ever since Bexsero was first licensed as a vaccine in Europe, I have tabled a number of early-day motions encouraging the Government and the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation to move more quickly. Like Meningitis Now and the original Meningitis UK "Beat it now" campaign, I wanted to ensure that we did not have to wait another five years, as we had to for the meningitis C vaccine, with all the accompanying loss of life and life-changing damage done to children in the meantime.

**Peter Dowd** (Bootle) (Lab): I met Harmonie-Rose the other day, and what a beautiful little girl she is. I do not want to make inappropriate or spurious comparisons, but the swine flu vaccine cost £1 billion, which, despite the criticism, was money well spent. Does the hon. Gentleman agree that a vaccine catch-up programme would also be money well spent?

**Mark Durkan**: I believe that it would. I will come to that point shortly.

Many Government and Opposition MPs in the previous Parliament and this one have been aware of the issues and concerns involved. First, there was the issue of whether we would get the men B vaccine on to the immunisation schedule as soon as we should. Thankfully, steps were taken last spring, and it came on stream in the autumn. The decision that was made by the Department of Health here effectively became the predictive text for what happened in my devolved area, and I welcome the fact that the Health Minister in Northern Ireland followed suit. A similar issue has arisen here. If the Department responds to the evidence that the Petitions Committee and the Health Committee took, which was based on the issues that the petition raised, that will make a difference not only to NHS England, but to my devolved area.

Being based in Northern Ireland, I am conscious that the south of Ireland has taken the decision to follow the UK on the men B vaccine. It will take it up later this year, which may have an impact on the supply of the vaccine. That is why we need to ensure that, when we talk to Government Ministers here and the devolved Ministers, we also talk to the authorities in the south of Ireland. Between us, we have a very good instrument—the British-Irish Council—which brings together all the Administrations on these islands. They should collectively discuss these policy issues and challenges, and they should combine their muscle to improve their negotiating power with Glaxo on any price implications or sensitivities in relation to the drug.

We have been asked to address three main questions, and I hope that the Minister will do so. I know that some will sound like technocratic issues, and perhaps talking in those terms will make the Minister feel uncomfortable or insensitive. There are the issues that delayed the men B vaccine being put on the schedule in the first place and the issues that we face now, particularly the cost-effectiveness framework. As many hon. Members have said, the framework needs to be adjusted to take into account peace of mind factors and the lifelong impact on those who survive meningitis but suffer lasting damage and have difficulties with the economic and social costs that arise from that. The hon. Member for Bath addressed the issue of ensuring that there is a commitment to funding the adolescent intervention study. Rightly, he did not over-speculate about that, but we need to fully understand it and see what can come of it.

As the hon. Member for Bootle (Peter Dowd) said, there is the question of the under-fives catch-up. Most parents understand that that is a basic thing that should be done. People find it hard to believe that there is a significant case against it; they think it is just a question of how we manage and organise it. It is not enough to say, "If we reach the newborns, that will be enough." The risk is significant.

Like the hon. Gentleman, I met Harmonie-Rose last week in Westminster Hall. I could not help but be conscious that I was talking to a beautiful, lovely child, and that perhaps, if the men B vaccine had been on stream earlier and in the immunisation schedule when it was licensed, she would not have had to use her great charm to lobby on this issue.

If we delay the under-fives catch-up, how many other people will be affected? How many other young, precious lives will be lost? How many families will be plunged into grief? How many young lives will be harmed? How many young people will lose limbs or suffer brain damage or facial disfiguration? We need a response and an intervention, which is why people have petitioned so strongly. The people who petitioned us want action, and I hope the Minister will address them in honest but hopeful terms.

5.14 pm

**Maggie Throup** (Erewash) (Con): Thank you for calling me to speak, Mr Pritchard, despite the fact that I was unable to be here at the start of the debate. It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship.

Decades of immunisation have provided protection from a wide range of diseases and have been crucial to improving the health of the nation—indeed, health

worldwide. The United Kingdom benefits from a world-class immunisation programme, which, as other hon. Members have said, is envied by many other countries. Nevertheless, there is still variation in the take-up of some of the key vaccines in both the early and teenage years, and the take-up of the flu vaccine in the older and vulnerable population could be better, so there is a problem in every age group. That does not seem right, given that we are debating a petition calling for the men B immunisation cohort to be expanded.

I commend the UK for being the first country in the world to provide a men B vaccine. As we have heard, the Republic of Ireland is going to follow suit. We lead the way in many areas of medical research and healthcare, and I am delighted that we continue to do so for this important public health and disease prevention measure, which will tackle the devastating condition of meningitis B—and, indeed, all types of meningitis.

Having a wide-ranging immunisation programme can cause problems. During the pre-debate inquiry, we heard evidence from parents who knew that their child had been vaccinated against meningitis but did not know that there are numerous types of the disease and that one vaccine does not protect their child from all of them. That can cause parents to rule out the possibility that their child is suffering from meningitis, which can delay their seeking medical help.

**Seema Kennedy** (South Ribble) (Con): Does my hon. Friend agree that the rapidity of meningitis B is terribly frightening for parents? I pay tribute to my constituent Emma Moore, who lost her first child, George, to meningitis in October 2013. She told me that she had a perfectly healthy little boy in the morning, and that by 11 pm at night she had to see his dead, lifeless body. She would not wish that nightmare upon anyone.

**Maggie Throup**: My hon. Friend is completely right that the speed of meningitis B is incredible. We heard various such stories in evidence. We must do everything we can to stop that.

The petition has already raised the profile of the disease, which will help to bust the myth that there is one meningitis and that vaccination against one strain makes a child immune to other strains. It is often difficult for parents to know what vaccines their children have had, when they had them, when their boosters are due, and what they are protected and not protected against. In evidence to the inquiry, we heard that irrespective of that confusion, medical professionals should and must trust parents' instincts more. Despite the fact that the numerous vaccines for the different types of meningitis can be confusing, parents often have a sixth sense that tells them that something is really wrong. However, I understand that medical professionals are concerned that we are becoming more and more resistant to antibiotics, and that if a child is treated with antibiotics without clinical evidence, that resistance builds up even more. This is a complex subject with no easy answers.

The good news is that the vaccination programme has started and is almost one year in. This time next year, the majority of infants under two years old—the group that shows the greatest prevalence of meningitis B—will have been immunised. I am pleased that the Minister has asked the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation to reconsider the men B vaccination

in the one to two-year-old age group. Given the potential community effect, I hope we will start to see the end of the disease.

There has been a lot of focus on meningitis B in recent months, but we must not lose sight of the impact of other types of meningitis or the fact that many other serious diseases can disproportionately affect infants, who cannot tell their parents or the doctor where they hurt or how poorly they feel. It was clear from the evidence that the Petitions Committee and the Health Committee took that a great deal of work still needs to be carried out to ensure that we get the best possible vaccines at the best possible price, and that they are as effective as possible. As is already happening, it is important to assess the outcomes of each and every infant who receives a men B vaccine. If possible, I would like to see data included from older children who have been immunised privately.

**Mrs Helen Grant**: In addition to vaccines, on which my hon. Friend is making a strong case, does she agree that we still need to do much more about prevention, and that the completion of the adolescent carriage study, which was recommended in June 2015, might be a good start? It would be helpful to hear from the Minister about progress on that.

**Maggie Throup**: My hon. Friend makes a good point, and I agree with her.

As we heard last week during the debate on funding for brain tumour research, no price can be put on anyone's life, at any age. We must use all the evidence available and do whatever is necessary and appropriate to provide protection from meningitis and other potentially fatal conditions.

5.20 pm

**Mr David Nuttall** (Bury North) (Con): As always, it is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship this afternoon, Mr Pritchard.

I want to share the story of Charlie. Charlie Edmondson is a lively, boisterous four-year-old. I know him because he attends the Sunday school at St Anne's church in Tottington in my constituency where, for the past seven years, I have been one of the church wardens.

Last year, at midnight on 15 December, just two days after Charlie took part in the Sunday school's annual Christingle and nativity play, he woke up and complained to his mum, Rose, that he was not feeling very well. He had a high temperature, but his twin sister had been ill the previous week and his parents had not felt 100%, so his mum understandably thought Charlie was probably going down with a similar bug.

Rose tried to get Charlie's temperature down with Calpol and some Nurofen, but the next morning he woke at 6 am looking extremely pale, with dark rings under his eyes, and his breathing seemed quite fast. His mother put the symptoms down to a viral infection and assumed he would start to feel better after he had been sick. Never in a million years did she think it could be meningitis.

Charlie went downstairs and, after some more Calpol and ibuprofen, he seemed to perk up and managed to eat some breakfast. At about 10 am, as he and his mum settled down to watch Tim Peake go up in a space

[Mr David Nuttall]

rocket, something that would normally excite the imagination of any young boy, he started to chat less and became quieter. At that point, his mum became concerned about a pinprick rash that had appeared. It did not look like a typical viral rash, and doubts started to form in her mind.

After they had watched Tim Peake go into space, Rose noticed Charlie was staring vacantly at the television, but she put that down to him perhaps being a little sleepy. Shortly after that, Charlie was sick, and he fell asleep next to his mum on the couch. As his mum said:

“I don’t know what prevented me from putting him in his bed and to keep him on the couch—it would have been so easy to do that and he may not have been so lucky.”

While Charlie was napping, his mum noticed what she thought was a bruise on his upper leg, with one on his arm and another small one near his neck. Rose knew that was a potential sign of blood poisoning, and she started to piece together the other symptoms. She looked at the Meningitis Now website for the checklist of symptoms. She called her husband, who told her to call their GP. Unfortunately, the GP closed at lunchtime, but she was put through to an out-of-hours doctor, who told her to call 999 immediately. She decided to check the rash, to see if it disappeared with a glass—it did not.

Rose called 999 and was told that an ambulance would be sent straight away. When the fast-response car arrived, Charlie was lying on his side on the couch. He immediately had antibiotics administered to him. The ambulance arrived about five minutes later and took him to the Royal Bolton hospital, which, as his mum said, did “an absolutely amazing job”. The hospital staff explained everything they were doing, including when they decided to induce Charlie into a coma and he was transferred to the intensive care unit at Alder Hey children’s hospital. At that point, they told his mother that they were treating him for meningitis B.

Charlie stayed in Alder Hey until Christmas day, including eight days in intensive care. He received fantastic care and treatment, but his family were disappointed that they were not given more information about meningitis and its after-effects. At this point, however, I will place on the record the enormous help that the charity Meningitis Now gave to Charlie and his family. I know that they are all extremely grateful. The charity sent them lots of information and they found that reading others’ stories helped them to understand the impact that the disease can have. It helped them to cope.

Unfortunately, three days after Charlie’s initial discharge, he was readmitted to the Royal Bolton and then Alder Hey, as he was struggling to stand and walk. The doctors suspected he might have a bone infection. That meant another week in hospital, including over new year, but he was finally discharged, with much more mobility, as the doctors discovered that the problem was inflammation around his ankle and hip joints. As an MMR scan confirmed, the meningitis had scarred his bones. It was two months before Charlie could walk and stand properly.

Charlie will continue to be monitored by Alder Hey for the next few years, to keep an eye on his growth plates. As Charlie’s mum said:

“I will be forever grateful that Charlie can say he has survived meningitis and I want him to remember how lucky he is and we are that he is still here despite being hit with such an awful, awful disease.

The speed at which this disease acts is frightening and the symptoms can be so easily confused with other things. This is why it’s so very important to recognise the signs and symptoms quickly.”

I hope that one benefit of this afternoon’s debate will be that more people learn the signs and symptoms, and know what to do. Understandably, Charlie’s parents want to see the roll-out of an improved meningitis B vaccination programme, so that others will never have to go through what they had to go through. Mr and Mrs Edmondson did not know that they could have vaccinated their children privately until the consultant told them that he had vaccinated his children because he knew how important it was.

I appreciate that even with the increased resources being made available to our NHS, the advances in medical science, new treatments, new drugs and a growing and ageing population inevitably mean that difficult decisions have to be made. Of course it will be costly to vaccinate even up to only the five-year-old age group, but when one considers the loss of life, the cost of treating cases such as Charlie’s—which one healthcare professional put at £30,000 to £40,000—and the suffering of children such as Charlie, along with the heartache, anxiety and distress of the parents, the cost of the vaccination suddenly starts to look very cheap indeed.

As you know, Mr Pritchard, I am not one to present problems without trying to find a solution for Government, so let me suggest another source of funding: the millions of pounds spent on trying to persuade adults who, despite years and years of warnings about the dangers of smoking, nevertheless continue to do so. If they have not stopped by now, when will they? Those adults have a choice and they choose to continue to smoke. Some of the millions spent on increasingly ineffective stop-smoking campaigns could be spent on children, who have no choice.

5.30 pm

**Geoffrey Clifton-Brown** (The Cotswolds) (Con): I am delighted to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Pritchard. I echo a feeling of sympathy for my hon. Friend the Minister, because in a sense she is the meat in the sandwich. Time after time she has to answer such debates, but, as she and the House know—the hon. Member for Foyle (Mark Durkan) certainly knows this, because he had an Adjournment debate on 7 July 2014 on this subject—there has been an ongoing campaign on this for a long time in the House.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bath (Ben Howlett) is right that meningitis B is a terrible disease that—as other hon. Members have said—comes on suddenly and, at least in the early stages, is often not recognised by health professionals, let alone parents. More publicity should be given to the disease so that people are aware of what to look for. Given that only yesterday I heard a public health advertisement to encourage parents to get their babies vaccinated against MMR, I am not sure why we should not have such a publicity campaign for meningitis B.

The Bexsero vaccine was first licenced by the European Medicines Agency on 1 January 2013. The Minister wrote to me in April 2014 and said that it would be

rolled out for children under two months, with a one-off catch-up programme for children born between 1 May 2015 and 30 June 2015. I use that illustratively, because at that stage we did not know when the vaccine was to be introduced. The Minister will say that by 2017 all children under two years will be covered, but if the vaccine had been rolled out at the time of my Adjournment debate, in which we were urging the Minister to do that for all children under one, more children would have been covered. In that debate she said:

“Children aged less than five years are most affected by MenB...the peak of the disease is in infants aged 6 to 12 months.”

She went on to say that

“MenB is fatal for about one in 10 of those who develop meningitis...With early diagnosis and treatment, most people can make a full recovery”.

That is true. She also said:

“Incidence has been decreasing in recent years...but it is unpredictable and it could rise again quickly.”—[*Official Report*, 7 July 2014; Vol. 584, c. 137.]

The disease has an unfortunate habit of falling and rising in incidence, so it could very well start rising again. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation set up a working party in 2013—I think in June—to look at vaccinating all children under one year. What has happened to that working party? Have we got the results yet?

This is an unfortunate issue, because as many hon. Members will know—particularly those who have had young children more recently than when my two were youngsters—we often have to take young children to the surgery anyway, so the costs to the NHS of administering the vaccine would be minuscule: just the cost of the drug. There is also a unit cost issue—if GlaxoSmithKline had to make more of the vaccines, presumably the price would come down. I urge the Minister to consider the anxiety that the disease causes and the vast number of people who signed the petition. It was the largest petition ever for such a debate, and I pay great tribute to the House for changing its procedures to introduce such interactive debates so that we can consider the concerns of large numbers of constituents on such issues. I originally got involved in the meningitis B campaign after my constituents, Dr and Mrs Turner, contacted me about their granddaughter, who sadly died from the disease, but it obviously concerns large numbers of constituents.

We should not consider this vaccine as just an issue of cost. We know that the drug is safe. It has been licensed since 1 January 2013 and in the United States, the student cohort at many universities received the vaccine at least two years ago, and it was also trialled in adolescents at a university in this country. It therefore appears to be safe, although the JCVI wants to look at that issue. I say as gently as possible to the Minister that we should not let this be purely an issue of cost. If we have a drug that works—we know it is effective—and it is simply an issue of cost, we should at least consider rolling it out to all babies under one year old and preferably to all children under five.

**Caroline Ansell** (Eastbourne) (Con): My hon. Friend makes a powerful case for the drug’s safety. We just heard an agonising story from my hon. Friend the Member for Bury North (Mr Nuttall) about Charlie

and his experience, so does he agree that the cost and suffering of those who survive men B should be factored into the consideration of a catch-up scheme?

**Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** I entirely agree. I will ask the Minister to clarify this, because when I sat down she said *sotto voce* that it is one year, but my information is that, from when it started, it was for all those under two months of age on 1 September 2015, with a one-off catch-up programme for babies born between 1 May 2015 and 30 June 2015—those who were three or four months of age when the programme was launched. Therefore, while by now it may have nearly spread to one year, that was not the case when it was introduced. We should consider rolling it out definitely to those who are one year old today and preferably to those a little older as well.

I turn to the Department of Health’s cost-effectiveness methodology for immunisation programmes and procurement—the so-called CEMIPP, which is a dreadful acronym. The Minister will tell us that that looks at the life-cost issues, but those who contract meningitis and suffer long-term effects face not just the £30,000 to £40,000 of costs my hon. Friend the Member for Bury North (Mr Nuttall) mentioned, but considerable lifelong costs afterwards. The discounting rates, as hon. Friends have said, are particularly mean in that respect, so to look at the issue in the round we must look seriously at the cost to the public purse of not vaccinating. That route could show us more clearly that a roll-out to a larger cohort would be cost-effective.

**Neil Carmichael** (Stroud) (Con): Meningitis Now is headquartered in my constituency. To follow on from my hon. Friend’s point, should we not think that prevention is better than cure? That should be the overall strapline to the debate.

**Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** My hon. Friend is right. I pay tribute to the charity based in his constituency and to the other meningitis charity, because they have been campaigning for many years on meningitis B and all the other strains.

The point about rolling out the vaccine to the cohorts—I urge the Minister to go further than that—is that my understanding is that once someone is vaccinated for meningitis B with Bexsero, they are covered for life. Therefore, if more cohorts are covered by the roll-out, more of the population will be covered and the entire population will become less susceptible.

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson** (Washington and Sunderland West) (Lab): My question follows on nicely from the point made by the hon. Member for Stroud (Neil Carmichael) in his intervention about the long-term costs. I first came across this issue at a reception held by Meningitis Now. I commend that charity and the Meningitis Research Foundation for their excellent work. In terms of special educational needs, long-term costs can come in when a child reaches 12 or 13 and it becomes apparent that they are not developing at the same rate as other children. All sorts of educational implications should be factored into the long-term costs.

**Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** I could not agree more. That is why the CEMIPP group study should look at not only the medical costs but the educational costs, the

[*Geoffrey Clifton-Brown*]

cost of carers and so on. There are considerable costs to the public purse. We tend, under our democratic system, to be quite short-termist in our view of such matters. I am involved at the moment in work on drugs for cystic fibrosis, to which exactly the same issues apply. After the considerable cost at the outset, there is a lifelong benefit to babies from getting such drugs. If we are going to carry out a cost-benefit analysis for the meningitis B vaccination, that is what we should consider.

**Dr Philippa Whitford** (Central Ayrshire) (SNP): I agree with the vast majority of what the hon. Gentleman says. In actual fact, it was not possible to trial Bexsero in humans because this is such a rare condition, and therefore we do not yet know whether the immunity will be for life.

**Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** I am extremely grateful to the hon. Lady. The benefit of these debates is that we always have a professional on hand who can give us the last word on the subject. My sister is a GP and would no doubt have given me that same advice.

I am grateful for the chance to speak in this debate. This is a tragic disease with tragic consequences. I urge the Minister to go further, and faster in rolling out a good, safe vaccine that will give immunity to a larger section of the population.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**Mark Pritchard (in the Chair):** Order. Normally I would call a Member from the Opposition Benches at this point. It would be Hywel Williams in this case, but he has not been here for one hour of the debate, for reasons that he has explained to me. I have some discretion, but I think it is only fair that I call now Peter Heaton-Jones, who has been here for the whole debate, and then Dr Sarah Wollaston, who was in the main Chamber for the health statement and is Chair of the Select Committee on Health.

5.42 pm

**Peter Heaton-Jones** (North Devon) (Con): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Pritchard. I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Bath (Ben Howlett) and the Petitions Committee on securing this incredibly important debate. I also pay tribute to the many families and charities whose tireless work has been instrumental in bringing us to this stage.

Two months ago, I was visited at my surgery in the village of Braunton in North Devon by my constituents Anthony and Jodie Cross. Mr and Mrs Cross told me about their daughters, Millie and Lydia, who both contracted meningitis B as young children. Millie was seven months old when she suffered from the disease. She went to hospital and was successfully treated, but on the day she returned home from hospital, her sister Lydia, who was nearly three, became ill. As the illness tragically developed, both of Lydia's legs were badly damaged by septicaemia and had to be amputated below the knee.

That was nearly 12 years ago. Lydia has gone on to become a remarkable young woman and, with her family, a doughty and brave campaigner. Nothing illustrates

that better than Lydia's own words. She wrote an article for my local newspaper, the *North Devon Journal*, in May 2014, when she was just 13 years of age. Her words sum up better than I could what a remarkable young woman she is and how she has fought this disease so bravely. She says,

“I became a double below knee amputee when I was two due to meningitis and septicaemia. Sometimes having a disability is really hard but then other times it doesn't really bother me. People may not realise how everyday things that they take for granted are much harder for me to do. I love all sports but I do get upset when I can't participate because my legs really hurt, or I have sores where they've rubbed. I started to really enjoy blade running but due to infections and needing the bones trimmed in my legs, I haven't been able to do it for months now. Hopefully, soon though, I can get back to training with the North Devon Athletics Club...I can then get my blades altered with new sockets and really train and focus on hopefully going to the next Paralympics in Rio, where I'd like to compete in the 100 metres (fingers crossed). I'm desperate to get back to doing it again. It's really annoying when you have the determination to do something but your 'disability' stops you.

I've probably had about seven bone trimming operations and my most recent one was about seven weeks ago. It's painful, but more annoying because I can't wear my prosthetic legs for about six to eight weeks afterwards. I'm also unable to attend school—Braunton Academy—during this time so I do a lot of school work at home, but I really miss seeing all my friends. I've got an amazing group of friends. They treat me just as Lydia (their mad friend), not a girl who's an amputee and I love that. I'm happier when people don't treat me differently because I'm only missing the bottom part of my legs and I'm just the same as any other teenager (loud, annoying, always sleeping in and very untidy)...

Even though I'm only 13, I've been able to have the most amazing opportunities, that I'm sure I wouldn't have had if I hadn't become an amputee. But the one I'm most proud of is being the youngest patron for Help For Heroes, which is such a huge honour. I've met many of our wounded heroes who have lost far more than me... and...are my inspiration and friends. Even though I'm a teenager and an amputee which makes me 'different', I still consider myself very lucky and I am definitely very happy. I've got an amazing family and friends and I wouldn't change anything about my life because that's what makes me 'me'.”

I thought it was worth reading that quite extraordinary article to the House at some length, because it sums up better than I could why we are here today.

Clearly, this is a matter of huge public interest and concern. When Mr and Mrs Cross came to see me, they told me about the growing petition seeking an extension of the men B vaccine to all children up to the age of 11. Today, that petition has in excess of 820,000 signatures—the most received by any petition since the new process was launched. I agree with hon. Members that it is good that we have changed our procedures in the House to allow such a petition to be debated in this way.

In considering the matter today, it is of course important to put the medical and scientific evidence front and centre. We should base our decision on that and that alone. Our decision must be evidence-based, which is why I agree wholeheartedly with my hon. Friend the Member for Bath that we should ask the JCVI to conduct a thorough review of the medical evidence. It is an important principle that Ministers should not make what amount to clinical decisions. Most Ministers—indeed, most MPs—are not scientists or doctors, although there are notable and extremely respected exceptions to that rule in the Chamber today, to whom we have listened very carefully indeed. We must take account of the



expertise and advice of the JCVI, which is why the right approach is to thoroughly review the scientific and medical evidence.

This Government have shown that they are willing to act on this issue. As we have heard, a men B immunisation programme for infants under the age of one was introduced in September 2015, in line with the JCVI's recommendations. In addition, the Government have requested that the JCVI research the evidence for extending the men B vaccination programme up to the age of two. Those are both welcome steps, and I hope they show that we are pushing on an at least partially open door and that the Government are willing to listen. I know that the Minister is listening today, and I look forward to hearing her summing-up.

The elephant in the room is the cost, which has been referred to, and it cannot be ignored. There is only so much money available in the Department of Health budget—I made that very point two weeks ago in a debate in the House on the need for compensation for those affected by the contaminated blood scandal.

**Mrs Helen Grant:** On cost, does my hon. Friend agree that the earliest possible safe introduction—“safe” being the important word—of a competing product to Bexsero could help patient access by reducing market prices and increasing availability?

**Peter Heaton-Jones:** I thank my hon. Friend for that intervention. I was much taken by comments that two of my hon. Friends made about cost. My hon. Friend the Member for Bury North (Mr Nuttall) made a powerful point in suggesting that we should be looking elsewhere for contributions towards the funding—it should come from those who, frankly, have decided to do harm to themselves rather than from small children who are in no way to blame for the position in which they find themselves. My hon. Friend the Member for The Cotswolds (Geoffrey Clifton-Brown) said—I wrote this down, because I thought it was telling—that we should consider very carefully the cost of not vaccinating, and I am sure the Minister will have taken that important point on board.

Cost is an issue to consider, which is why it is important that we look at the scientific evidence and carefully take on board what the experts from the JCVI and elsewhere say about this issue, as I know we will. We need to get this matter dealt with soon, because time is of the essence. Families are being affected as we speak, in the same tragic way as, in North Devon, Mr and Mrs Cross and their daughters Millie and Lydia have been. Their bravery, selflessness and hard work in pushing this issue forward, along with that of many other families and campaigners, is the reason why we are here today. I say to the Minister that we should listen to them, and we must not let them down.

5.52 pm

**Dr Sarah Wollaston (Totnes) (Con):** It is a pleasure to follow my hon. Friend the Member for North Devon (Peter Heaton-Jones), and I apologise to my hon. Friend the Member for Bath (Ben Howlett) for missing his opening statement, because of a statement in the main Chamber.

I start by thanking all the families who gave evidence to the Petitions Committee and the Health Committee.

Through their very brave and dignified testimony, they have done more to raise awareness and save lives than any Government-led awareness campaign could possibly hope to achieve.

It is wonderful to be in a debate in which we are airing the positive benefits of vaccination, which has undoubtedly been one of the greatest achievements of modern science. We stand on the brink of eradicating polio from the world, and it is worth pausing to thank all those who have been involved in the development of vaccination over the years.

**Neil Carmichael:** At this point, I would like to salute Dr Edward Jenner, who worked on a smallpox vaccination and was based in my constituency. That underlines the importance of vaccination, and that work then is directly linked to the work of Meningitis Now.

**Dr Wollaston:** I thank my hon. Friend. In fact, I will take us back even further by mentioning Ben Franklin, who said that

“an Ounce of Prevention is worth a Pound of Cure.”

He was referring to fire services in Philadelphia, of course, but the principle still stands.

In paying tribute to all who have brought us to where we are today, we should remind ourselves that vaccination is becoming increasingly complex to develop. Bexsero is being developed through reverse antigen mining and is extraordinarily expensive. That is why we have to consider cost-effectiveness, because in a system where finances are limited, what might be displaced if a new intervention is funded? In other words, we in this House and beyond have a responsibility to ensure that the money we spend can save as many lives as possible, and to consider that in the round.

That is why it is important to take account of the work of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation in making its incredibly difficult decisions and judgments. It is absolutely important that we allow the JCVI to carry out its work without undue political interference. The role of this House is, of course, to raise awareness and to hold the Government to account for the way in which—and the framework under which—the JCVI operates. However, our role must never be to lean directly on members of that committee in the very difficult decisions that they make. I pay tribute to the JCVI—to Professor Andrew Pollard and his team—for their work. Their decisions are extraordinarily difficult, and they need to apply the science with a combination of judgment and sensitivity. It is absolutely right that we regularly review the criteria that they are able to take into account.

I thank the Minister for her letter today confirming that the cost-effectiveness methodology for immunisation programmes and procurements working group, or CEMIPP—it may need a catchier title—is going to publish its work in full. Perhaps she will say whether she has now received that report. It is absolutely important that the principle of transparency applies, so that we can all be clear about the decision-making process.

I support Members who have said that we should review the so-called discounting rate if it means that, as my hon. Friend the Member for Faversham and Mid Kent (Helen Whatley) has pointed out, by the time someone is in their 20s, effectively no account is taken

[Dr Wollaston]

of them. It clearly seems reasonable that we apply the same principle that is applied to public health decision making in the NICE methodology, with its lower discount rate, so that we can take full account of that situation. It is also right for the House to reflect on views beyond this place by thinking, for example, about the social costs. I do not wish to repeat the many important points that have been made about that today.

The JCVI's independence is absolutely vital. We in this House are not in a position to make judgments about the effectiveness and safety of vaccination. We have to rely on experts, and we are very grateful to them for their work. However, one thing that we have to do is hold the Secretary of State to account for implementing the decisions of the JCVI in a timely manner and for the time that it takes to carry out the negotiations on the cost of vaccines.

I would like to make a further point, which I do not think Members have brought up today. The level of variation in the roll-out of existing vaccinations needs to be looked at. During the Health Committee's current inquiry into public health, we have been hearing evidence about the difficulty that public health professionals and directors of public health have in being able to access the data and information that they need to tell them where the gaps are in the roll-out of vaccination. Perhaps the Minister will update the House on where we are in that regard, because it clearly cannot make sense that artificial barriers have sprung up between those who are responsible for implementing the programme and those who are delivering it on the ground. It would be helpful to have an update on that issue.

It is also absolutely right that the House holds the Minister to account on what is being done to follow up the work that is happening on sepsis. As she will know, early diagnosis is critical. Although we want to focus on the number of cases that we can prevent, we cannot prevent them all, so we must also focus on early diagnosis and intervention and on ensuring that we have the right pathways in hospitals, so that the time it takes from the moment someone enters a hospital until they receive life-saving antibiotic therapy is kept to a minimum. Perhaps the Minister will update us on that.

**Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** I hesitate to intervene on my hon. Friend, especially as she is such an expert on this subject, but as I understand it, Bexsero was licensed by the European Medicines Agency on 1 January 2013. It was not introduced in this country until more than two and a half years later, and people will have died of the disease in the interim. Does my hon. Friend not think that is too long a process when the argument is not about the safety of the drug but purely about the price? Something needs to change. The negotiation with the drugs companies needs to be done in a different way.

**Dr Wollaston:** I agree that there needs to be a better and faster procedure for negotiating about cost, but we cannot get away from cost, because, as I mentioned, cost-effectiveness is not an abstract concept. It means asking, could we save more lives by spending the same amount of money differently? If the cost of the drug is exorbitantly high, would it be better to invest the money in, for example, early diagnosis and intervention? Those

complex decisions should not be made by politicians. Politicians and the public should be part of the process that sets the guidelines and advises the committee, but it is not for this House to make those decisions, although I absolutely agree that of course it would be better if the negotiations could be done more quickly.

I end where I began, by paying tribute to the very brave families for the evidence that they gave. I hope that the Minister will do everything in her power to ensure that we reach decisions as quickly and as fairly as possible.

[PHILIP DAVIES *in the Chair*]

6.1 pm

**Hywel Williams (Arfon) (PC):** I am glad of the opportunity to speak in the debate, and I congratulate the hon. Member for Bath (Ben Howlett) on securing it. I am grateful for the somewhat unexpected opportunity to make a brief contribution. I should explain my late arrival: I was detained because I had another, long-standing engagement. I was able to leave because I was in the fortunate position of being the chairman and so could curtail discussion in order to attend this debate.

An overwhelming case has been made on this matter by the petitioners, but also, importantly for us as Members, by our constituents in the campaigns carried out locally. My constituent Janice Roberts has been instrumental in raising the issue locally and in raising awareness among other families. She has combined that with being a champion for local families. We are all very grateful to her for the work that she has done.

An hon. Member referred earlier to being a parent of some standing. I am a new parent, with a three-month-old daughter and a son of two and a half, and I think I can imagine the pain and anguish that parents face with this appalling and terrible illness. As a new parent, I live in fear of what might happen to my child. For me and other parents, cost is obviously not an issue where our own children are concerned, but in the real world, of course, cost is an issue. Inflation is higher in the health service than in the rest of the country, whether one wants to use the retail prices index or the consumer prices index, but in the face of the pain and anguish and the illness of little children, cost just has to take a back seat. From what we have heard, and from what I had already read, this drug is safe. The cost should not be an issue. Every child should have this vaccine, and I am very glad to add my voice to that call.

6.3 pm

**Dr Philippa Whitford (Central Ayrshire) (SNP):** I apologise to the Chamber for being late; that was due to the health statement earlier. I, too, begin by paying tribute to the families who attended the combined Petitions and Health Committees last month. Their bravery in going through their experience again was incredible, and it was obviously very moving for us to listen to.

Funnily enough, this is World Immunisation Week, so the debate could not have been timed any better. Just think of the lethal diseases and conditions that we have tackled across the world because of immunisation. The hon. Member for Totnes (Dr Wollaston) referred to polio; we have not beaten that yet, but we are on the way.

Meningitis is an inflammation of the meninges, the covering of the brain, and that can happen with other diseases, not just meningitis B or any of the meningococcal diseases, but they are the most serious; they are the ones that result in the biggest harm. There is A, B, C, W and Y. When I was a younger doctor, which was a wee while ago, meningitis C was the big concern. It was very common in teenagers as well as in children, and there was always a big peak when people went off to university, but in 1999 the vaccine for that was introduced. It was given to those right up to the age of 18, and 90% of those cases are now prevented, which is a real transformation.

That leaves meningitis B, which is the most lethal type and affects people very quickly. We have heard that from the families and from hon. Members in the debate. There are not many conditions whereby someone will go from being slightly off-colour to either death or permanent disability in less than 12 hours. Having worked in a paediatric hospital and dealt with children with meningitis, I can tell hon. Members that for a doctor, it is terrifying. As was talked about in the Committee, it is not that doctors think, "Och, no, it won't be that; I'll ignore it." It is simply that it is so hard to pick out that child. When they are a little bit hinky, as we would say in Scotland—a little bit off—it is not obvious, but there are signs that people should be looking for.

As the hon. Member for Faversham and Mid Kent (Helen Whately) said, do not wait for the rash. I was delighted to see in the Meningitis Now advice that that is written in big red letters: "Don't wait for a rash". Do not wait for the rash if the child is quiet, not reacting normally and very feverish. As a doctor, what I would say is of real concern is cold hands and feet. If a child has a fever, yet has cold hands and feet, that to me is a sign of septicaemia—a sign that the blood supply to the extremities is beginning to shut down. That should be a warning sign long before we get to the rash. Reading the testimony produced by the families and the petitions group is absolutely heartbreaking. In case after case, the first warning sign that the parents or the medical professionals recognised was that horrible rash.

It is important that we take account of the long-term disability. One in 10 of these children will not survive. One in three of them will be left with a severe disability. That includes brain damage, cognitive and sensory impairment and, as we have heard, limb amputation. That is horrific to think of in little children. I can tell hon. Members as a doctor that this impinges on doctors as well. If someone has seen a child and not spotted meningitis, or seen a child and watched them just slip through their fingers, that is absolutely horrific. Meningitis moves so fast that vaccination has always been the holy grail. We now have it, but we probably have not rolled it out widely enough, because of the cost-benefit analysis.

I will echo the hon. Member for Totnes: there is no question but that the decision should not be made in this House. It is not a political decision; it must be made in the cold light of evidence of benefit, but that is not just cost-benefit; it is also risk-benefit. We spend a lot of our time being lobbied by constituents who are against vaccination. Think of the saga we have been through with the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine in the last decade, and here we are with a movie reigniting all of that.

There was no trial with Bexsero, so we are still gathering the data through this year. I am talking about the efficacy, safety, side effects and, crucially, as I mentioned earlier, whether people have permanent protection. We do not know that yet, but questions on those points have to be answered, so it is crucial that the body responsible is the JCVI. On my reading, the key problem has been in the discounting. Of course if people invest money in any treatment, they want a quick return. That is what the City of London would look for as well. But we are talking about preventing things—preventing damage that will be with someone for their whole life. A child's life is written off, before they are 28, as really not having any additional value in being saved. A discounting of 3.5% means that that value is gone at that age, even though we have perhaps saved 70 years of life. In particular, if the child never got ill in the first place, we would have saved a disabled life; we would have saved a life of suffering, and the cost to society and the family of looking after a child who perhaps faces incredible disabilities and suffering.

Every year, that life is discounted at 3.5% until we reach zero, yet we accept that public health measures, such as smoking cessation, take a long time to give us a return. Having seen the results of people smoking, I am not quite ready to say that we should give up on those public health measures. We need people to stop smoking as that will save us money in the long term. However, we should be using the same rate, because if we were discounting at 1.5% a year, the catch-up up to the age of five would have been considered cost-effective. It is not that the rate should not be down to the JCVI, or that it should not be based on proper medical evidence. The issue is the tool that was given by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, based on the Treasury figure of 3.5%, although appraisal committees can consider anything between zero and 6%. The key thing is to ask for that evidence to be looked at—specifically the long-term costs of major disability—and to look at the impact on the decisions of using that lower discount rate.

The other thing mentioned was a study of adolescents. In meningitis C, we were particularly after the adolescents. Babies do not carry meningococcal meningitis; teenagers do. When we vaccinate little children, it is for the individual protection of that child. The protection that is given by teenagers is herd immunity. When they stop carrying it, babies will catch it less. We do not know whether that will happen with Bexsero as it is such a different vaccine. As the hon. Member for Totnes mentioned, the whole structure is totally different. Normally, we are looking at the sugars on the surface of bacteria. Bexsero was done through genomics—identifying protein to create antigens and antibodies. It is so expensive because it has been done in a totally different and novel way.

We need to do a study on adolescents. There seem to have been a couple of years of talking about doing it, yet we have not even started or laid out the terms and parameters. It is really important that we answer the questions with evidence, not just by thinking that we would quite like to splash the vaccine around. The case for extending the catch-up to five years is stronger as half the cases will happen before the age of two and the majority will happen before the age of five. The cost burden for a child who requires 24/7 care for their entire life—particularly when they are older and their parents

[Dr Philippa Whitford]

are no longer looking after them—including the burden on their family, friends and society, is enormous. I find it hard to believe that it would not be cost-effective to prevent that.

For me, as a doctor, vaccination is almost the only way. The one thing I do not recognise in the cost-effectiveness balance is the talk about peace of mind. As we explored with families in Committee hearings, peace of mind caused some of the problem, because some parents thought, “My child is vaccinated against meningitis.” We cannot cast that up. A simple change in the discounting method and the inclusion of long-term social care costs are the most important things.

Even if we roll the vaccination out, we must remember that there are other types of meningitis, and that there is more than one strain of meningitis B. We need to get that great little Meningitis Now card out to families and parents as widely as possible, but we also need to get this message to doctors: do not wait for the rash. Look at the child, listen to the parents, and, as I said earlier, think about cold hands and feet. We have the potential to stop the damage of this absolutely horrific disease, and I hope that we take the issue back to the JCVI.

6.14 pm

**Andrew Gwynne** (Denton and Reddish) (Lab): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Davies, as it was to serve under that of Mr Pritchard earlier. I pay tribute to the hon. Member for Bath (Ben Howlett) for opening the debate in such an eloquent and detailed fashion. The way he set out the terms of the debate is a credit to the petitioners, and we have heard a set of powerful contributions from right across the Chamber.

A week ago, I said that the Petitions Committee debate on brain tumour research was a credit to the way in which the House of Commons operates. That has followed through to this week’s debate. I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall North (Mr Winnick) and the hon. Members for Foyle (Mark Durkan), for Faversham and Mid Kent (Helen Whately), for Erewash (Maggie Throup), for Bury North (Mr Nuttall), for The Cotswolds (Geoffrey Clifton-Brown), for North Devon (Peter Heaton-Jones), and for Arfon (Hywel Williams), as well as the Chair of the Health Committee, the hon. Member for Totnes (Dr Wollaston), and the hon. Member for Central Ayrshire (Dr Whitford), who leads on health for the Scottish National party. It is always a pleasure to follow her expertise on such matters. Mainly, I congratulate all 823,000 petitioners for the enormity of their campaign, which led to the petition becoming, I think, the most popular e-petition so far. This is a huge issue for so many families affected by the disease.

The impact of meningitis B is felt long after initial contraction, and about one in 10 suffering from it will die. According to research published in *The Lancet*, one in three survivors will be left with lifelong disability. There is, necessarily, a huge cost to society and the individual when people are left without the ability to lead a normal life. Considering that there is a possibility of tackling the disease with just one vaccine, the issue deserves our undivided attention. Some hon. Members who are regulars in debates on health will know that I am always banging the drum for prevention, and I am

not the only one. Simon Stevens, in his “Five Year Forward View”, identifies £5 billion of savings later in the review period that could be made as a direct consequence of prevention early on in that five-year forward view. Meningitis B is one instance where the case for prevention is very strong indeed. The ongoing cost to the NHS of a patient who survives meningitis can run into millions of pounds in the worst cases.

The UK is leading the world in the fight against meningitis. Our immunisation and surveillance programmes are world-class, and everybody involved in them should be proud of the lives that have been saved and the lifelong disabilities that have been prevented over the years. However, as I will explain, we still have a long way to go. The joint work of the Petitions Committee and the Health Committee has been instrumental in really getting to the bottom of an issue that has been trundling along for far too long.

The notion of Committees taking evidence on matters raised in e-petitions is quite new, and it is right that scrutiny work is guided by the public. That was recognised by my hon. Friend the Member for Warrington North (Helen Jones), who chairs the Petitions Committee. That the Petitions Committee is proactive with other Committees of the House will be of great importance for the future work of not just the Petitions Committee, but the other Select Committees of the House of Commons. I hope that in this instance, this work will be of some comfort to the many hundreds of thousands of people across the country who are signing petitions on a variety of issues. Indeed, I checked just before the debate and 1,240 people in my constituency signed the petition before it closed. Almost exactly the same number signed it in the constituency of the Chair of the Petitions Committee, and a similar number—1,311—signed it in the constituency of the hon. Member for Bath. I am sure that the Minister appreciates the depth of feeling on the matter right across the country.

I will get into the detail, because the debate is not as clearcut as many of us would like. Indeed, very few issues in health are simple. There is always more than one side to consider, and I appreciate the merits of the Government’s case. The Minister will argue that the Government are rightly following the recommendations of the JCVI, which the Opposition agree is correct in principle, but not, having looked at this in a bit more detail, necessarily in this instance. As we have already heard, the JCVI recommended an adolescent carriage study—this was more than two years ago—to determine what bacteria young people are carrying, and my understanding is that that study has not yet started. It takes a considerable amount of time for such a study to collect usable data, so will the Minister confirm that the funding needed to carry out the study will be made available? I have seen a reasonable timetable for the work set out by Meningitis Now and the Meningitis Research Foundation. If the Department of Health will not be following that timetable, will the Minister confirm when an adolescent carriage study will begin? Has she ensured that there are sufficient supplies of the vaccine to carry out the study?

Health economics, which other Members have mentioned, frustrates me a little because there is a bit of guess-ology, or a wet finger in the air, to it. Unless the lifetime cost and benefits of, and all the associated issues with, a particular drug can be assessed, it is

difficult to assess the true costs and benefits of a particular treatment. I do not think that lifetime costs are adequately considered when looking at the cost-effectiveness of drugs and treatments. Indeed, that point was raised in the Procedure Committee's final evidence session. Professor Andrew Pollard, chair of the JCVI, suggested that the JCVI was concerned that it "might be underestimating" the lifetime costs—that point was eloquently put today by the hon. Member for The Cotswolds. Dr Mary Ramsay, head of immunisation, hepatitis and blood safety at Public Health England, pointed out that social costs, such as out-of-pocket expenses, are excluded from the JCVI formula. Likewise, as we have heard from the hon. Member for Central Ayrshire, the peace-of-mind benefits are difficult to measure, but they are also left out of the formula.

Will the Minister assure Members here today that the working group has considered how to reform the JCVI framework so that some of the health gains for children are adequately represented, and so that prevention is prioritised in the formula? I understand that the JCVI agreed to review the impact of the vaccination programme within two years of its decision. I hope that, in light of the exceptionally strong public interest in this issue, the JCVI will, as part of that review, reassess the case for extending the vaccination to all children. The current cost-effectiveness framework used to assess vaccines tends to be a little unfair when it comes to relatively rare but severe diseases in children, and I accept that changes to those procedures do not come quickly, but that is no excuse for the unnecessary and bureaucratic delays that we saw in the introduction of the vaccine for the under-ones. I hope to see promising results this autumn, showing that the vaccine works in a mainstream programme.

Finally, if the JCVI were to make a recommendation to extend the reach of the meningitis B vaccine, I would not hesitate strongly to encourage Ministers to extend the vaccination's coverage at the earliest opportunity. The principle of quasi-independence for the JCVI is important, and it should be defended, as we have heard from other hon. Members today, but that is not to say that its procedures and remit should not be continually re-evaluated to ensure that it takes the right factors into account. I hope the Minister will listen extremely carefully to all the arguments that have been raised on both sides of the Chamber in this debate and will see the strength of public opinion on this issue as genuine and real. Given that she has a considerable amount of time in which to respond, I am sure that we will get a thorough and full reply to all the questions put by hon. Members today. I am sure that the petitioners watching the debate, both here and through online forums, will be interested in what she has to say.

6.25 pm

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Jane Ellison):** I thank all hon. Members who have spoken in this important debate. As others did, I start by offering my condolences to the family of Faye Burdett, whose tragic death sparked such interest in the e-petition that led to this debate, and to all the other parents. Their powerful testimony on their personal family tragedies has led us and their Members of Parliament here today, and they have helped to stimulate interest in the petition, which has huge support, with more than 820,000 signatures. The petition goes right to the heart of the concern that parents and the public have about meningitis.

I have listened to the many hon. Members who have spoken this afternoon and, like everyone in the Chamber, I have been moved by the stories we have heard of how both meningitis and septicaemia have affected families and, in some cases, have tragically changed their lives forever. As has been made clear, meningococcal meningitis—the infection and inflammation of the lining of the brain—and meningococcal septicaemia, or blood poisoning, which for simplicity I will refer to as meningitis, are very serious infections that can be severely disabling and even fatal, as has been movingly and, in some cases, starkly demonstrated by hon. Members today. It is right that we should have robust arrangements in place to protect against this disease. In fact, we are the only country in the world with a vaccination programme for all the major causes of meningitis, and it is clear from the strength of feeling today that hon. Members fully support the meningitis and other world-class vaccination programmes that we have in place to protect individuals, particularly children, and the community as a whole by vaccinating against preventable diseases.

For 35 years successive Governments have based decisions on vaccination programmes on independent expert advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, and it will help to answer one or two points that have been raised if I clarify the JCVI's legal basis. Since 1 April 2009, the Health Protection (Vaccination) Regulations 2009 have placed a duty on the Secretary of State for Health in England

"to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the recommendation of the JCVI is implemented"

where certain conditions are met, including that the recommendation is

"in response to a question referred to the JCVI by the Secretary of State"

and that it is

"based on an assessment which demonstrates cost-effectiveness".

That is the basis on which the JCVI was constructed and under which it operates.

At the recommendation of the JCVI, as the House knows, we introduced in September 2015 a men B programme, using the vaccine Bexsero, for babies born on or after 1 July 2015. The babies receive a dose of vaccine at two months, with a further dose at four months and a booster at 12 months. To ensure that we have protected as many infants born in 2015 as possible from men B before the usual winter peak in cases, we also offered the vaccine to babies born in May and June 2015 as part of a one-off catch-up programme, which was possible because the vaccinations could take place when the babies were due to attend their routine immunisation appointments at three and four months.

By May 2016, all infants under one will have become eligible for the men B vaccine, and by May 2017 all children under two will have become eligible for vaccination, which clarifies the points made by my hon. Friends the Members for Erewash (Maggie Throup) and, in particular, for The Cotswolds (Geoffrey Clifton-Brown). Obviously, much of today's debate has focused on extending the men B vaccination programme, and hon. Members and those who signed the e-petition want us to go further, which I absolutely understand. The term "meningitis" strikes fear into the heart of any parent. Public Health England surveys parental attitudes, and its surveys regularly show that meningitis is the disease that parents fear the

[Jane Ellison]

most. When we hear sad stories and see utterly heart-breaking pictures of children such as Faye, of course it adds to parents' fear and worry. They want what is best for their children, which includes protecting them from meningitis if there is a means available to do so.

The Government feel the same, which is why we became the first country in the world to introduce a programme using Bexsero. However, although meningitis is a much-feared disease, it is now much rarer, thanks in large part to the success of this country's immunisation programmes. Cases are currently at their lowest numbers in more than two decades. To give the House an example drawn on by the hon. Member for Central Ayrshire (Dr Whitford), who spoke for the Scottish National party, cases of meningitis C have dropped from a peak of around 900 in 1998-99 to about 30 cases in 2014-15. Very few children will get meningitis, and thankfully, deaths are uncommon, although no less tragic.

The hon. Member for Central Ayrshire also mentioned teenagers. As I have enough time, I will draw the House's attention to the men ACWY programme that we have introduced. Men W is the strain of meningitis that has increased; cases have been increasing since 2009. There were about 50 cases in 2012-13, about 100 in 2013-14 and around 180 in 2014-15. We rapidly introduced a vaccination programme this year as part of an emergency response to control the national outbreak of group W meningococcal disease. Provisional data show men ACWY vaccine uptake at around 34% in the urgent catch-up cohort aged 17 to 18 in 2014-15. I say that to enlist the help of hon. Members when we try to increase awareness of the men W campaign again this year. We need any help that can be given in publicising it. As I remarked with one colleague before the debate, it is considerably harder to get teenagers to the GP than small infants. It is an important campaign involving a very dangerous strain of meningitis that we must continue to bear down on.

However, the petition is about men B. It calls for the men B programme to be extended to children up to 11 years, although several hon. Members have suggested that up to five years may be a compromise. I fully understand why parents and the public want the extension, but as we have begun to explore in this debate, it is not a simple matter; I hope that hon. Members agree. Some of the reasons for that have been teased out, and I will say a little more about them.

Any Government must make the best use of the resources that they have to ensure that they deliver the maximum health benefit to the population. The greatest burden of meningitis B falls on the under-ones, who have therefore been our focus, on expert advice. As we have heard, such judgments are based on NICE's rules on cost-effectiveness, which have helped successive generations of Ministers to make difficult decisions that are none the less fair and justifiable and reflect, as the Chair of the Health Committee said, the many challenges across our healthcare system.

I have spoken in detail to Professor Andy Pollard, the chair of the JCVI, to understand what process the committee went through when considering the men B vaccination and to be assured that the committee's recommendation is robust. I have been reassured that the programme we have is the right one, targeting the

group of children at highest risk of disease and death. Professor Pollard confirmed that a catch-up programme for one to four-year-olds would not be cost-effective at a realistic vaccine price. Also, the disease is so rare in those aged five to 11 that a programme for that age group would not be cost-effective, and the JCVI could not recommend it.

**Dr Whitford:** Is it not the case that the JCVI did a cost-effectiveness analysis using a 1.5% discount, which is the same as in public health, and at that level a catch-up programme for one to five-year-olds would be cost-effective?

**Jane Ellison:** I am coming to that point, but I thank the hon. Lady for her intervention.

As it stands, on the evidence and advice that I have received, I cannot support extending the men B vaccination programme to older children, but I emphasise that the JCVI keeps under review the evidence relating to all vaccination programmes, and I know that it will consider all the points made in this important debate. If the committee's advice changes, I will consider it as a priority. The JCVI also keeps the eligibility criteria under review. I wrote to the chair on 17 March this year, following the evidence session with parents, asking the committee to review the cost-effectiveness evidence for one to two-year-olds, which Professor Pollard mentioned in his evidence to the committees. I await formal advice on that. Again, if the JCVI's advice changes, I will consider it as a priority.

Many of the contributions made by hon. Members in this debate have queried whether the cost-effectiveness methodology used by our experts is right for immunisation programmes. The shadow Minister drew out that point, as did others, including my hon. Friend the Member for Bath (Ben Howlett), who led the debate on behalf of the committees. As some hon. Members said, an independent expert group—the Chair of the Health Committee gave it its full title, but I will call it CEMIPP for ease—is considering the cost-effectiveness methodology for immunisation generally. It includes factors such as peace of mind, cost of long-term social care for surviving children and how prevention is taken into account, all of which have been mentioned in this debate, as well as the issue of discounting.

The CEMIPP review is considering whether current discount rates are appropriate for vaccination in general, and it will report in the summer. I will consider any recommendations on that, although obviously I cannot pre-empt decisions in this debate. As I indicated to the Chair of the Health Committee when she made her contribution, I look forward to receiving the report in the summer. I have committed to publishing the report, and I do so again. If it is of interest, I will also provide the Petitions and Health Committees with a written briefing summarising the report and the Government's proposed next steps when we get it.

Several hon. Members have expressed concern about whether the research requested by JCVI into whether a men B vaccination programme for adolescents would be cost-effective will take place and how long it might take. I can confirm that a preliminary study of the meningococcal strains carried by teenagers is now under way and will report in February 2017. It will inform a larger study of the effect of men B vaccination in that

group. As the Chair of the Health Committee said, it is about exactly how the impact of the larger group would bed down on the impact of the disease in smaller children. I commit to the House to commission the second, wider study following on from the preliminary study now under way on strains.

I recognise that Members have concerns—again, the hon. Member for Central Ayrshire mentioned this issue—about how long the research is taking. I have had extensive discussions about that, because like hon. Members, I want quick answers. However, things are sometimes difficult to weigh in the balance. Robust scientific studies on which long-lasting and important decisions can be taken take time. My scientific advisers have told me that this is a particularly complex study, and that a previous study had inconclusive findings. We want to get this one right and ensure that we have a definitive answer. I am hopeful that this study could start in December 2017. The House has my complete assurance that we will always go with as much speed as we can while maintaining important robustness, so that we reach answers on which evidence-based policies can be made.

Much has been made about the importance of raising awareness and ensuring quick treatment. As many have said, no matter what the nature of the vaccination programme, there will still be cases, and we need to bear that in mind. Many Members have spoken of the reassurance that vaccinations offer and how they set minds at rest; it came out particularly in some of the evidence sessions. Although it is important that it reassures parents, I take this opportunity to underline and stress that vaccination is not a silver bullet. Even with a vaccination programme up to the age of 11, there would still be men B cases in under-11s, as we think that the vaccine covers only about three quarters of all men B strains and no vaccine is 100% effective.

A number of people have made the point, including the hon. Member for Central Ayrshire in an earlier intervention, about understanding the impact of the programme. No other country has introduced a free vaccination programme.

There is as yet no evidence regarding the real-world effectiveness of Bexsero in preventing meningococcal disease in a population—that is different from the safety issue—because, as has been said, incidence is too low for clinical trials to provide a reliable measure of effectiveness.

In response to points made by my hon. Friend the Member for The Cotswolds, I will say that we should have some indication later in 2016 of how effective the vaccine has been. However, establishing an accurate measure of how effective the vaccine is, how long the protection lasts and what proportion of strains it will prevent will take many years of detailed observation by Public Health England, and that clearly will feed into the ongoing review and the important decision-making process that we have. It is worth making that point.

**Mr Winnick:** I go back to what the Minister said a few moments ago. Of course there is no guarantee with vaccination; everyone recognises that. However, my constituents—no doubt she listened when I spoke about my constituents who tragically lost their child—strongly feel that if Mason, their seven-year-old boy who died, had been vaccinated against this disease, he would have lived. To a large extent, that is the essence of the

petition, the debate today and the rest of it. To repeat myself, everyone recognises that there is no guarantee, but there is a question of saving lives.

**Jane Ellison:** Of course, and I have tried to reflect on that important point. Nevertheless, raising awareness and ensuring the quick treatment of meningitis will always remain very important for that reason, so parents and healthcare professionals need to remain alert to the signs and symptoms of the disease, as was brought out in the moving speech by my hon. Friend the Member for Bury North (Mr Nuttall) when he talked about the attentiveness of Charlie's mum as she monitored his symptoms.

Let me tell the House a little about what we are doing to raise awareness among healthcare professionals. Public Health England produces a range of training materials for immunisers, which includes information on the various programmes. It also collaborates with the charities in this area to support their work to improve healthcare worker knowledge, including through the development and distribution of resources aimed at each type of healthcare professional. It runs teaching and training events, and cascades briefing notes through networks. NHS England also does work to provide tools to help GPs to recognise meningitis. A great deal of work is going on in this area, but of course there is always a need to do more.

I turn to the issue of raising awareness among parents, because that is where we can do more. I announce to the House today that I have asked Public Health England to develop a national awareness campaign that will focus on the dangerous infections that parents worry about the most, including meningitis, septicaemia and sepsis. The campaign will focus on the symptoms that parents need to look out for. To get that right, we will work with the appropriate experts and charities, and of course more details will be available in due course. I will look to keep the relevant Committees up to date with that, but it is my intention that this information should be rolled out before the peak of cases in the winter.

**Ben Howlett:** Will the Minister also confirm that she will work with the Department for Education on helping those in the teaching professions and nurseries to identify the different conditions, so that we break down the silo type of response that sometimes prevents these sorts of conversations from being had more freely?

**Jane Ellison:** I have only had initial conversations with Public Health England about the shape of the campaign, but I can assure my hon. Friend that the officials and the other people working on this campaign will look very carefully at what has been said today, and at some of the ideas that hon. Friends and other Members have put forward, and of course they will take all those points into account.

**Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:** I fear that I am becoming the bane of the Minister's life over this issue, so I apologise, but I am grateful to her for giving way. One of the issues that I raised in my speech was the unit cost. As I understand it from her reply today, she does not think that there is a case yet for rolling vaccination out to children under five. Would she undertake to keep this matter under review, and would she also undertake to

[*Geoffrey Clifton-Brown*]

ensure that the JCVI, or Department of Health officials, will continue to have discussions with GlaxoSmithKline on what the drop in the unit cost might be if all these extra vaccinations were given to under-fives?

**Jane Ellison:** I can assure the whole House that the JCVI keeps that under constant review. It is not something that is occasionally dusted off and looked at every four or five years. The committee looks at all the factors that go into making the relevant decisions. When the factors that contribute to its decision making change, it looks into them. I have already given the House the assurance that the JCVI will keep that under careful review. The Select Committees heard directly from Professor Pollard and had that assurance from him. However, I will draw the JCVI's attention to the concerns raised in this debate and the huge level of interest in the matter in the House and among the wider public.

As came out in the evidence that the JCVI gave to the Health Committee and the Petitions Committee, under the current cost-effectiveness criteria, the men B vaccination programme was only just cost-effective even for infants on JCVI's final analysis, but we did not shy away from introducing it because we know how devastating meningitis can be and how important protecting children from it is to parents. That is why we became the first country to have a programme of using Bexsero. Many other countries have asked experts to consider men B vaccine programmes, but because the cost-effectiveness is so borderline, to date only Ireland has recommended a programme. I understand that it will start in the autumn, using the same criteria as the UK's programme. We are leading the way in protecting our children from men B.

As I draw my remarks to a close, I want to reiterate Members' thanks. I appreciate the fact that so many Members have expressed their thanks to Professor Pollard and the JCVI for the complex and important work that they do. That also goes for the many clinical experts who give us their expertise on which to make these enormously difficult decisions.

**Dr Wollaston:** I am intervening because the Minister mentioned that she is drawing her remarks to a close. Can she comment on the issue I raised about the variation in roll-out and the communication issues for public health directors in being able to assess the variation in their areas?

**Jane Ellison:** I am not able to give my hon. Friend an answer today. If she does not mind, I will write to her about that. I have had a conversation about that with the public health director in my own borough, so I am aware of some of the frustrations that have been expressed. If my hon. Friend does not mind, I will write to her with more detail rather than give a response off the top of my head—her question deserves a better answer.

I want to put on the record my thanks to the meningitis charities that work tirelessly to support families affected by this terrible disease and have done so much to advance their cause. Many of them have circulated their 10-point action plan. I have touched on most of those points and indicated how the Government are responding.

Like other Members, I recognise the courage and dignity that, as has rightly been said, Mr and Mrs Burdett and the other families affected by meningitis in such a tragic way have shown over recent weeks. Nothing I can say today can make up for their loss, but I have listened very carefully to the evidence that they have bravely given to the Select Committees, and particularly the emphasis that they have put on raising awareness, which they have done so much about. I hope it is some comfort to them to know that not only their own efforts in bearing testimony but the new awareness campaign, alongside our vaccination programmes, will save lives in future.

6.48 pm

**Ben Howlett:** I thank you, Mr Davies, and Mr Pritchard, who was here earlier, for chairing the debate. There have been incredibly powerful speeches today. I have seen this place at its best many times here in Westminster Hall during debates on petitions. I thank every Member here for contributing and for listening to the 820,000-plus people across the UK who care deeply about the issue. It shows that we as parliamentarians can really connect with our constituents on issues they care passionately about. I lend my thanks to the petitioners, the families, the charities and all those who gave evidence to the joint Health Committee and Petitions Committee sittings for their time, their passion, their work around our country and their fundraising for little children, including little girls like Harmonie-Rose in my constituency and many thousands of others in the rest of the UK.

I thank the Minister for her response. I was pleased to hear about the public awareness campaign that she has just announced to the House. It is absolutely right, as my hon. Friend the Member for Totnes (Dr Wollaston) said, that the decision-making process is clinically led. Sometimes it is rather irritating when politicians come in and say, "We know best." Sometimes we do not know best, as my brother who is a doctor tells me many a time—although he is a junior doctor, but we will not get into that debate right now.

We rightly have a responsibility to hold the Government to account. Given what the Minister has just announced, I was pleased to hear her wish to report back to the Petitions Committee and the Health Committee on the reports that will be produced later in the summer. I look forward to seeing what reforms to CEMIPP will be discussed—as someone who is thoroughly dyslexic, with luck I will not end up having to spell that.

I thank all those who have taken part in the debate. This is not the end of the journey. Once we get to debate a particular subject in this Chamber, that is not the end of the road. There is no doubt that this is a long-term conversation that needs to be had. Any life lost is one too many. I thank you, Mr Davies, for chairing the debate.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Resolved,*

That this House has considered e-petition 108072 relating to the meningitis B vaccine.

6.51 pm

*Sitting adjourned.*







# Written Statements

Monday 25 April 2016

## CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### Nuisance Calls: Calling Line Identification

**The Minister for Culture and the Digital Economy (Mr Edward Vaizey):** My hon Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Baroness Neville-Rolfe), has made the following written ministerial statement:

On 12 January 2016, the Government published a consultation seeking views on a proposal to amend the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003 to make it a requirement for direct marketing callers to provide Calling Line Identification (CLI). This followed a commitment by the Government to impose such a requirement, subject to consultation, during the passage of the Consumer Rights Act 2015, and forms part of the Government's strategy to tackle the problem of nuisance calls and to protect the vulnerable and elderly in society who are most impacted by this issue.

I am today publishing the Government's response to the consultation, a copy of which will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses. The overwhelming majority of respondents to the consultation were in favour of the proposal and agreed that it would improve consumer choice and would make it easier for the regulator to take enforcement action against those who breach the rules. The consultation can also be found here.

I am therefore also laying before Parliament a statutory instrument amending the 2003 Regulations so as to implement the proposal. The requirement to provide CLI will come into force on 16 May 2016.

The Government are clear that there is no silver bullet to the problem of nuisance calls, but we are committed to working closely with regulators, industry, consumer groups and others to raise awareness and develop practical solutions to this complex issue.

Attachments can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2016-04-25/HCWS699>.

[HCWS699]

## DEFENCE

### Service Complaints Ombudsman's Annual Report

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mark Lancaster):** I am pleased to lay before Parliament today the service complaints ombudsman's annual report for 2015 on the fairness, effectiveness and efficiency of the service complaints system.

This report is published by Nicola Williams as the first service complaints ombudsman, having previously fulfilled the role of service complaints commissioner during 2015. The report also covers the work of her office, and that of the Ministry of Defence, in preparing for the implementation of the new service complaints system on 1 January 2016. It concludes that the old process was still subject to delay and so not operating efficiently.

The report acknowledges where each of the services has made improvements in 2015 to the way in which they manage complaints. This approach to continuous improvement, along with implementing lessons learned and best practice, provides a solid foundation on which to introduce the new complaints system. This is a shorter and quicker process, and one which strengthens oversight and accountability through the powers of the new ombudsman.

Unlike in previous years, there are no new recommendations in this report. The ombudsman has decided that as the new service complaints system was only introduced on 1 January 2016, it is only right to give it a period of time to operate before properly assessing its effectiveness. The ombudsman's annual report for 2016 will report on the performance of the new system in its first year, making any recommendations as appropriate.

I will place a copy of my response to the ombudsman in the Library of the House.

[HCWS698]

## ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

### Joint Transport and Environment Informal Council

**The Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (Amber Rudd):** Today my noble hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth) has made the following statement:

I attended the Joint Transport and Environment Informal Council in Amsterdam on 14 and 15 April.

The main focus of the meeting was on the future of European transport, the challenges in the transition to a zero-emissions economy and the steps that should be taken in the EU to develop a sustainable and smart transport and mobility system.

On 14 April, Environment Ministers were invited to discuss "Green Mobility" and the possibilities of hastening and scaling up the transition towards cleaner fuels and zero-emissions mobility. I outlined the UK's approach to the future development of new car CO<sub>2</sub> emissions regulation that promotes a quicker transition to low emission vehicles. In parallel, Transport Ministers were invited to discuss "Smart Mobility" and asked in particular to offer reflections on the proposed Amsterdam declaration on connected and autonomous vehicles (CAVs), where Department for Transport officials offered support. Discussion focused on the ways Europe could adopt a more co-ordinated approach, to ensure the technologies would be developed with inter-operability in mind and the main challenges with respect to legislation, co-operative intelligent transport systems, liability, data protection and privacy.

Following lunch, I participated in a joint visit to an Innovation Expo showcasing more than 200 projects and innovative designs on various topics. I then attended a joint Transport and Environment interactive session on Innovating for the Future where Ministers were invited to explore future scenarios for smart and green mobility, and discuss their priorities for achieving these future scenarios.

The following day, Transport and Environment Ministers were invited jointly to discuss the follow up to COP21 in international aviation and shipping. The focus was on how both Transport and Environment Ministers could best work together, and how Europe could contribute to negotiations at the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Overall,

there was positive momentum during this discussion, with Ministers recognising the link between international aviation and shipping emissions and the long term goal set out in the Paris agreement. In the context of the negotiations to agree a global market-based measure in ICAO, Ministers also recognised the importance of achieving carbon neutral growth of international aviation from 2020 and the inclusion of a review mechanism to increase ambition over time. There was strong support for progress in the IMO to agree a global system to collect data on fuel consumption of ships and subsequent development of a work plan to identify international shipping's fair share of global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Transport Ministers also met to discuss how the transport sector is, or will be, affected by border controls in the Schengen area. This session touched on transport security presenting member states with the opportunity to convey their condolences following the recent tragedy in Brussels and also to exchange views on transport security measures.

[HCWS696]

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### April Agriculture and Fisheries Council

**The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Elizabeth Truss):** My hon. friend, the Minister of State for Farming, Food and Marine Environment (George Eustice), represented the UK at the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 11 April in Luxembourg.

Two fisheries items were presented. Firstly, by the presidency, on the framework for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries sector. Commissioner Vella, DG Environment, presented the second item on the proposal on the conservation of fishery resources and the protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures. Most member states, including the UK, welcomed moves to increase regionalisation and to simplify the legislation. The UK and Denmark mentioned the need to allow enough flexibility to take account of the development of new technologies and techniques.

Moving on to agriculture, Commissioner Katainen, DG SANTE, explained that there are opportunities for agriculture in the fund for investment and innovation for 2015-2018 in particular through the European fund for strategic investment (EFSI). member states generally welcomed the further financing options and were keen to explore how EFSI could be used.

Commissioner Hogan, DG Agriculture, updated member states on the market situation support measures. During this agenda item four related AOBs were addressed: the crisis in the dairy market; the modification of the implementation rules to be provided for the planned support scheme for the fruit and vegetable producers with regard to the embargo established by the Russian Federation; the extension of the final date for submission of aid applications; and pigmeat exports to the Russian Federation.

There was a full round of interventions from member states who maintained their existing positions on the market crisis. The UK, Denmark and Sweden stressed the need for longer-term solutions, many of which are already under way such as the opening of new markets with international trade deals. The UK also referenced

the work it is progressing with the European Investment Bank to help farmers manage global price volatility and manage risk.

### *Any other business items*

Germany introduced the AOB item on combating food fraud in the EU, which was an update on a joint project undertaken by Europol and Interpol. There was support for the paper by 13 member states, including the UK.

Austria, supported by 12 other member states, tabled an item on the negotiation of the association agreement between the European Union and Mercosur. The Commission highlighted the benefits of new trade deals and noted a new impact assessment is being prepared.

Luxembourg introduced an item on the 38th Conference of EU Paying Agencies where it was concluded that audit procedures needed to be stabilised and longer term simplification needs to continue. The UK intervened, echoing calls for more proportional sanctions and simpler audits.

Lithuania presented the outcome of the political forum on rethinking the food supply chain. It concluded that national laws should be used to strengthen supply chains.

[HCWS697]

## TRANSPORT

### Vehicle Emissions

**The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Mr Robert Goodwill):** I wish to inform the House that the Government have now concluded the Vehicle Emissions Testing Programme and we have published our findings.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport informed the House on 10 November that we had established this important programme following the revelations that Volkswagen had been using software in their cars which caused the engines to behave differently during emissions tests compared to real world driving. Not only has this caused disruption and distress to the 1.2 million Volkswagen Group users in the UK, it showed a lack of regard for the serious health consequences of nitrogen oxides (NOx) emissions and caused significant damage to the trust consumers have placed in car manufacturers across the country. It was vital that we immediately started a UK investigation into whether other manufacturers were using equivalent prohibited devices and more broadly to better understand why emissions results in the real world were significantly different from those tested under laboratory conditions.

Our testing programme was designed to test a range of the best-selling passenger diesel cars. We selected an independent and representative sample of vehicles to test in a variety of conditions using the latest technology. We appointed Professor Ricardo Martinez-Botas, of Imperial College London, to provide independent academic oversight of the work.

Importantly, the tests have not detected evidence of test cycle manipulation strategies as used by the Volkswagen Group from other manufacturers. However, tests have found higher levels of NO emissions in test track and

real world driving conditions than in the laboratory for all vehicles, with results varying significantly between different makes and models.

Although the progressive tightening of European emissions standards has substantially reduced harmful pollutants from vehicles, existing laboratory tests designed to ensure these emissions limits are met have been shown to be inadequate. However we have already secured a tough new real driving emissions test in EU legislation. From next year, vehicles will have to meet emissions limits in real driving conditions across a wide range of typical operating conditions. This will improve consumer confidence in manufacturers. The results from our testing programme further confirm that the UK was right to push for the early introduction of these tough new limits.

Even before the introduction of the new limits, we are urging manufacturers to introduce new technologies to reduce emissions sooner than the new EU regulations require. Some manufacturers have announced that they intend to make changes to vehicles already in use, to improve emissions, and will offer this to customers on a voluntary basis. We welcome this and encourage action from other manufacturers.

We will continue working to ensure that the new rules for real driving emissions and type approval are robust, deliver the expected outcomes and that manufacturers behave consistently. In addition, this year the Department for Transport will be establishing a new programme of market surveillance testing which will seek to ensure that products entering our markets fully comply with the law.

I am appearing at the Transport Select Committee's inquiry into vehicle type approval this afternoon where I will be happy to explain these findings further.

I have placed copies of this report in the Libraries of both Houses.

Attachments can be viewed online at:

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2016-04-25/HCWS700>.

[HCWS700]



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