

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT
GENERAL COMMITTEES

Public Bill Committee

CHILDREN AND SOCIAL WORK BILL [*LORDS*]

Sixth Sitting

Tuesday 10 January 2017

(Afternoon)

CONTENTS

New clauses under consideration when the Committee adjourned till
Thursday 12 January at half-past Eleven o'clock.
Written evidence reported to the House.

No proofs can be supplied. Corrections that Members suggest for the final version of the report should be clearly marked in a copy of the report—not telephoned—and must be received in the Editor’s Room, House of Commons,

not later than

Saturday 14 January 2017

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The Committee consisted of the following Members:

Chairs: MRS ANNE MAIN, † PHIL WILSON

† Caulfield, Maria (*Lewes*) (Con)
 † Creasy, Stella (*Walthamstow*) (Lab/Co-op)
 † Debbonaire, Thangam (*Bristol West*) (Lab)
 Fellows, Marion (*Motherwell and Wishaw*) (SNP)
 † Fernandes, Suella (*Fareham*) (Con)
 † Green, Kate (*Stretford and Urmston*) (Lab)
 † Hoare, Simon (*North Dorset*) (Con)
 † Kennedy, Seema (*South Ribble*) (Con)
 † Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma (*South Shields*) (Lab)
 † McCabe, Steve (*Birmingham, Selly Oak*) (Lab)
 † Merriman, Huw (*Bexhill and Battle*) (Con)
 † Milling, Amanda (*Cannock Chase*) (Con)

Siddiq, Tulip (*Hampstead and Kilburn*) (Lab)
 † Syms, Mr Robert (*Lord Commissioner of Her Majesty's Treasury*)
 † Timpson, Edward (*Minister for Vulnerable Children and Families*)
 † Tomlinson, Michael (*Mid Dorset and North Poole*) (Con)
 † Whately, Helen (*Faversham and Mid Kent*) (Con)
 Farrah Bhatti, Katy Stout *Committee Clerks*
 † **attended the Committee**

Public Bill Committee

Tuesday 10 January 2017

(Afternoon)

[PHIL WILSON *in the Chair*]

Children and Social Work Bill [Lords]

New Clause 2

POWER TO TEST DIFFERENT WAYS OF WORKING

(1) The purpose of this section is to enable a local authority in England to test different ways of working under children's social care legislation with a view to—

- (a) promoting the physical and mental health and well-being of children, young people or their families,
- (b) encouraging children or young people to express their views, wishes and feelings,
- (c) taking into account the views, wishes and feelings of children or young people,
- (d) helping children, young people or their families gain access to, or make the best use of, services provided by the local authority or its relevant partners (within the meaning given by section 10(4) of the Children Act 1989),
- (e) promoting high aspirations for children or young people,
- (f) promoting stability in the home lives, relationships, education or work of children or young people, or
- (g) preparing children or young people for adulthood and independent living.

(2) The Secretary of State may by regulations, for that purpose—

- (a) exempt a local authority in England from a requirement imposed by children's social care legislation;
- (b) modify the way in which a requirement imposed by children's social care legislation applies in relation to a local authority in England.

(3) Regulations under this section may not be used so as to remove any prohibition on a local authority in England arranging for functions to be carried out by a body whose activities are carried on for profit.

(4) Regulations under this section may not be used to exempt a local authority in England from, or modify, its duties under—

- (a) section 17 of the Children Act 1989 and Part 1 of Schedule 2 to that Act (duty to provide appropriate services to children in need);
- (b) section 20 of that Act (provision of accommodation for children who appear to require it for certain reasons);
- (c) section 22 of that Act (duty to safeguard and promote welfare of looked after children etc);
- (d) section 47 of that Act (duty to make enquiries and take action to safeguard or promote welfare of children at risk);
- (e) section 10 of the Children Act 2004 (duty to make arrangements for promoting co-operation to improve well-being of children);
- (f) section 11 of that Act (duty to make arrangements to ensure that regard is had to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children).

(5) The Secretary of State may make regulations under this section relating to a local authority in England only on an application by that authority.

(6) Subsection (5) does not apply to regulations under this section that only revoke earlier regulations under this section.

(7) Regulations under this section may be made in relation to one or more local authorities in England.

(8) Regulations under this section may include consequential modifications of children's social care legislation.—(*Edward Timpson.*)

This new clause would give the Secretary of State a power to enable local authorities in England to test different ways of working under children's social care legislation for one of the purposes mentioned in subsection (1). Subsections (3) and (4) include safeguards on the use of the power. The power may only be exercised on an application by a local authority. See also the following, which are related: NC3, NC4, NC5, NC6, NC7, NC8 and NC9.

Brought up, read the First time, and Question proposed (this day), That the clause be read a Second time.

2 pm

Question again proposed.

The Chair: I remind the Committee that with this we are discussing the following: Government new clause 3—*Duration.*

Government new clause 4—*Parliamentary procedure.*

Government new clause 5—*Consultation by local authority.*

Government new clause 6—*Consultation by Secretary of State.*

Government new clause 7—*Guidance.*

Government new clause 8—*Annual report.*

Government new clause 9—*Interpretation.*

The Minister for Vulnerable Children and Families (Edward Timpson): It is a pleasure to have you in the Chair this afternoon, Mr Wilson. I am sure that Committee members have been spending their lunchtimes thinking carefully about what we spoke about this morning, and wondering what more I would say this afternoon. To ensure that we make good progress, I will address the specific points made before our break.

If I understood the hon. Member for South Shields correctly, she was questioning, as part of her response, whether the principles set out in the new clause were binding. I reassure her that any use of the power may be only for the purposes set out in the new clause, and for no other reason. That will also be clear in the statutory guidance. She also raised the issue of the Human Rights Act 1998; as with all legislation, new regulations would need to be compatible with the Act. The House also scrutinises all legislation.

Other hon. Members asked about situations in which a pilot was successful—as they will be in every case, we hope—or not successful. I will take a few moments to explain those two situations. All successful pilots will be evaluated so that we understand the impact and whether there is a case for permanent changes to the legislative framework. Such evaluation will be ongoing through the process, with a full review after three years.

If seeking to extend an exemption for a further three-year term, the Government would be required to report to Parliament. That would happen where the pilot has clearly demonstrated benefits, but the Government need additional time to decide whether it would work across the country. If, following a successful pilot, the Government decide that they would like to make the

change for all local authorities, all the usual process would apply, including consultation and full parliamentary scrutiny. The pilot, however, is only the first step towards helping us build the evidence base on which we may want to make further changes in future.

Kate Green (Stretford and Urmston) (Lab): Will the Minister clarify whether the evaluation would be independent? A concern expressed this morning by my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak was that local authorities might be evaluating their own pilots—marking their own homework.

Edward Timpson: Part of the evaluation is through the expert panel, which is involved in ensuring some independent oversight of the pilot, but it would need to be evaluated locally, as well as nationally. In addition to local government, the Department will keep a close eye on the development of the pilot; I will say a little more about that later.

If a pilot is not successful, it will be monitored locally, as well as nationally by the Department, to ensure that there are no adverse impacts on children. For example, we can track the relevant performance metrics, and random case audits are a helpful tool as well. As I mentioned in answer to the question from the hon. Member for Stretford and Urmston, the expert panel will scrutinise the proposed monitoring arrangements locally and by the Department to ensure that they are robust in what they are evaluating. If the Department gains intelligence through those processes that a pilot is not working in the best interests of children, that would be investigated and acted on immediately.

All regulations can be revoked through the negative procedure at any point. To answer a question posed earlier about whether a pilot can be terminated within the three-year period, I should say that it can be revoked at any point, should that be deemed necessary. That is clear in regulation. We will also want assurance in the application from a local authority that it will end a pilot immediately if there is evidence of an adverse impact on children.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck (South Shields) (Lab): I am not sure whether the Minister will include this in his comments, but is not putting in the provision that a pilot can be revoked at any point if it is causing harm to children a backward way of doing things? Will he not accept the comments made by me and my hon. Friends that there should be robust consultation? The Bill should be built on the evidence now—not after the fact, to remedy mistakes once they have been made.

Edward Timpson: I understand what the hon. Lady says and take it in good spirit, but it misses the point of what these clauses are about: building an evidence base. We cannot future-proof all of children's social care on the basis that we are already seeing failure—I will come to the geographical spread of success and failure across the country—irrespective of the fact that we have a very rigid and complex legislative framework within which all these local authorities have to work. In itself, that framework is providing the inconsistencies that it is meant to prevent. What we are trying to do in the Bill, in a careful and controlled way, is enable different ways of working that are not about what local authorities have to do but about how they do it. That is the purpose of the new clauses.

Hon. Members also asked what would happen if there was a situation where more than one local authority was in a pilot. New clause 9 makes provision for combined authorities to apply for use of the power set out in it. The hon. Member for Stretford and Urmston asked in particular about the Greater Manchester combined authority, which I think involves 10 local authorities that are currently working on their own devolution settlement. Of course, that may involve children's services, because I understand that such services are part of their agenda. Where there is a combined authority, we will want to see any application made under these provisions, just as we would for any individual local authority.

Similarly, if a local authority was running a pilot and subsequently became a combined authority, it would need to reapply for any change or extension of the pilot. We will make sure that that is set out in statutory guidance, because that would clearly be a change in circumstances in respect of what would have been approved originally by Parliament. As a consequence, the authority would need to seek further approval.

The hon. Member for South Shields also returned to the issue of profit making. As I have said before and will say again now, the power to innovate has absolutely nothing to do with profit making in children's social care. The clauses make it clear that it cannot be used to revisit the established position on profit, and we have also been clear that pilots are granted on the basis of achieving better outcomes for children and not on efficiencies. I do not see any evidence that this process could be linked to profit making and we will make it clear in statutory guidance that the local authority will be expected to use the financial impact assessment as part of its application, detailing the expected costs and benefits of a pilot. That information will also be available to the expert panel when it scrutinises applications.

Steve McCabe (Birmingham, Selly Oak) (Lab): I have a point that I want to clarify quickly. The Minister said that new clause 9 refers to the situation of a combined authority, as established under section 103 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. Would it be possible for local authorities that do not fall within that state of affairs to come together? We have examples in London of local authorities that are already working jointly. Is there provision in what he is proposing for that kind of combination to exist? Also, regarding a specific combined authority, would it be possible for a Mayor to override his view about what provisions should apply?

Edward Timpson: The answer to the hon. Gentleman's first point is yes, but of course the authority still has to comply with all the elements put in the applications and the process that follows in respect of the scrutiny of the application, and whether it is approved. There need to be very clear lines of responsibility and accountability within that, because ultimately it is the local authority that is responsible for providing those services; it holds that function.

As for the hon. Gentleman's question about the Mayor, it is not one that I have been asked directly before; I know that it is becoming more relevant in some parts of the country. My initial view—I will clarify it later; if he does not mind, I will take some time to do that—would be that this is something approved by Parliament,

[*Edward Timpson*]

which cannot be superseded by a Mayor or their powers. However, I will certainly seek to ensure that the hon. Gentleman gets chapter and verse on that point.

I also wish to consider the issue around consultation, which hon. Members have raised. The Department has had a period of very open consultation about the power and it has spoken with a wide range of organisations, including representative bodies of social work, local government, the voluntary sector, children's organisations and others. Those meetings have been instrumental—indeed, critical—in forming our thinking on the new clauses, but we will of course continue to consult as we develop the detail of the process. We have committed to consult publicly on the statutory guidance to accompany the clauses and, as I have said before, there will also be consultation on each individual use of the power.

Mrs Lewell-Buck: Does the Minister not accept the information I shared with the Committee earlier: that there are far more organisations, practitioners and experts who are against the new clauses than are for them? More than 100,000 people have signed a petition against the measures. If the Minister really wanted to listen to the sector and the public, would he not be going back and deeply re-thinking the new clauses? Even the NSPCC has said:

“Despite numerous conversations with ministers and officials, the evidence for the need for this power remains unconvincing and does not justify the potential risks of suspending primary legislation.”

More than 50 organisations in this country who are experts in the field share that view. Why is the Minister not listening to them?

Edward Timpson: Of course I respect all the views expressed about the Government's view on any policy. I am not somebody who will not listen; in fact, I dare suggest that I have a good track record of listening to those who have views on matters that fall within my portfolio. The truth is that no legislation under her party's Government or this one has ever passed where people have expressed only one side of the argument. Can the hon. Lady tell me any different?

It is my job to listen to both sides of the argument but to come to a considered and informed view as a decision-maker in a position of responsibility to make legislation. I have already alluded to the many representations I have had that I cannot ignore, from the likes of the Local Government Association and the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service. I also mention the support from the Children's Commissioner for the new clause, which I did not mention before. There is a balance to be struck. I accept that this is not an uncontroversial piece of legislation. It has provoked strong views, but is one on which, on balance, I think we have come to the right conclusion.

Simon Hoare (North Dorset) (Con): Unless I am misreading new clause 2 and onwards, it would provide a power to enable local authorities to explore an innovative way of working: there is no compulsion. If they decide not to do that—if they do not want to do innovative, blue-sky work or whatever we wish to call it—there is no obligation for them so to do. It is an enabling power; it is not an enforcing power.

Edward Timpson: My hon. Friend is right: the whole purpose is to ensure that this is a grassroots movement from a local level. There is no direction from Government about how local authorities decide they would like to provide the services they are responsible for. If no local authority applies, that is the end of the matter. The reason we are debating the clause is that local authorities have come forward and said that they want to be able to do that. It is important that we listen to those who are on the frontline, charged with making decisions and bringing policy into action, when they come to Government with a very clear view about what they think needs to be done.

Mrs Lewell-Buck: I take the Minister's point about consultation; there are always two sides to the argument, but the balance is heavily weighted against him on this measure. Other colleagues may correct me if I am wrong, but I have always held the belief that there is a history in this House of making child protection legislation—legislation that protects our most vulnerable children—on more of a cross-party consensus, as was the case with Children Act 1989, which is the flank of legislation used by all practitioners and all agencies when discharging functions in relation to protecting children.

The Minister said that local authorities are coming forward. I do not want to embarrass anyone, but when I asked one local authority that he had cited before as coming forward what power it wanted to be exempt from, it could not say. Is it not the case that there is just not enough support out there for these measures at all? The new clauses should be scrapped.

2.15 pm

Edward Timpson: No. I fundamentally disagree with the hon. Lady. To answer the earlier question from the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak, the likes of Leeds City Council—one of our flagship children's services councils—North Yorkshire, Lincolnshire County Council and the tri-borough, are all local authorities that have a strong track record in delivering high quality children's social care. They understand the huge benefit that innovation in their services can make and has brought and they are at the front of the queue among those who want to trial many of these new ways of working. The tri-borough has said that it is

“excited about the ‘power to innovate’ clauses within the Children and Social Work bill. We believe this builds on the Munro Review of Child Protection in helping us to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and to enable social workers on the front line to spend more time working with families and less time sitting in front of their computers and filling in forms.”

North Yorkshire says that it

“welcomes the opportunity...On behalf of the wider LA sector we are keen to safely explore whether there are freedoms from current national requirements which could be used to enhance local practice.”

I am not prepared to ignore the views of those who I know are at the front of children's social work, delivering excellent services, who are still looking to improve and can help others to do likewise.

Steve McCabe: The Minister is being generous. I am also grateful for the information he has provided about the authorities looking for the opportunity to innovate. Can he tell us what kind of exemptions they are seeking?

What are the powers that they feel are currently restricting their innovating practice and which they are seeking to be freed from?

Edward Timpson: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman took the time to read the letter that I sent round to all Committee members, which set out a number of examples of how local authorities think the power can be used. There is no presumption that those would be granted, of course: any application would need to go through robust scrutiny before it was agreed, as I have set out.

Mrs Lewell-Buck: Will the Minister give way?

Edward Timpson: I am just answering the question from the hon. Gentleman, if the hon. Lady could be patient for a few moments. If the hon. Gentleman rereads the letter, he will remember that it talks about testing changes to the planning processes, trialling new approaches to the independent reviewing officer, more agile approaches to adoption and fostering assessments, and looking at different approaches to assessing friends and family carers.

Of course, the whole point of the new clauses is that it is not me telling local authorities, “This is what you must do”; it is for them, over time, to come up with their own ideas about how they think they can improve their services. It is not what they have to do, but how they do it. If that is a concept that some struggle with—not necessarily the hon. Gentleman, but perhaps some in his party—I am afraid we are never going to have a meeting of minds; we are not going to find the consensus that, I agree, we are able to reach in the majority of cases on child protection.

There is a fundamental disagreement about what we are trying to achieve and the way we go about it. I am absolutely sure that the approach we are taking will do what local authorities want and what Eileen Munro set out in her report almost six years ago.

Mrs Lewell-Buck: Will the Minister give way?

Edward Timpson: I will now give way.

Mrs Lewell-Buck: The Minister is being extremely generous. I read his letter in depth and the fact sheet that went with it. As I said in my opening comments, there are four examples that would get rid of vast swathes of legislation that protects children. Evidence from CoramBAAF to this Committee debunks every one of those four examples and highlights the extremely dangerous pitfalls there would be if that were to take place.

The Minister keeps quoting Eileen Munro, as if in her review in 2011 she recommended dispensing with primary legislation. She never did. That is what the Minister is trying to do, but Eileen Munro never recommended that.

Edward Timpson: I am sorry that the hon. Lady takes that view, because I was under the impression that the review into child protection carried out by Professor Eileen Munro in 2011 was widely welcomed and respected across the political spectrum. That is exactly what is reflected in the many *Hansard* reports I have read from across the House, in which hon. Members all lauded a report that finally got down to the nuts and bolts of why we need to have a system that, as the tri-borough rightly

expressed in relation to this clause, gets social workers out working directly with families and away from being in front of a computer at their desks.

The reason why I keep quoting Eileen Munro is that she was the person charged by Government to provide an independent review, which has been considered, scrutinised and generally approved by this House as the way to go. I am often held to account for how many of Eileen Munro’s recommendations we have implemented, so I place credence in what she has to say about what we are trying to do, because she has already considered it and come up with a solution for Government, in her independent capacity. She says:

“I welcome the introduction of the power to innovate set out in the Children and Social Work Bill. This is a critical part of the journey set out in my Independent Review of Child Protection towards a child welfare system that reflects the complexity and diversity of children’s needs.”

I cannot ignore that, because it demonstrates that her report is still relevant in many ways. I would like to know whether the hon. Member for South Shields agrees with the Munro report. If she does, but disagrees with what Eileen Munro is saying now, what has changed? What is different? I cannot see where the logic would take us.

That is why it is important to allow local authorities such as Hampshire, North Yorkshire, the tri-borough and others—such as Richmond and Kingston with their “Achieving for Children” in Richmond—to try out new ways of working. They might not know, at the moment, exactly what those will be, but they need the opportunity to try them in a controlled, safe way. The Bill provides that without removing swathes of legislation. It enables them to trial or pilot a new way of working, exactly as was done with social work practices under the last Labour Government. Then a decision can be made about whether to go forward with it.

Mrs Lewell-Buck: The Minister seems to be painting the picture that I disagreed with Eileen Munro’s recommendations. I certainly did not. In fact, I strongly supported recommendation 10 that councils should have a legal duty to provide enough early intervention services, which this Government rejected. He listened to my opening comments. He knows why I disagree with the new clauses, and he knows why thousands of people outside this House do as well.

Edward Timpson: I am not sure what question the hon. Lady wants me to answer on the back of that, but I can reassure her that Eileen Munro said in her conclusion:

“A move from a compliance to a learning culture will require those working in child protection to be given more scope to exercise professional judgment in deciding how best to help children and their families.”

I still do not understand what there is in our clauses, according to the hon. Lady, that contradicts that approach.

There are a number of other issues that I want to cover before I conclude, because it is important that every question asked by an hon. Member receives a response. One question was about which of the measures would be within the scope in the Bill. IROs in particular have been mentioned as an example; it is only an example. There has been some debate about the possibility of relaxing IRO support. The local authorities interested

[Edward Timpson]

in that approach are talking not about getting rid of the role in its entirety but about using it more flexibly; it is an important distinction to make.

The hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak asked where improving outcomes is now in relation to the Bill. We have expanded the requirements that we set out in relation to new clause 2, replacing them with a more detailed set of requirements to ensure that the outcomes that we are seeking for the relevant children, whom I listed earlier, are much more clearly defined. We have also extended the consultation requirements on local authorities to go beyond safeguarding partners to include other relevant persons, particularly in relation to children and young people. The hon. Member for Stretford and Urmston mentioned schools, which are important and which we must ensure are part of the consultation where relevant.

Depending on the impact that the use of a power will have, it might be appropriate for local authorities to consult publicly, as they would in other circumstances. If the Secretary of State were dissatisfied with the extent of consultation, she could ask local authorities to widen it before agreeing to grant an application.

I risk of falling out a little further with the hon. Member for South Shields. She unhelpfully raised the link between funding and local Government support for these new clauses. I can categorically say there is no link between them and funding received by any local authority. The chief social worker was simply urging the profession to take this opportunity. I am sorry that the hon. Lady chose to try and suggest, or at least insinuate, otherwise and I hope she will disassociate herself from those comments.

In closing, I want to reiterate two points that must not be overlooked. First, this power is about grass-roots innovation. It is all about believing in and trusting professionals to test new approaches, and it is hard. The purpose of the power is to improve the services we deliver for children. If we look at who is calling for this power, it is not private companies or failing children's services seeking to cut costs, but some of our country's most inspirational leaders and innovative charities. To characterise this as something that is intended to take away support from children or even enable privatisation is to misrepresent our ambition and undermine the integrity and professionalism of staff who work with children on the frontline.

The new clauses being debated by the Committee today are significantly different from those debated in the other place, and I hope the Committee recognises that the Government have listened and taken substantial steps to put safeguards in place around the power. I remain ready at any time to discuss these new clauses further, but in the end, they are a genuine attempt to help local authorities test different approaches and better ways of working in the interests of children. I urge the Committee to support them.

Mrs Lewell-Buck: I want to make some brief concluding comments.

If Government Members want to vote for this, they should be able to articulate with total conviction and clarity which primary legislation—out of the lists provided by concerned organisations and individuals under threat—

they are and are not comfortable with a local authority, even their own, opting out of. They must be able to articulate why they are happy to give local authorities the opportunity of opting out of supporting disabled children in their area or visiting vulnerable children in their area and why they are satisfied to do so against a groundswell of objection outside and inside the House, even among Government Members. What culpability are they prepared to accept when children in their area have been harmed as a result and claim redress from the state?

The Minister asked for support, but he has not articulated a case, built on strong evidence and stakeholder engagement, for why these clauses are needed. He has not offered any comfort or explanation to people who are seriously concerned about the threat that these clauses pose to vast swathes of legal protection, on which the most vulnerable children and young people rely. I have not been reassured that the endgame is not the marketisation of social work.

These clauses have been the main thrust of the Bill from the outset. They epitomise this ideologically driven Government at their very worst and set a precedent, as Liberty, CoramBAAF and others have said in their evidence, for changing the fundamental rules on how our country's laws are made and how we are governed, which MPs on all sides of the House have always adhered to. I am deeply disappointed that this Minister, of all people, is going along with this. We on this side will never, ever go along with it.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time.

The Committee divided: Ayes 10, Noes 5.

Division No. 11]

AYES

Caulfield, Maria	Milling, Amanda
Fernandes, Suella	Syms, Mr Robert
Hoare, Simon	Timpson, Edward
Kennedy, Seema	Tomlinson, Michael
Merriman, Huw	Whately, Helen

NOES

Creasy, Stella	Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
Debbonaire, Thangam	
Green, Kate	McCabe, Steve

Question accordingly agreed to.

New clause 2 read a Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 3

DURATION

(1) Regulations under section (Power to test different ways of working) must specify a period at the end of which they lapse.

(2) The period must not be longer than 3 years beginning with the day on which the regulations come into force.

(3) But the Secretary of State may by further regulations under section (Power to test different ways of working) amend the specified period to extend it by up to 3 years.

(4) The specified period may be extended on one occasion only.

(5) Before extending the specified period the Secretary of State must lay a report before Parliament about the extent to which the regulations have achieved the purpose mentioned in section (Power to test different ways of working)(1).

(6) The Secretary of State may by regulations make transitional provision in connection with the lapsing of regulations under section (Power to test different ways of working).’—(*Edward Timpson.*)

This would ensure that exemptions or modifications under the power to test different ways of working in NC2 are of a temporary nature. The regulations may be made for up to 3 years and may be renewed for one further period of up to 3 years.

Brought up, and read the First time.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time.

The Committee divided: Ayes 10, Noes 5.

Division No. 12]

AYES

Caulfield, Maria
Fernandes, Suella
Hoare, Simon
Kennedy, Seema
Merriman, Huw

Milling, Amanda
Syms, Mr Robert
Timpson, Edward
Tomlinson, Michael
Whately, Helen

NOES

Creasy, Stella
Debbonaire, Thangam
Green, Kate

Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
McCabe, Steve

Question accordingly agreed to.

New clause 3 read a Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 4

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

‘(1) Regulations under section (Power to test different ways of working) are subject to the negative resolution procedure if they only—

- (a) relate to requirements imposed by subordinate legislation that was not subject to affirmative resolution procedure, or
- (b) revoke earlier regulations under that section.

(2) Any other regulations under section (Power to test different ways of working) are subject to the affirmative resolution procedure.

(3) At the same time as laying a draft of a statutory instrument containing regulations under section (Power to test different ways of working) before Parliament, the Secretary of State must lay before Parliament a report—

- (a) explaining how the purpose mentioned in subsection (1) of that section is expected to be achieved, and
- (b) confirming that the regulations are not expected to have a detrimental effect on the welfare of any child and explaining any measures that have been put in place to ensure that is the case.

(4) If regulations under section (Power to test different ways of working) are subject to the affirmative resolution procedure and would, but for this subsection, be treated for the purposes of the standing orders of either House of Parliament as a hybrid instrument, they are to proceed in that House as if they were not a hybrid instrument.

(5) For the purposes of subsection (1)(a) subordinate legislation “was not subject to affirmative resolution procedure” if it was not subject to any requirement for a draft to be laid before, and approved by a resolution of, each House of Parliament.’—(*Edward Timpson.*)

This new clause would set out of the procedure for making regulations about testing different ways of working under NC2. Most regulations are subject to affirmative resolution procedure, with the two exceptions mentioned in subsection (1)(a) and (b) of the clause. The Secretary of State is also required to lay a report before Parliament dealing with the matters mentioned in subsection (3).

Brought up, and read the First time.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time.

The Committee divided: Ayes 10, Noes 5.

Division No. 13]

AYES

Caulfield, Maria
Fernandes, Suella
Hoare, Simon
Kennedy, Seema
Merriman, Huw

Milling, Amanda
Syms, Mr Robert
Timpson, Edward
Tomlinson, Michael
Whately, Helen

NOES

Creasy, Stella
Debbonaire, Thangam
Green, Kate

Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
McCabe, Steve

Question accordingly agreed to.

New clause 4 read a Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 5

CONSULTATION BY LOCAL AUTHORITY

‘(1) Before making an application for the Secretary of State to make regulations under section (Power to test different ways of working) a local authority in England must—

- (a) consult such of the other safeguarding partners and relevant agencies in relation to its area as it considers appropriate, and
- (b) any other person that the local authority considers appropriate.

(2) In deciding who to consult under subsection (1)(b) a local authority in England must, in particular, consider consulting any children or young people who might be affected by the regulations.’—(*Edward Timpson.*)

This would impose a consultation requirement on local authorities before making an application under NC2.

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 6

CONSULTATION BY SECRETARY OF STATE

‘(1) Where a local authority in England make an application for the Secretary of State to make regulations under section (Power to test different ways of working) the Secretary of State must invite an expert panel to give advice about—

- (a) the capability of the authority to achieve the purpose mentioned in subsection (1) of that section if the regulations are made,
- (b) the likely impact of the regulations on children and young people, and
- (c) the adequacy of any measures that will be in place to monitor the impact of the regulations on children and young people.

(2) The expert panel is to consist of—

- (a) the Children’s Commissioner,
- (b) Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education, Children’s Services and Skills, and
- (c) one or more other persons appointed by the Secretary of State to consider the application.

(3) The Secretary of State may appoint a person under subsection (2)(c) to consider an application only if the Secretary of State thinks that the person has expertise relevant to the subject matter of the application.

(4) Having invited the expert panel to advise, the Secretary of State must wait at least 6 weeks before making regulations under section (Power to test different ways of working) in response to the application.

(5) Before making regulations under section (Power to test different ways of working) in response to the application, the Secretary of State must also publish any written advice given during that 6 week period by the expert panel.—(*Edward Timpson.*)

This would impose consultation requirements on the Secretary of State before making regulations under NC2.

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 7

GUIDANCE

‘(1) The Secretary of State must give local authorities in England guidance about—

- (a) factors that a local authority in England should take into account in deciding whether to make an application under (Power to test different ways of working),
- (b) the form and content of applications under (Power to test different ways of working) and the process for making them,
- (c) consultation under section (Consultation by local authorities),
- (d) monitoring and evaluating the effect of the regulations under section (Power to test different ways of working), and
- (e) the exercise of functions under, or in connection with, children’s social care legislation as modified by regulations under section (Power to test different ways of working).

(2) Before giving guidance under this section the Secretary of State must—

- (a) consult such persons as the Secretary of State considers appropriate, and
- (b) publish a summary of the consultation responses.’—(*Edward Timpson.*)

This would require the Secretary of State to give local authorities guidance on certain matters to do with NC2 and NC5.

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 8

ANNUAL REPORT

‘If the Secretary of State makes regulations under (Power to test different ways of working) the Secretary of State must, in respect of each year in which they remain in force, publish a report about the extent to which the regulations have achieved the purpose mentioned in section (Power to test different ways of working)(1).’—(*Edward Timpson.*)

This would require the Secretary of State to publish an annual report on any regulations under NC2.

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 9

INTERPRETATION

‘In sections (Power to test different ways of working), (Duration), (Parliamentary procedure), (Consultation by local authority), (Consultation by Secretary of State), (Guidance), (Annual report) and this section—

- “child” means a person under the age of 18 (and
 “children” means people under the age of 18);
 “children’s social care legislation” means—
- (a) any legislation specified in Schedule 1 to the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 so far as relating to those under the age of 18;

(b) sections 23C to 24D of the Children Act 1989, so far as not within paragraph (a);

(c) the Children Act 2004, so far as not within paragraph (a);

(d) any subordinate legislation under the legislation mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (c);

“local authority in England” means—

- (a) a county council in England;
- (b) a district council;
- (c) a London Borough council;
- (d) the Common Council of the City of London (in their capacity as a local authority);
- (e) the Council of the Isles of Scilly;
- (f) a combined authority established under section 103 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009;

“relevant agency”, in relation to a local authority area, has the meaning given by section 16E(3) of the Children Act 2004;

“safeguarding partner”, in relation to a local authority area, has the meaning given by section 16E(3) of the Children Act 2004;

“subordinate legislation” has the same meaning as in the Interpretation Act 1978;

“young people” means people, other than children, under the age of 25.’—(*Edward Timpson.*)

This defines terms used in NC2, NC3, NC4, NC5, NC6, NC7, NC8 and this clause.

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 10

IMPROVEMENT STANDARDS

‘(1) The Secretary of State may—

- (a) determine and publish improvement standards for social workers in England;
- (b) carry out assessments of whether people meet improvement standards under paragraph (a).

(2) The Secretary of State may make arrangements for another person to do any or all of those things (and may make payments to that person).

(3) The Secretary of State must consult such persons as the Secretary of State considers appropriate before determining a standard under subsection (1)(a).

(4) In this section “improvement standard” means a professional standard the attainment of which demonstrates particular expertise or specialisation.

(5) Nothing in this section limits anything in section 38.’—(*Edward Timpson.*)

This new clause allows the Secretary of State to determine and publish improvement standards for social workers or arrange for someone else to do so. There is also a power to carry out assessments. The clause does not limit the regulator’s functions under clause 38.

Brought up, and read the First time.

Edward Timpson: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

This new clause supports our aim of establishing a new career pathway for social workers that recognises specialist, post-qualification expertise in child and family social work and will reinforce our focus on the quality of practice. It makes provision for the Secretary of State to determine and publish improvement standards for social workers in England, or to arrange for someone else to do so on her behalf. An improvement standard is a post-qualification professional standard which, if attained, demonstrates a particular expertise or specialisation. The Secretary of State will be required to consult before determining any improvement standards.

I would like to make it clear that these standards are distinct from the proficiency standards which the regulator, Social Work England, will set and which must be met by all social workers in order to register. The new clause is vital to enable the introduction of the national assessment and accreditation system which is a fundamental part of our national reform programme that seeks to ensure that all children and families get the support and protection they need.

We are all aware that child and family social workers do an incredibly important job under very trying circumstances, and we all thank them for it. They deal with complex and fraught situations that require great depth of skill, knowledge, understanding and empathy. To clearly set out what characterises effective work with children at their most vulnerable, the chief social worker for children and families, Isabelle Trowler, has published three statements on the knowledge and skills needed to operate at three levels of practice for child and family social workers. That includes frontline practice, supervisory roles and practice leaders. One of the Department's priorities is supporting the workforce in consistently meeting these aspirations.

The knowledge and skills statements will form the basis of a national assessment and accreditation system for child and family social work, or NAAS. Child and family social workers will be accredited against these standards in order to recognise consistently the specialist knowledge and skills that child and family social workers, supervisors and leaders need in order to practise effectively. NAAS will provide, for the first time, a consistent way of recognising the specialist knowledge and skills needed by child and family social workers, supervisors and leaders to practise effectively. It will recognise progression through the child and family specialism, making clear what good practice looks like and what path a career in social work could take. Supporting social workers to improve their practice is vital when it comes to supporting the profession, and thus the children and families they work with.

We have carried out extensive work with the profession to establish what form assessment will take, and we have launched an open consultation to support our thinking on how the new system is to be rolled out. While there are no current plans for a NAAS for adult social work, this measure would enable the Secretary of State to determine and publish a similar set of improvement standards in relation to adult social workers in England. There is already a degree of specialisation in this area through the roles of approved mental health practitioner and best interest assessor. We intend to look closely at whether taking further steps in this direction for adult social work is desirable.

I trust that the Committee will support this important work to build the professional and public status of children and family social work and support the profession so that it can focus ever more closely on practice that delivers for vulnerable children. *[Interruption.]* I cannot conclude without hearing from the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak.

Steve McCabe: As I have said before, the Minister is extremely generous. I wanted to ask him about people who have acquired higher-level awards and qualifications as part of previous accreditation exercises. He will be familiar with the old CCETSW post-qualification

award in children services. I think I am right in saying that the NSPCC ran a similar award at one stage. There are therefore practitioners who have a previous higher-level qualification award. Is it the Minister's intention that their awards will be accredited or in some way fitted into the new framework or will those people now be expected to acquire an additional higher-level qualification?

Edward Timpson: This is a new form of accreditation and assessment. Over time, all practitioners who want to work in the field will need to be accredited against the new standards set out in the knowledge and skills statement. The difference now is that there are three different tiers. One of the things that has led to our bringing in this proposal is the strong feeling that there has not been a clear career pathway for children's social workers. When they become experienced they may even become Members of Parliament or they end up in management, away from the frontline but still using their great expertise and knowledge about how to deliver good social work. They have an opportunity to supervise practitioners or to become a practice leader.

Those who are already accredited and have shown that they have relevant experience will be well placed to meet the new accreditation standards that are being set for supervisory and practice leader role. We hope that over time that will enable more of those very high-quality, well-versed and experienced social workers to remain active in social work, rather than our losing that precious commodity as they move into corporate roles within their organisation. I hope that explanation finds favour with the hon. Gentleman and that hon. Members will support the new clause.

Mrs Lewell-Buck: I have a few brief comments and questions for the Minister. I am a little concerned that we are seeing an attempt to put back into the Bill powers for the Secretary of State to determine professional standards and assess whether social worker practitioners meet them or not. It is right that Ministers should want to take action to improve standards, but will the Minister explain what those standards will be as they will be subject to secondary legislation and therefore not to intense parliamentary scrutiny? It is only right that the Committee is clear about the intention of the new clause and understands why the Secretary of State feels the need to determine professional social worker standards. It is also a little concerning that after the success in the Lords of the noble Lord Hunt as regards an arm's length social worker regulatory body, new clause 10(1)(b) is now proposed. Will the Minister explain the rationale for the new clause and give assurances that there will not be Government interference, influence or Government-funded assessment activities of social workers against improvement standards?

The new clause attempts to reassert the role of the Secretary of State in setting standards and developing assessment benchmarks post-qualification. Could that not result in confusion and conflict with the role and functions of the proposed social worker regulatory body, or is the intention that the Secretary of State and persons appointed to assess improvement will be a de facto second regulator? I am sure the Minister agrees that that could have the adverse effect of creating confusion about who is setting and who is assessing standards. It could create more bureaucracy in an already highly

[Mrs Lewell-Buck]

complicated arena and would have an adverse effect on recruitment and retention—an area in which, as the Minister knows, the sector is already struggling.

After this morning's debate, I cannot help thinking that there is an attempt to do something else with the new clause, especially as it has been introduced once again without any consultation or discussion with the social work sector. In answering my questions, can the Minister convince us otherwise?

Edward Timpson: I am grateful to the hon. Lady for her reasoned and helpful questions to try to establish what the new clause proposes. I think I have set that out in some detail already, but I will try to address some of the specifics that she has raised.

I have already given a picture of what the consultation has involved to date. It is also worth reminding the Committee that more than 1,000 social workers have volunteered to test out the assessment accreditation process as it is rolled out so that we can be sure that what we have at the other end is fit for purpose. There has been widespread involvement of the social work profession. This is not a new phenomenon. It is being brought in very carefully as regards this important change for those working on the frontline.

2.45 pm

The knowledge and skills statements are simply statements and they will not take on any formal status until the Secretary of State has powers to publish standards against which an assessment of skill and knowledge is made. That is not unusual; in other public service professions, such as doctors, nurses and midwives, there is a similar approach.

Social Work England will have a role as the regulator in approving post-qualifying courses, both those relating to the approved mental health professionals, which I mentioned before, and the training of the best interests assessors. In time, the new regulator will also be able to take responsibility for the national assessment and accreditation system.

The system will be rolled out in the first instance by the Department for Education. Phase one of the roll-out will be in 2017-18 and phase two in 2019-20. Once the regulator is up and running, there is a clear logic for it to take on that role of approving post-qualifying courses, of which this would be one. That is an important distinction to make and is very much in line with what happens in other parts of the public service.

As I set out in my opening remarks, this system is very different from the clear remit of Social Work England and the regulation of the profession. This is about how to maintain standards post-qualification, how we support social workers as they move through the profession and gain experience, and how we can be confident that they have the requisite knowledge and skills to provide a first-class service for children in their area.

I will continue to discuss these points with the hon. Lady. If there are other specific questions that I have not covered, I will endeavour to do so in writing. This measure has not appeared suddenly overnight; it has been through a long process of development with the

profession. It has been welcomed and constructively engaged with by social workers and local authorities, which are very interested in seeing how they can ensure that it improves not only the quality but the status of social work in their areas.

Question put and agreed to.

New clause 10 accordingly read a Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 11

SAFEGUARDING: PROVISION OF PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

“(1) For the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children a local authority in England must ensure that pupils educated in their area receive appropriate personal, social and health education.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1) “personal, social and health education” must include but shall not be restricted to—

- (a) sex and relationships education,
- (b) same-sex relationships,
- (c) sexual consent,
- (d) sexual violence, and
- (e) domestic violence.

(3) Targeted inspections carried out by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) under section 136 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 shall include an assessment of the provision of personal, social and health education under subsection (1), including whether the information provided to pupils is—

- (a) accurate and balanced,
- (b) age-appropriate,
- (c) inclusive, or
- (d) religiously diverse.

(4) Assessments made under subsection (3) must include an evaluation of any arrangements for pupils of sufficient maturity to request to be wholly or partly excused from participating in personal, social and health education.

(5) For the purpose of subsection (4) “sufficient maturity” shall be defined in guidance by the Secretary of State.

(6) Withdrawal from personal, social and health education by pupils under subsection (4) shall not be considered a breach of the safeguarding duties of a local authority.

(7) This section comes into force at the end of the period of twelve months beginning with the day on which this Act is passed.”—(*Stella Creasy.*)

Brought up, and read the First time.

Stella Creasy (Walthamstow) (Lab/Co-op): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

I hope the Committee will bear with me. As can be heard, I am not as well as I should be. I have to admit I probably would not have been here today were I not so passionate about this subject and the importance of providing sex and relationship education as a form of safeguarding for all children. With that in mind, I will probably not speak as loudly and clearly as I might do otherwise. I hope that does not dull the willingness of Government Members to listen to the case for the new clause.

I want to go through a number of elements of the new clause and explain why it would be a worthwhile addition to the Bill. First, this is a safeguarding issue and, as we know, the Bill covers safeguarding. On Second Reading, the Minister agreed that it should be

part of the discussion of the Bill. Secondly, introducing this element of safeguarding needs specific legislation as it is clear from the evidence on the provision of relationship education to children that guidance will not cut it. Thirdly, we need to consider the status quo and the response of the public. Our role as politicians is to lead but also to listen. There is overwhelming public support for such an important measure.

Finally, I shall explain why we must see progress now and in this Bill on this issue, which has been debated in this House for as long as I have been a Member of Parliament. In 2010, as Members may recall, the previous Government made the first effort to legislate. We have had these discussions now for six years. Thinking back in time, though, is perhaps the point at which all of us will start with this discussion, perhaps remembering our own sex and relationship education. For me, 2017 is important, because it is the year in which I turn 40—a big statement birthday. Do not all shout at once that that could not possibly be so—[*Interruption.*] Too late!

This has already been one of those years in which I have had conversations with people that remind me that I am no longer a tender teenager—not least, having a conversation with my staff where they expressed incredulity about the fact that when I was at school we did not have Wikipedia. We did not have the internet—[*Interruption.*] Government members of the Committee are nodding their heads. The world in which our young people are growing up is very different from the one that we knew.

As a former youth worker I am always reminded of something we taught ourselves, which was, “Everybody has been a 15 year-old but not everybody has been a 15 year-old in the modern world.” When people first reflect on the idea of sex and relationship education, they think of the headlines, the concerns that many of us have about things such as Snapchat, sexting and online pornography—the normalisation of an extremely sexualised culture.

I know that some who have been concerned about these proposals have written to Members to say, “There are groups in our society who are not privy to this online forum and therefore should not be involved in this legislation,” but that makes me think about why this is not to do with the internet or the modern world, but with the timeless challenge that we face in our society of how we ensure that everybody has good, healthy and constructive relationships with other people, and with the importance of sex and relationship education in that, because it is a safeguard. If we are honest, when we look back to our childhood and to some of the things that all of us of my generation—or, indeed, those who are older—know, we are aware that exploitation, danger and risk to children have always been prevalent in our society.

When we think about the scandals that have been uncovered in the last couple of years, about how people used to talk and interact with young people, or about the treatment of young girls in our society, we can see that safeguarding children is not a question of the modern world but a question of a better world. New clause 11 is very much not about the internet; it is about the world we live in today and how we make sure that all our young people are given the right education and the right skills, not simply to identify risk but to prevent risk.

The new clause is also about recognising the range of issues that we need to deal with in our world today. I am extremely proud of a young woman called Hibo Wardere from Walthamstow, who has been a leading campaigner on female genital mutilation, and of the young woman from my community called Arifa Nasim, who set up Educate2Eradicate. They are going around schools in this country talking about issues with “honour-based violence”—I call it that, but there is no honour in it. We know that there are multiple issues within our society that we have to be able to talk to our young people about if we want to keep them safe.

Given how sensitive people are about the concept of sex and relationship education, it is very important to think about it in terms of the risks people might face and the importance of addressing them. It is easy for British people to laugh about sex, and to feel uncomfortable or awkward about it. I remember my first sex education lesson at school, where I fell asleep and was woken up by a teacher waving a female condom at me—nevermore do I think about a plastic bag in that way. However, this is not a comedy issue, because we know that millions of young people in this country are at risk. Some 47,000 sexual offences were recorded against children last year. I say “recorded” deliberately: these are just the ones we know about. Crucially, a third of those were perpetrated by children against children.

We know that 5,000 rapes have been reported in our schools in the past couple of years and that nearly 60% of young women aged 13 to 21 report facing sexual harassment in their school or their college. The place that we want all our children to go to, to be safe, and to be able to learn, grow and expand their minds, has become a place of danger and risk for too many in our society. The truth is that the world is different from the one that we grew up in. There has been a normalisation of extreme sexual imagery because of the accessibility of pornography. I remember people having magazines and books at school that would probably be considered pornographic. Now, it is on a phone or a computer. Only 18% of parents think that their children have accessed pornography; the reality is very different—it is closer to 40%. Indeed, 79% of young men and 62% of young women report it being part and parcel of their everyday life.

At the moment, sex education is mandatory in terms of the biology of sex. In the biology curriculum, we teach young people about reproduction, but we do not teach them about relationships. That is where the risk comes in and where the gap in our safeguarding procedures exists. At the moment, we only have sex and relationship education across our schools in a very patchy way. Some schools are doing amazing work, and we should recognise that, but safeguarding only works if every young child has access to information, training and support.

Ofsted found in 2013 that 40% of schools required improvement or were inadequate in their provision of sex and relationship education. That means millions of children in our schools right now are simply not getting the right sort of information about relationships, consent and sensitive issues such as their relationships with the other sex and with the same sex, domestic violence and abuse, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Critically, Ofsted also showed us that young people are crying out for this kind of information and support to keep themselves safe and that they were extremely

[Stella Creasy]

disappointed in the quality and frequency of lessons. Inevitably, it is part and parcel of their lives to ask these questions. However old we are, we all remember the point when we first become aware of our own feelings of wanting guidance and the right kind of relationships with people.

It is fascinating that study after study shows the value, power and potency of good sex and relationship education to address many of those issues and to keep our young people safe. A study by Bristol University just last year found that while schools find it difficult to acknowledge that our young people might be sexually active, children do not. Young girls reported being harassed in school if they asked questions about sex and relationships, and young boys reported feeling inadequate and anxious if they revealed an ignorance about relationships. We cannot let that stand. Frankly, if we do not step into that void, the internet or the playground will. That is where the risk comes.

For avoidance of doubt, this is not about replacing parents. It is about supporting parents and recognising an environment in which sexual feelings and sexual imagery are so much a part of modern life. Even with the best parenting and the good advice that we know millions of parents across this country try to give their children, if the people who children come into contact with on the street, in the playground or in chatrooms do not have the same set of values and level of support, the risk remains.

Only one in seven children in our schools have had any form of sex and relationship education. That means six other children are missing out and therefore might have negative impressions about what a good, positive and healthy relationship looks like. We know that this is something children themselves have reported, with 46% of children saying they have not learned how to tell when a relationship is healthy. We should think about that for a moment. When children do not know that violence and intimidation should not be part of a close, loving relationship, and when 44% of children have not been taught what an abusive relationship is, that is not an environment in which we can consider our children to be safe.

It is about not only physical violence but intimidation and coercive control. We have now legislated on that for adults, but we have a gap when it comes to young people. Some 43% of children do not know they have a responsibility to seek consent and have a choice about whether to give it. That is startling. The children who have not had that education are crying out for us, as politicians, to get this right, which is what we are trying to do through the new clause.

We should create a safe environment in which children of any age get the right kind of education to make healthy relationships and to know not simply what sexual conduct is, but what it means to give their consent, to be with someone for love, and what an equal and loving relationship looks like. This is not only about having healthy relationships with peers. It is also about a young child recognising when they are at risk. One of the concerns we have and the reason the new clause discusses age-appropriate education is the importance of starting early with children. One of the most shocking cases I dealt with as an MP in my constituency was not

one, but two instances of children under the age of 13 engaging in sexual behaviour in local parks, involving children who did not want to be involved—that is the best way I can put it.

Think about that for a moment: children under 13. That means we need to start with children under 10, if not younger, giving them the right words to be able to say no and describe what is happening to them, and what they do and do not like. Yet, again, we are finding in the Ofsted studies that too many children are not being taught the proper words for their own organs and how to talk about what might be happening to them. This becomes a safeguarding issue, because we know that when children are given the right information in an age-appropriate fashion they are much more likely to report abuse or be able to report something happening to them.

3 pm

It is too risky to us and this Bill's ethos about keeping children safe not to address this omission. We know we need to address it because of the cases that have come out. Both the Jay report into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham and the Children's Commissioner inquiry into gangs identified the provision of sex and relationship education as a crucial way to stop harm and said that the lack of information about healthy relationships and consent was a contributing factor in the vulnerability of those involved in the cases.

I know that when we talk about sex and relationship education people are frightened about the headlines they might see in the *Daily Mail* and other publications of equal value and note to our society. [Interruption.] I have no idea why Conservative Members are laughing. We also know parents want to see this happen: 78% of parents said they wanted to see good sex and relationship education in schools as a way to support them and to bridge the gap, so they could be confident that when they gave their kids the best values in life, the kids they were meeting would be equally well trained. We also know the new clause has the backing of a wide range of children's charities—that is, the people who deal with safeguarding issues day in, day out: Barnardo's, the Terrence Higgins Trust, the NSPCC, the Scout Association, the Family Planning Association and the National Children's Bureau.

There is widespread support for the importance of doing this and, if we are honest, that support has been there for some time. While we can all recognise the concerns of a small minority of organisations, I believe there are ways in which we can bring in this legislation to reflect those concerns while not letting them get in the way of safeguarding and recognising this as an important part of safeguarding. I certainly do not share the concerns of the former Education Minister, who believed we should not legislate to make relationship education mandatory in schools because it was about giving schools the freedom to set their curriculum. When we have seen such a failure, frankly, to provide this sort of education, it is simply not good enough to leave things to chance, and nor do I believe that this is something that can be kicked into the long grass and continually pushed back.

I think the Minister and the Education Secretary recognise this as something we need to do. The trouble is we keep recognising it as something we need to do and never get round to doing it. We know children are

at risk as a result. I hear the Education Secretary saying that this is in her in-tray. I also think it is worth referring back to what the Minister said on Second Reading:

“This matter is a priority for the Secretary of State, so I have already asked officials to advise me further on it, but I will ask them to accelerate that work so that I can report on our conclusions at a later point in the Bill’s passage, when everyone in the House will be able to look at them and have their say.”—[*Official Report*, 5 December 2016; Vol. 618, c. 84.]

The challenge we face today is that we are almost at the end of consideration in Committee in the House of Commons for this legislation. We are running out of time for this to become part of the legislation, and the elephant in the room that will define politics for us for this year, and perhaps for years to come, that of Brexit, means it is hard to see when there might be other such legislative opportunities. One reason for tabling the new clause is to ask the Minister to make the commitment today for a piece of legislation, because we know this is going to have to be part of law for it to happen. We know this is going to have to be part of law to make sure every school—not just maintained schools, but academies—provides this form of education. We agree on its value, but we also recognise the urgency of acting. If not in this legislation—we are at a very late stage—it is difficult to see when there might be alternative time for progress to be made.

The risk is that we will spend another year telling our young people that we hear their message that they want this form of support and telling parents that we get it. They want to know that other kids have had good education, too. We will listen to teachers saying, “Unless it is part of the curriculum and we are given support to be able to provide this, we can’t teach it.” It needs to be part of the national curriculum. If not now, when? That is the question for us.

I want to hear what the Minister has to say, because I heard him on Second Reading.

Steve McCabe: Before my hon. Friend concludes, I want to say that I am more than happy to support her new clause, although the Minister may be about to tell us that he has an alternative or additional proposal.

Since we have spent so much time talking about the value of innovation, would my hon. Friend be open to a proposal in which the Minister encouraged schools to innovate? We could make a start right away by finding the best models for my hon. Friend’s proposals and some of the wider issues referred to by other organisations, including online safety, tobacco, alcohol, drug abuse and broader health issues. Would she be open to a proposal that said, “Let’s invite schools to innovate. Let’s ask Ofsted to report on the success of that innovation. Let’s encourage schools that are doing the right thing, so that the Minister can free the others from the constraints and encumbrances that current legislation imposes on them.”?

Stella Creasy: My hon. Friend will be aware of previous conversations about straying from the point. We were very mindful in drafting this new clause that we should focus on relationship education as part of PSHE, which has been declining in schools. I believe there has been a 21% decrease in the number of PSHE lessons in the past couple of years because it is not valued. We recognised that it had a particular role to play in safeguarding because of the widespread evidence of sexual harassment of children.

I completely agree with my hon. Friend about the value of other forms of lessons. I will give a shout-out to Kris Hallenga and the CoppaFeel! team who have been looking at how to provide cancer education within PSHE. There is clearly a broader debate, but we do not know if there is going to be any alternative education legislation that might allow such proposals to be included.

The point about innovation and safeguarding is apposite. One reason Opposition Members were concerned about other parts of this legislation is that we want to give schools a clear framework about what should be included. Within that, we could work in a way that works for pupils and their location. That is why the new clause specifies a framework for sex and relationship education as part of safeguarding, recognising that it needs to be age appropriate.

The way in which a five, six- or seven-year-old would be taught about their body and how to ensure that, if anything happened that they were not happy or comfortable with, they could speak out, would be very different from the conversations that might be had with 13, 14 or 15-year-olds about some of the things that were going on in their lives. It would also be done in a way that was inclusive. I am particularly mindful of the evidence of young people who are gay and lesbian who said they were not given good sex and relationships education, which caused them huge amounts of harm at a young age, so it is important to ensure it is inclusive.

Finally, we need to recognise different religious perspectives. That is an important element, and I do not underplay that. Concerns have been expressed by religious organisations. We need to reflect and respect religious perspectives without using that to stop the important provision of relationships education.

The new clause is drafted in such a way that it is very much about the role of Ofsted, which I am sure would be involved in any form of safeguarding and monitoring of sex and relationships education in schools, however the Government choose to do this—if they do want to. There is a clear role for Ofsted to look at this as a form of safeguarding. Schools that were not providing sex and relationship education would be judged inadequate on safeguarding, which is a very serious matter, but it would reflect the importance of the topic.

Crucially, the new clause would give young people the opportunity to say whether they wanted to take part in this education. Some 90% of young people surveyed said they wanted this education, so it is important to give them the power to opt out, rather than that being led by their parents. The Secretary of State would have the role of setting the age at which they would be of sufficient maturity to do that. I am thinking particularly of young people who might be at college or in further education who would be covered by the new clause: we want to ensure that they have the right to take part in lessons if they choose to do so.

Finally, returning to the point that my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak made in saying, “Let’s just get on and do it”, the new clause sets out a clear timetable. That is the message I want to give to the Minister. I heard his words on Second Reading and I have seen the briefings from the Education Secretary. There has clearly been a sea change in the Government’s perspective on the issue over the past year, which is welcome.

[*Stella Creasy*]

I recognise that there is cross-party support for sex and relationships education. Five Select Committee Chairs said they wanted to see it happen. All of us who have been campaigning on the issue for some time want to see action, because we are all acutely aware that we have lost previous opportunities to make progress. The guidance that covers sex and relationships education for our young people was produced in 2000, before the era of Snapchat, Facebook and even Twitter, which feels as old as the hills. We need to move with the times, but most importantly we need to move. If the Minister will not accept new clause 11 and work with us to make it work, I want to hear him make a commitment to legislation. I tell him plainly: another consultation, another review and a generalised commitment will not do any more. Young people in this country need and deserve better from us.

Huw Merriman (Bexhill and Battle) (Con): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Walthamstow. I find it strange to say—she perhaps will find it strange to hear—but I am critical of the new clause because it is not ambitious enough. Rather than just talking about safeguarding and listing aspects of personal, social and health education under subsections (a) to (e)—aspects, in reality, of sex education and relationships management—I would like to be bolder and enlighten and empower all our pupils in the whole sphere of personal, social, health and, indeed, economic education. In that sense, my call to the Minister is to be more ambitious and go further than the hon. Lady set out.

The hon. Lady referred to 90% of pupils wanting this form of education. I think it is 92% of pupils who want it, and they are not just referring to the limited form of education that she talked about. They want a sphere that would include economic education too. That is hugely important. Within schools, we are focusing more on mental health issues, wellbeing and preparing our pupils not only to cope with the challenges and pressures of their school surroundings, but with the challenges of the workplace and life in general. To pick up on the hon. Lady's theme, I would like to see legislation that covers all those parameters. There is great support for that—some 92% of parents and 88% of teachers support it.

Legislation has to be properly thought about within this sphere, however, because 12% of teachers are not positive about such provision. That may be because they are concerned about their workload and want some reassurance about what may be taken out of the curriculum if this particular provision put in. I would prefer to take a thoughtful approach. I have no issue with a consultation, because it gives us the opportunity to feed in on how legislation should be formed.

I do not wish to speak further, because I am pleased and keen to hear what the Minister has to say. I reassure the hon. Lady that while I will not be voting for a new clause that is restrictive and could go much further, I am certainly behind the general thrust of ensuring that we enlighten all our schoolchildren on the wider area—an area that does not just cover sex education and relationships management, but all the challenges of daily life.

Kate Green: It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Wilson. I support the new clause tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow.

I am sure she welcomed the enthusiasm that the hon. Member for Bexhill and Battle displayed for a broad-based PSHE offer for young people, I am afraid I was rather chilled by his final words that the intention was enough. As my hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow pointed out very eloquently, as long as she and I have been in Parliament—and no doubt for many years before that—that is what we have heard: the intentions are good, but nothing materialises. In the meantime, our young people are crying out for this kind of education offer.

3.15 pm

Huw Merriman: Perhaps it is the lawyer in me, but I think it is important to note that the new clause says that personal social and health education

“must include but shall not be restricted”

to certain subjects. There is also a danger that this is not the greatest piece of legislation. Anyone looking at the new clause will think that they are required to teach all the things that I have added, perhaps with the exception of the economic aspect. It is not entirely clear what provision the hon. Member for Walthamstow is trying to restrict—or widen.

Kate Green: I find the whole sentiment behind this discussion rather disappointing. I think it is very clear what the concerns of young people, parents and teachers are and why my hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow has tabled the new clause. She, of course, can speak for herself. Of all my colleagues, I think it is fair to say that, but may I say on her behalf that if this proposal is not perfect, we are amenable if the Minister wishes to produce something better, but we want it now. We have waited too long for something to happen, as opposed to warm words and expressions of enthusiasm.

The hon. Member for Bexhill and Battle is absolutely right to point to the importance of the debate in the context of all the attention the Government are giving to mental health and wellbeing. If we look at the record of previous Governments, including the coalition Government and the present Government, on a whole lot of related issues, it seems a great shame that we are not supporting those steps forward, which have been made with cross-party support in relation, for example, to female genital mutilation; in relation to stalking, which will be the subject of amendments in Committee later this afternoon; and in relation to coercive control, mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow; in relation to same-sex marriages; and in relation to the very good follow-up which has been put in place following some of the appalling child sex scandals of recent years. It is tragic that the Government and previous Governments, having made great social steps forward in all those areas, are unwilling to underpin them with really good education for our young people so that they can understand their rights under that legislation.

Stella Creasy: I always stop my hon. Friend when she gets going at my peril because she is such a powerful advocate. Can I give reassurance to the hon. Member for the constituency which I cannot think in my head right now but I am sure is a wonderful place?

Huw Merriman: Bexhill and Battle.

Stella Creasy: That's it—a lovely place. Personal and social education is already part of the curriculum, but what we have seen over the past couple of years is a

diminution in time allocated to it. The new clause would make the provision of lessons on these particular issues part of the safeguarding element that is inspected, and so prompt schools to ensure that these issues are covered. That does not preclude any of the points that have been made and the wider debate we can all have.

There is cross-party consensus about the value of PSHE and concern about the diminution in its delivery over the past couple of years. However, the measure would ensure that these subjects were part of the framework on which schools were inspected. If they were not providing lessons and guidance on these issues, that would be a matter for failing by Ofsted.

Ofsted looks at the provision of sex and relationships education, as we have seen, and has shown that it is of poor quality in many schools right now. However, at the moment it is not part of the safeguarding duty that they inspect. By making it part of the safeguarding duty, the measure gives Ofsted stronger powers to push schools to do it. It is not about PSHE being restrictive—the hon. Member for Bexhill and Battle is reading the proposal in quite a literal way—it is about Ofsted's powers. If the hon. Gentleman wants to have a conversation about Ofsted, I would be happy to talk to him, but I suspect it is beyond the scope of today's debate. I hope that reassures all my colleagues as to why we want to make sure that these particular topics are covered.

Kate Green: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I want to pick up the point that the hon. Member for Bexhill and Battle made about teachers' confidence in dealing with this subject. As my hon. Friend has explained, in embedding in the inspection regime an expectation that safeguarding standards are part of the way in which the curriculum is delivered, we create a need to ensure that teachers are properly equipped to teach that curriculum. That will have an effect on what is taught in teacher training colleges and on teaching practice. It will have an effect on the way in which schools organise, manage, support, mentor and develop their staff and on the way in which staff time is allocated, to ensure that teachers are able to teach the subject properly.

From talking to teachers, I do not think that their worry about this subject is so much about whether or not they have time to do it—they think it is important and want to make the time—as about a fear that they do not know how to do it. It requires proper attention to equip and educate them to deliver top-quality teaching.

We know that quality is an issue. My hon. Friend pointed out that one in seven children are receiving no sex and relationships education at all. Of those children who are receiving such education, half told the Terrence Higgins Trust in research it carried out that the teaching they received was poor or even terrible. There is little point in offering a poor or terrible education to our children. We have to raise the quality. That is not an excuse for doing nothing. It is an excuse for embedding firmly an expectation and an obligation on schools, along with an inspection regime to ensure that they meet it.

I am troubled that despite all the social progress we have made in my adult lifetime, and particularly the immense progress in relation to equality between women and men, young people's attitudes to relationships between the sexes remain primitive in so many ways. We have seen shocking research in recent years, which has shown

that young men and young women—teenagers—believe it is acceptable, for example, for a boy to hit his girlfriend if he sees her talking to another bloke or for a man to expect the woman in a partnership to put food on the table when he wants it.

The fact that those attitudes should still be pervasive among young people shows that there is a very real need to educate them in relation to not only in the biology of sexual relationships, as my hon. Friend said, but on the much broader dimensions of respect and equality. We have delivered those things in so many other ways—in legislation and social practice—but they need to be underpinned in our education system.

I want to conclude by saying, on my behalf if not on behalf of my hon. Friends, that if the Minister thinks the new clause is deficient, I insist he introduces something else as a matter of urgency. We would be happy to consider that. As my hon. Friend said, time is running out. If such a proposal is not available in Committee or on Report, there is no further chance to achieve the intention that is constantly expressed in this House and which is the will of the House and the wider public: to do so much better than we do now. I look forward to hearing what the Minister has to say. Without strong assurances that things will now change, I am pleased to support my hon. Friend's new clause.

Simon Hoare: I am the father of three young daughters of eight, six and four. The moment I am dreading is when they start asking what we used to call “those questions”. I am rather hoping my wife will be on hand. I am sure she will then promise to give me some sex education after she has dealt with the children.

This is such a complex and complicated issue, as the hon. Member for Walthamstow set out. I rise to make a few remarks against the backdrop of having attended a faith school and as a practising Roman Catholic. My wife is a member of the Church of England, but my children are Catholics. I very much support what lies behind the hon. Lady's new clause. I see nothing contradictory in being a practising Christian and wanting to ensure our next generation is equipped with as much resource and education as possible for the challenges that face modern youth—challenges that I, as a 47-year-old, could never have envisaged when I was 14, 15 or 16.

I remember the acute embarrassment—teenagers like to do this to their teachers—when we had a spinster nonconformist Methodist biology teacher in a Catholic state school who was asked by a friend of mine during this biology lesson—one where we had those pictures that were never quite clear anatomically—“Miss, what does a man do if he wants to have sex, but they do not want to have a child?” He knew full well what the Catholic teaching was on artificial contraception, but it threw this nonconformist spinster into an absolute tailspin and her answer was, “I think you should go to talk to the school chaplain”—she did not know how to answer. So it is as much about educating the educators as it is educating those who need the information.

The hon. Member for Walthamstow has been in this place longer than I, and I am reluctant to give her any advice about it—the new clause, that is, not anything else—[*Laughter.*] Before my hon. Friend the Member for Faversham and Mid Kent chips in with anything slightly “Carry On Laughing” or whatever, I think there are some omissions between 2 (a) and (e). For example,

[*Simon Hoare*]

it is important to have something about transgender. Likewise, while the hon. Lady said at the start of her remarks that this was not solely about digital, given its huge impact on perception, the curriculum should include an element on digital and the internet.

We have all bandied statistics around, but I remember reading that today most teenage boys that have accessed pornographic websites, just out of interest and teenage curiosity, actually believe that most women do not have pubic hair. That is a direct bit of education from the internet that affects the mindset and changes how we think about ourselves and our potential partners in a relationship.

I also notice—and it slightly belies what has actually been support from my hon. Friend the Member for Bexhill and Battle and I hope, certainly in theory, from the Minister—that the new clause is tabled solely in the name of Labour Members of Parliament who all happen to be women. This is an issue that should command cross-party support and certainly representation from both sexes. A father, a husband and a boyfriend have as much interest in ensuring a high quality of PSHE as women do. The hon. Member for Walthamstow might want to think about that point, which is why I hope that she will not press this new clause to a vote today but instead think about some proactive cross-party working on Report. That is not to kick the issue into the long grass; it would just help to create a better base.

Some wording—some form of protection—is needed for those who run faith schools, all faiths, to make the position absolutely clear. I have little or no doubt that I will receive emails from constituents who happen to read my remarks. They will say that this is all about promotion, and this or that religion thinks that homosexuality—or another element—is not right. So to provide a legislative comfort blanket, for want of a better phrase, the new clause needs to include a clear statement that we are talking not about promotion, but about education, and where sex education is delivered in a faith school environment, those providing the education should not feel inhibited about answering questions such as “What is the thinking of our faith on this particular aspect of sexuality?”

Stella Creasy: The hon. Gentleman has touched on an incredibly sensitive issue. I do not want to misinterpret his remarks, but he should be aware that many of us are concerned about children who are same-sex attracted in faith schools. One of the things that is important about getting this right is making sure that every school is acknowledging those children. Can he just clarify what he means by inhibition?

We did try to work in a cross-party way on this, and I continue to do so—and cross-gender, as well. I agree with him that this is not an issue for women; it is an issue for all of us. We are where we are with the new clause, but it would be helpful if the hon. Gentleman could spell out what he is talking about. Specifying religious inclusiveness and recognition of different religious perspectives is not the same as allowing a religious perspective to inhibit what we might teach young people. We need to give every young person, whether they have relationships with the same sex or different sex, the right education and support to have healthy relationships and to feel good about themselves as well.

3.30 pm

Simon Hoare: I take the hon. Lady’s point but I think we are looking through different ends of the same telescope. I do not think it would be sensible, or maximise the benefit of the thrust of the new clause, if faith schools were able to say “This aspect of human sexuality is contrary to”—I use that term in its broadest sense—“our religious doctrine, and we will not teach it.” The point I am making is that it should be taught because it is part of human nature—people are born straight or gay, or whatever phraseology one cares to use—but the school would not be in breach of any regulation or legislation to say to the class “We are a Muslim”—or Catholic, Jewish or Methodist—“school: this happens in human life, but the religious teaching of our majority faith in this classroom is that we don’t promote it”, or “That is not what we think.”

That is in part why this sort of debate is not best suited to the Committee. These discussions should take place across the genders and across the parties in preparation for Report. I am conscious that in trying to answer a legitimate point, fairly raised by the hon. Lady, I may have used terms that a 47-year-old white Catholic would use, which some people might find slightly old-fashioned and out of date, or perhaps not as politically correct as they should be. The thrust of what the hon. Lady is talking about is absolutely right, and germane to the whole of the Bill. However, if we are to command support from the religious as much as the secular, the sensitivities and anxieties that people often jump to—“This is all about promotion and trying to convince children at six that they should be gay, and if they are not there is something wrong with them, etc.”—need to be clearly and sensitively identified, so that those particular hares do not start running.

That is why I urge the hon. Lady, if she and her colleagues are serious about the new clause getting a fair crack of the whip, not to press it to a vote this afternoon but to work in a cross-party way to see what can be achieved, hopefully with the support of the Minister—we shall listen with interest to his remarks in a moment—on Report.

Mrs Lewell-Buck: It is a pleasure to speak in support of the new clause tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow, which would ensure that all local authorities would provide accurate, age-appropriate personal, social and health education, including age-appropriate sex and relationship education. I believe that we speak for most of the hon. Members in the Committee Room, and in the House more broadly, in saying that steps in such a direction are necessary and important to ensure that children can stay safe, happy and healthy in the 21st century. The current guidance in the area, as my hon. Friends have said, is out of date, and therefore woefully unable to address the challenges and possible dangers they outlined. The education system must respond to change in society to provide young people with the skills and knowledge they need to be safe. While guidance in PSHE and particularly in sex and relationships education is not able to do that, the dangers are clear, as is the case for acting.

I welcome the fact that the Minister and the Education Secretary seem to be coming round to the cross-party consensus on the issue, with suggestions in the media that the Education Secretary is planning a change of policy in that area. The issue is not about politics or

partisan point scoring, but about protecting the best interests and the health of children. I am sure all Members in this room will agree that that must be one of our highest priorities.

The Bill offers an ideal opportunity for the Government to make the changes in our education system that are so badly needed. I hope the Minister will support the new clause tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow.

Edward Timpson: May I begin by congratulating the hon. Member for Walthamstow on a stoic effort when she is clearly under the weather? I wholeheartedly agree with the hon. Members who have spoken in what has been a helpful debate in teasing out the issues that surround these sensitive subjects. Now is the time to make sure that every child has access to effective, factually accurate, age-appropriate sex and relationships education and PSHE. That is why we are responding positively and strongly to calls for further action. I am grateful to the hon. Members for tabling this new clause.

Perhaps surprisingly, we have ended up with a greater level of consensus on this new clause than we have had on previous new clauses. As I have said in previous debates on the Bill, we hear the call for further action on PSHE and we have committed to exploring all the options to improve delivery of SRE and PSHE. We are actively looking at how best to address both the quality of delivery, rightly raised by the hon. Member for Stretford and Urmston, and accessibility to ensure that all children can be supported to develop positive, healthy relationships and to thrive in modern Britain today. We welcome the support in delivering this in a timely and considered manner.

The Secretary of State herself has made this a personal priority, as we have heard, and we will be able to say more at a later stage in the Bill about how the Government intend to secure provision that is fit for purpose, inclusive and supports all young people growing up in our country today. It therefore seems to me that we are all pursuing similar aims. We all welcomed the excellent report published on 13 September by the Women and Equalities Committee and the considered recommendations within it. We are unanimous that sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools in any form is unacceptable and should not be tolerated. We are much more alive to that and need to make sure that that is properly reflected in the way that we equip children in future.

As part of our response, published on 9 November, the Government have committed to work with other interested parties over the coming months to produce a framework to support schools to produce their own new codes of practice, setting out the principles for a whole-school approach to inclusion and tolerance to combat bullying, harassment and abuse of any kind. Alongside that we have also committed to building our evidence base to better understand the scale and scope of the problem, as well as providing best-practice examples of effective ways to work with boys and girls to promote gender equality and both prevent and respond to incidents of sexual harassment and sexual violence. We will also set up an advisory group to look at how the issues and recommendations from the Committee's report can be best reflected within existing Department for Education guidance for schools, including the statutory guidance, "Keeping children safe in education" and our behaviour and bullying guidance.

Clearly, there is more that we need to do, which is why the Secretary of State is prioritising progress on the quality and availability of PSHE and SRE. In doing so, we must of course, as the hon. Member for Walthamstow said, look at the excellent work that many schools already do as the basis for any new support and requirements. As we know, sex education is already compulsory in all maintained secondary schools. Academies and free schools are also required by their funding agreement to teach a broad and balanced curriculum, and we encourage them to teach sex and relationships education within that. For example, many schools cover issues of consent within SRE, and schools draw on guidance and specialist materials from external expert agencies such as the PSHE Association, which produced the "Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) for the 21st Century" guidance in 2014. This supplementary guidance was developed by the PSHE Association, Brook, and the Sex Education Forum. It provides specific advice on what are sadly all too modern issues, including online pornography, sexting and staying safe online. The guidance equips teachers to support pupils on those challenging issues, developing their resilience and ability to manage risk.

In addition, Ofsted publishes case studies on its website that highlight effective practice in schools, including examples of how SRE is taught within PSHE. Examples include a girls' Catholic secondary school that has used pupil feedback to enhance its programme to equip students to learn about healthy relationships and issues of abuse and consent. I do not dismiss out of hand the suggestion by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak that innovation might have a place in this arena. There is much to commend his suggestion, and I will take it away and give it further thought.

We are also actively considering calls to update the guidance on SRE. As hon. Members have said, the guidance is out of date, and attempts since 2000 to update it have not come to fruition. The guidance is already clear that young people should learn about what a healthy relationship looks like, but it does not necessarily equip children with the skills and knowledge that they need in the world as it is today or ensure that the timeless nature of SRE that the hon. Member for Walthamstow spoke about is properly reflected.

Whatever we do, as hon. Members have said—including my hon. Friend the Member for North Dorset, in relation to faith schools—we must attempt to allow everybody with a view a chance to make their case. It is a sensitive issue, as everyone is aware, but we want to ensure that we bring as many people with us as possible. The broader the consensus, the greater the prospect that any change will be successful. As the hon. Member for Walthamstow is aware, I have already said that work is in train and we will return to these issues later, at a stage of the Bill when the whole House will have an opportunity to debate them.

Stella Creasy: It is great to hear that the Government are now working on this. My challenge to them is that I need some specific responses. The Minister talked about a framework. Will it be statutory? Over the last couple of years, we have seen clear evidence that because SRE is not a statutory part of the curriculum, it is not happening in too many schools. Some 60% of schools in this country are now academies; the measures that he is discussing cover maintained schools. Will his

[Stella Creasy]

framework be statutory in all schools, including academies? When will it be introduced, and when will we see the difference?

I said to the Minister in my initial remarks that I would like him to address the question of when we will see the change. A consultation, a framework and guidance are great, but if there are no teeth—if SRE is not statutory and schools are not inspected on it—nothing will change on the timescale that we want. I say to him gently that all of us recognise the difficulties and sensitivities involved in the religious issues—that is why these matters are part of the new clause—but I am not sure that I know of any other policy area that has such overwhelming public support. The risk is that if we keep finding long grass, we can stay in it. Can he give us an explicit commitment now about what the framework will actually do legislatively?

The Minister talked about the Bill coming back at a later stage. We are at the end of Committee stage, so he was talking only about Report. That is not much time for all of us to consider it and ensure, if legislation is involved, that it will be effective. If legislation is not involved, the clear evidence is that any measures will not make a difference.

Edward Timpson: Just to be clear, when I talked about the framework, I was doing so in the context of the response to the report of the Women and Equalities Committee on sexual harassment in schools. It is a framework to support schools to produce their own new codes of practice on issues of inclusion, tolerance and combating bullying, harassment and abuse of any kind. It is not a catch-all framework for PSHE or SRE; it is specifically to deal with those issues raised by the Committee. It illustrates the seriousness with which the Government take those issues and the fact that we are prepared to do something about it, rather than just thanking the Committee for its work.

There is a balance—I know that the hon. Lady is trying hard to strike it—between giving the Government constructive assistance in finding a way forward and appreciating that this issue cannot be resolved with a new Secretary of State in a short period of time. There are lots of repercussions that need to be thought through. The last time that legislation was attempted in 2008-09—I think the then Minister was Jim, now Lord, Knight—that was played out for all to see. We therefore need to be careful about the process we set up and how we ensure that we bring people with us.

3.45 pm

The hon. Lady should be reassured, and I hope she is, that we have a commonality in trying to establish how we ensure that by the time children growing up in Britain today reach adulthood—we hope it will be much earlier than that—and are moving away from the environment of their families and schools and into the big, wide world, they have resilience, knowledge and understanding of what they are capable of doing and what people are capable of doing to them. We want them to know where those lines can be drawn, so that they can react and ensure that they make good decisions as they go through their lives. That is the clear intention behind what we are all seeking to achieve.

I am afraid that the hon. Lady will have to be a bit more patient so that we can ensure that we make the right response that can come to fruition—unlike the attempt by the Labour Government, laudable though it was, in 2008-09. As she rightly identified, there will be a whole range of views, and people will want the opportunity to have oxygen to express them in. We need to be mindful of that, because we do not want to set up anything to fail: that would be the worst thing we could do for children, whom we are seeking to help and support.

Stella Creasy: This is difficult. I thank the Minister for what he has said; I appreciate that it feels a bit as if every amendment and new clause I am involved in is a sticky wicket for him. I asked him some very specific questions about legislation and the need for legislative action on the issue, on which I think we all agree. He referred to 2008-09. There was an attempt in 2013 to make legislation, and that was pushed back by the previous Government for the same reasons that he is talking about. We have proposals and there is support for them.

Edward Timpson: There is an important distinction. The parallel I am drawing is with 2008, when there was an attempt by the Government to lead an independent review and to look at making changes. In 2013, the attempt was not by Government. We are talking about the Government coming forward with proposals. That is the parallel I am trying to draw, rather than looking at 2013.

Stella Creasy: The difference is that there was legislation in 2008-09, and the Minister will recall that it was caught up in the wash-up ahead of the general election. There is not legislation here, and that is what we are looking for now.

The parallel for me is with what my mother calls “eat the frog” moments. If a person has to eat a frog, there is no nice way of doing it, so they might as well just get on and eat the frog. There will be people who oppose whatever we try to do on this issue, and the Government cannot keep saying “at a later date” and not specifying anything.

Are we going to see a legislative proposal on Report? If we will not, then continuing to press the new clause is the best way we have of pushing to make progress. Members from all parts of the House agree that we need progress and a recognition that while we will never get it perfect, we can get good legislation. The failure to make progress over the past six years has let our children down. Unless the Minister wants to intervene and say, “We will commit to bring forward a legislative opportunity on Report”, however late in the day, I will press the new clause to a vote. It is important to set a marker.

I appreciate that Government Committee members are shaking their heads. I am sorry, but frameworks and guidance are what we have had for the past six years, and we are not making progress. As the Minister does not want to intervene, I will press the new clause to a vote.

Question put. That the clause be read a Second time.

The Committee divided: Ayes 5, Noes 10.

Division No. 14]

AYES

Creasy, Stella	Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
Debbonaire, Thangam	
Green, Kate	McCabe, Steve

NOES

Caulfield, Maria	Milling, Amanda
Fernandes, Suella	Syms, Mr Robert
Hoare, Simon	Timpson, Edward
Kennedy, Seema	Tomlinson, Michael
Merriman, Huw	Whately, Helen

Question accordingly negatived.

New Clause 12

ARRANGEMENTS FOR REMAINING IN A RESIDENTIAL CHILDREN'S HOME AFTER REACHING ADULTHOOD

(1) The Children Act 1989 is amended as follows.

(2) In section 23CZA (arrangements for certain former relevant children to live with former foster parents)—

- (a) in subsection (2)(b)—
 - (i) after “person” insert “or residential children’s home”;
 - (ii) leave out “former foster parent” and insert “former care giver”;
 - (iii) after second “parent” insert “or residential children’s home”;
- (b) in the second sentence of subsection (2) after “together” insert “, or at the residential children’s home”;
- (c) for all references to “former foster parent” substitute “former care giver”.

(3) In paragraph 19BA in Part 2 of Schedule 2 (local authority support for looked after children)—

- (a) in sub-paragraph (1), after “parent” insert “or in a residential children’s home”;
- (b) in sub-paragraph (3)(b), after “parent” insert “or residential children’s home”.’ —(*Steve McCabe.*)

This new clause would extend the “staying put” arrangements that currently exist for young people placed with foster parents to those living in a residential children’s home.

Brought up, and read the First time.

Steve McCabe: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

The Chair: With this it will be convenient to discuss new clause 20—*Former relevant children: provision of sufficient suitable accommodation*—

(1) In the Children Act 1989, after section 23C insert—

“23CA Duty on local authorities to secure sufficient accommodation for former relevant children

(1) It is the general duty of a local authority to take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, the outcome in subsection (2).

(2) The outcome is that the local authority secures sufficient suitable accommodation (whether or not provided by them) within their area to meet the needs of former relevant children, where “former relevant children” has the same meaning as in section 23C(1) of this Act.

(3) In taking steps to secure the outcome in subsection (2), the local authority must—

- (a) produce, and make available to all former relevant children, information about the providers of accommodation and the types of accommodation they provide,
- (b) be aware of the current and expected future demand for such accommodation and consider how providers might meet that demand, and
- (c) have regard to—
 - (i) the need to ensure the sustainability of the market, and
 - (ii) the need to encourage providers to innovate and continuously improve the quality of such accommodation and the efficiency and effectiveness with which it is provided.”

This new clause would establish a clear statutory duty on local authorities to secure sufficient, suitable accommodation for all care leavers up to age 21. Local authorities already have a duty to ensure sufficient accommodation for looked after children in their area.

Steve McCabe: It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Wilson. Hopefully this will not take too long and will not be terribly contentious. The Minister and I might not necessarily agree on the nature of my new clause, but I hope that there is not too much between us on this issue. As far as I can see, the new clause follows a very welcome decision that he took in the last Parliament about children in foster care staying put. I believe that was the right thing to do and he deserves credit for it. I should say in passing that the idea flows from a previous Labour pilot; we did not have to exempt a single local authority from a single bit of legislation to implement that pilot, but there you go.

Anyway, the new clause comes from a decision taken by the Minister. I always thought at the time that people would inevitably say, “Well, if you are making this provision for children in care who happen to live in a foster home, what about other children in care who have different arrangements?” In fact, I am slightly surprised that we have not reached a stage where this has been tested out in court. It always occurred to me that someone would inevitably seek to challenge and test the legality of a situation whereby we can have rather different sets of rules for children who are subject to the same care provision but are living in slightly different arrangements.

What I seek to do with the new clause is simple: I am trying to mirror the arrangements that the Minister made for children being able to remain in foster care for other children who might want to remain in the children’s home where they live. There are two aspects to consider. First, there is a moral issue. For children who are subject to care orders, we are their parents. They are our responsibility. That is what we sign up to when we receive such children into care.

I listened to the hon. Member for North Dorset talking about being a father and about his children. I assume that all of us who are parents are not the sort of people who are likely to kick our kids out at 18. Maybe some of us will be quite glad to see them go off to university, so that we get a bit of a break and a breather from time to time, but generally I would not think most of us, and most parents, are like that.

The truth is that parenthood is one of those things that people buy into probably for their entire life. There will always be times when children will come back, and there is no golden rule saying that at 18 or 21, they are

[*Steve McCabe*]

capable of standing on their own two feet and can be cut adrift. If that is how we would behave towards our own children, it is not unreasonable to say that we should behave like that towards all children, and certainly children for whom we have become the parents.

The situation with foster care is more clear cut. I know that the Minister has a great deal of personal experience of this. The children are living in a semi-permanent arrangement with a particular parent or set of parents and have often been there for a very long time. It makes perfect sense for someone such as the Minister to say, "Well, it is ridiculous to have an artificial cut-off point—I am going to seek to extend that."

The issue is much more tricky when it comes to children's homes, because that provision has developed at different times under different frameworks: some local authority—although there is probably much less of that now—some private or in charity or not-for-profit organisations. The nature of the buildings and the homes is different. Although the new clause is designed to try to mirror the provision for foster care arrangements, I am reluctant to say that I want the Minister to legislate to say that everyone can remain in a children's home, come what may. I do not personally think that is sensible.

As a consequence, I went back and had a look at a proposal drawn up a couple of years ago by a consortium of organisations, many of which the Minister has a lot of contact with: the National Children's Bureau, the Who Cares? Trust, Action for Children, Barnardo's and the Centre for Child and Family Research at Loughborough University. I am sure the Minister is familiar with the work they engaged in, which was a scoping exercise, "Staying put for young people in residential care". The consortium came up with four options that it suggested we might want to consider.

The first option is for care leavers to continue to live in the same children's home that they were living in when in care, as this is obviously about what we do with children after they pass the cut-off point of 18. My own hunch is that that may work in some circumstances and not in others.

A second option was that the care leaver lives in a separate building but in the same grounds as the children's home they were living in when in care. Again, that might work in some situations. There may not be scope for that sort of provision in all situations so it may not work and there may not be funding or finance to deal with it.

The third option is that a care leaver might live in a different house from the one they were living in when in the children's home, but that they would continue to have support—something akin to supported lodgings. The fourth option, which I think is more commonly referred to as "stay close", is for the young person to live independently but with regular access to their former home—for example, being invited back for tea on a regular basis.

That strikes me as broadly what happens with our own children. They may continue to live with us beyond the age of 18 or they may come back periodically; they may at times live near us and come back. One would hope that we are always available when they need help and support. That is what I am asking the Minister about in the new clause.

Depending on his response, I am not sure that I will want to press the clause to a vote. I am making the point that we cannot have a situation where we have decided that someone who has the good fortune to be in foster care gets extended provision and we recognise their needs beyond the age of 18, but if someone lives in a different kind of care provision, they do not get the same consideration. I do not hold the Minister responsible, but we hear horror stories of care leavers ending up in bed-and-breakfast accommodation, virtually doss-houses in some cases, where they are required to live alongside people with serious alcohol and drug problems, with prostitution on the premises.

4 pm

What happens to youngsters when they leave care is pretty important in my book, which is why I tabled the new clause. Its purpose is to explore with the Minister how he intends to mirror the very good staying-put provision that he introduced for those in foster care and extend it to other children in care. I want to remind the Committee that the biggest danger with such provision for young folk is that it becomes part of a very bureaucratic local government exercise, although the Minister was telling us earlier about why he wants to loosen some things up. The one thing that a 19 or 20-year-old in a crisis does not need to be told is to come back when the office is open at 9 or 10 o'clock in the morning. What we need is the same thing we offer our children when we say, "I'm here when you need me, because it is my responsibility to care about you and I love you. I am going to make sure that you get the possible help that I can provide for you." We would do that for our kids, and we should do it for any child we take into care.

Mrs Lewell-Buck: I shall speak in support of new clause 12, tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak, and my new clause 20.

As it stands, there is a clear inconsistency in the law, where children in stable foster placements can stay with their foster families until the age of 21 under the terms of staying-put arrangements introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014, but similar provisions do not exist for those in residential care. I am sure that the Minister agrees that that is simply unacceptable. We cannot have a two-tier system under which those in foster care receive more comprehensive support from the state, their corporate parents, than those in residential care.

I know that the Department for Education is in discussion with key organisations on this matter, and that the Minister is aware that children in residential care often have complex needs and require an immense amount of support. I have no doubt that he is also aware that safe and secure housing is key to improving life chances, especially for some of our most vulnerable children, yet more than often that is not the case. Care leavers have disproportionately poorer outcomes compared with other young people; 40% of care leavers are not in education, employment or training compared with 14% of their peers. The Government's own figures show that nearly one in five care leavers aged 19 to 21 were in accommodation that was considered either unsuitable or that suitability was not even known. I am sure that the Minister would want to use the Bill to take every opportunity to improve life chances and outcomes for

those care leavers, and whenever he did so, he would have the support of all us in this room, because safe and stable accommodation is a basic human need and the starting point for providing young people with absolutely the best beginning in life.

The statistics on the number of care leavers who come into contact with the criminal justice system in comparison with those in the general population are heart-breaking. According to recent figures, the offending rates for looked-after children in England are now four times those for of all other children. For those who end up in prison, a recent study by Her Majesty's inspectorate of prisons found that 27% of young people in the young offender institutions it surveyed had previously been in care. When female young offenders were looked at, that figure was up to 45%. It is clear from those figures alone that the current legislation is failing care leavers. One of the factors that is known to give them a better chance in life is to ensure that they all have suitable and stable accommodation.

Local authorities have a duty to ensure that there is sufficient accommodation for looked-after children in their area. New clause 20 would introduce a similar duty to ensure

“sufficient...accommodation for all care leavers up to age 21.”

The Bill requires local authorities to consult on, and publish details of, their local offer to care leavers, setting out the support available for areas such as education, health, employment and accommodation. However, the local offer, as currently drafted, does not go far enough. It requires only that local authorities state publicly what they already provide, and there is no duty on them to ensure that the provision in their area meets local need. There is also no evidence, as we discussed earlier—that the local offer for SEN introduced in the Children and Families Act 2014 has made it more likely that relevant needs are met.

Many care leavers have had to deal with enormous trauma, instability and disruption in their young lives before they have learned the coping skills to deal with the impact of their experiences. That is why so many children growing up and leaving care have related mental health issues. It is absolutely vital that we support these young adults by offering them the stability of safe and secure accommodation. I want the Minister to explain to the Committee what he is going to do to remedy the inequality between children in foster care and children in residential care, and to ensure that the accommodation needs of every single one of our children leaving care are met, and met appropriately.

Kate Green: I just want to say briefly that I support both new clauses tabled by my hon. Friends. In introducing the Staying Put legislation for young people in foster families, the Minister took a big step forward. I have seen the benefit of that in my constituency, including the fact that it has put pressure on the whole system to facilitate keeping those young people in the families that have been providing the foster care, including ensuring that the financial arrangements to support housing costs are consistent with the Staying Put legislation. I have had casework where a foster parent has come to me to say that she faced a cut in the household housing benefit, and we were able to push back on that to enable the young person to stay in the foster home post-18.

That is a really important lesson, if I may say so, in relation to young people leaving residential accommodation. We know that there have been very difficult conversations going on over the last year or so relating to financial support for supported accommodation, as referred to by my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak. The Government have delayed, on two occasions, changes to housing benefit as they would apply to supported accommodation, but delay is not a long-term answer to what is putting huge uncertainty into the circumstances in which housing providers of that particular kind of accommodation are able to plan for the future. We could send a really good, useful signal in this legislation about the need for proper, strategic underpinning of accommodation for young people whether they leave foster care or residential care. We need to provide continuing housing support for them as young adults. This legislation is an important opportunity to reinforce that as our starting priority, which is the best interests of those young people.

I hope that the Minister will respond favourably to both new clauses. I think that he did a very good thing with the Staying Put legislation and it would be good to see that extended to the benefit of all looked-after, and formerly looked-after, young people so that we can really do everything. As my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak said, we should, as corporate parents, do what parents would do for their own children.

Edward Timpson: I am grateful to hon. Members for tabling these new clauses. They would place a duty on local authorities to secure sufficient accommodation for care leavers up until the age of 21 and would extend the existing Staying Put duty to those children leaving residential children's homes. I understand the purpose behind both the new clauses and agree that care leavers should be supported to access the accommodation they need.

As a backdrop, it is worth going to the start of these Committee sittings and remembering some of the other aspects in the Bill in respect of corporate parenting principles, the care leaver offer and the extension of the personal adviser to every care leaver up to the age of 25 when requested. This is not an area where we have been neglectful. On the contrary: we are the first Government I am aware of who have managed to pull together a comprehensive cross-Government strategy on care leavers and get commitment from a whole range of Departments in areas where we know care leavers particularly require help and support.

I remind the Committee that local authorities are already responsible for providing suitable accommodation to all care leavers aged 16 to 17. When care leavers reach age 18, local authority leaving care teams are responsible for helping care leavers access suitable accommodation. Their new home must be suitable for their needs and linked to their wider plans and aspirations—for example, living close to work or college.

The tapered support offer that already exists for care leavers, which clause 3 will strengthen, is designed to help move young people away from dependence. The corporate parenting principles we are introducing in clause 1 will also ensure that local authorities remain focused on providing appropriate support as care leavers move to independence.

[*Edward Timpson*]

When a care leaver is homeless or at risk of homelessness, the homelessness legislation provides strong protection for them. Local housing authorities have a statutory duty to house care leavers under the age of 21 if they become homeless and people over 21 who are vulnerable as a result of being in care. Statutory guidance for councils also makes clear that those leaving care should be treated as a priority group for social housing.

The Government recognise the importance of improving practice and are funding the homeless charity St Basils to work with local authorities to improve joint working between children's and housing services, to help them develop accommodation pathways for care leavers that provide a range of options, reflecting care leavers' readiness to live independently. The Government are also supporting the private Member's Homelessness Reduction Bill, which will place duties on local housing authorities to provide targeted information and advice for care leavers on preventing homelessness.

Another accommodation option for young people leaving foster care—it has already been mentioned—is Staying Put, which we introduced in 2014. That enables young people to stay living with their former foster carers where that is what they both want. The latest data show that, encouragingly, more than half of 18-year-olds who were eligible for Staying Put are now choosing to do so.

New clause 20 would extend Staying Put to young people leaving residential care. I completely agree with the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak that those young people should have the same opportunity as those in foster care to maintain relationships with their former care givers. That is why earlier this year, after the research that the hon. Gentleman mentioned from the NCB and others, we asked Sir Martin Narey to conduct a review of residential care. Like the hon. Gentleman, Sir Martin believed that simply extending the Staying Put duty to those leaving residential children's homes was not the right answer and that the Government should test variations of Staying Close—I am afraid we are back into innovation territory—as an alternative to Staying Put for those leaving residential care. In July, we accepted his recommendations and committed to introducing Staying Close for all those leaving care through that route.

We are not biding our time. On 21 December, we invited local authorities to bid to run pilots, through which we will learn what works to deliver Staying Close, as recommended by Sir Martin Narey. We will use that information to make sure that the future roll-out is fully effective and properly targeted.

Mrs Lewell-Buck: Will there be an option in Staying Close for children in residential care to remain in their residential placement if they wish to, or not? Mr Wilson, I should probably have declared at the outset that I am a patron of Every Child Leaving Care Matters, which campaigns on this issue.

Edward Timpson: The hon. Lady will be pleased to know that we have been working very closely with the Every Child Leaving Care Matters team, so that it is able to positively contribute to the work and look at the different models that we need to test out through the

piloting of Staying Close. In that way, the needs of each individual young person can be met by the range of models available. Some of the early innovation that has already taken place through the children's social care innovation programme has shown, interestingly, that there are different types of arrangements that work for different young people.

For example, in North Yorkshire we have the No Wrong Door project, which is centred around having a consistent keyworker throughout not only the young person's time in care but also their time leaving care, irrespective of the place that they are then in. That is built around the concept, which has come through the care inquiry and other routes, that helping maintain those important relationships through that transition can be as beneficial as anything else that we do to support them.

The House Project in Stoke has set up a housing co-operative run by care leavers, who are responsible for managing their tenancy. They have formed their own community, have a good social network and continue to be well supported, but they are starting to gain a sense of independence. I think that the answer to the hon. Lady's good question is that we want to ensure, through the piloting, that we allow the opportunity to try all the different options available for young people leaving residential care. There are already some residential care settings that keep on young people beyond 18. We need to discover through the pilot what level of demand there is for that and where it is right for that to be done.

4.15 pm

We must also not look at the issue in isolation but consider it across the piece, including alongside the fostering stocktake that is now ongoing. Specialist fostering placements could also play a role in some of the work that might be needed to transition out of residential care.

Mrs Lewell-Buck: Just to clarify the option to remain in some of the models that the Minister has said are being explored, will there be an option for children who want to remain in residential care to do so, or will there not? I am not clear from his response so far.

Edward Timpson: We have accepted the recommendations of Sir Martin Narey that there should not be a duty to provide that for every young person leaving residential care. Through the piloting of Staying Close, we want to consider the different opportunities to find not just the right accommodation solution but the right relationships and pathway into independence for each of those young people.

I think that that is the right approach, and a sensible and proportionate way to respond to the consistent view of the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak on staying in residential care. Having now understood the basis for his new clause, I hope that I have given him a sense that we are travelling in a direction that accords with where he hopes to go. However, there is still some work to do, and we have committed in our response to Sir Martin Narey's report to rolling the measure out across the country, so that every young person leaving residential care will have the opportunity to continue with the support received by those in foster care.

Steve McCabe: That was a helpful response from the Minister, and I would like the chance to reflect on what he has said. I beg to ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

Ordered, That further consideration be now adjourned.
—(*Mr Syms.*)

4.18 pm

Adjourned till Thursday 12 January at half-past Eleven o'clock.

Written evidence to be reported to the House

- CSWB 15 Jay Williams
 CSWB 16 Article 39
 CSWB 17 John Dawson, Senior Social Work Practitioner
 CSWB 18 Alice Barker Trust
 CSWB 19 Sonia Mainstone-Cotton
 CSWB 20 Dr Judith King
 CSWB 21 Kirsty Walker
 CSWB 22 CLIC Sargent
 CSWB 23 British Association of Social Workers England
 CSWB 24 Jon Blend
 CSWB 25 Yorkshire & Humberside Independent Panel Chairs forum
 CSWB 26 Michael Shaw
 CSWB 27 Dr Steve Rogowski
 CSWB 28 Dr Peter Whitaker
 CSWB 29 CoramBAAF
 CSWB 30 Children England
 CSWB 31 Alan Kennelly
 CSWB 32 Louise O'Sullivan IRO
 CSWB 33 John Kemmis
 CSWB 34 Lisa Bailey
 CSWB 35 Helen Macfarlane
 CSWB 36 John Plummer
 CSWB 37 Patrick Wilkings
 CSWB 38 Ms Roisin Sweeny
 CSWB 39 Rachel Olaoye
 CSWB 40 Lana Gayle
 CSWB 41 Alderman Mark Fittock
 CSWB 42 Unicef UK and the Children's Rights Alliance for England
 CSWB 43 Bolanle Kayode
 CSWB 44 Association of Independent LSCB Chairs
 CSWB 45 Nagalro
 CSWB 46 Action for Children
 CSWB 47 Professor Mike Stein
 CSWB 48 Anne Jackson
 CSWB 49 London and South East regional Foster Panel Chairs forum
 CSWB 50 PSHE Association and NAHT
 CSWB 51 Royal College of Nursing
 CSWB 52 Pete Bentley
 CSWB 52A Pete Bentley (supplementary)
 CSWB 53 Local Government Association
 CSWB 54 David Hersh, Chairman of Governors, Tiferes High School
 CSWB 55 Young Futures
 CSWB 56 Mrs Judith Nemeth, Executive Director of NAJOS, the National Association of Jewish Orthodox Schools
 CSWB 57 Association of Professors of Social Work
 CSWB 58 Article 39 - further submission
 CSWB 59 Dr Ray Jones, Emeritus Professor of Social Work, Kingston University and St George's, University of London
 CSWB 60 Coram Children's Legal Centre
 CSWB 62 Oliver Mills
 CSWB 63 Ateres High School, Gateshead
 CSWB 64 Dr Anna Gupta
 CSWB 65 National Association of Reviewing Officers (NAIRO)
 CSWB 66 Emeritus Professor June Thoburn
 CSWB 67 Maria Stanley
 CSWB 68 Menorah Grammar School (London)
 CSWB 69 Jewish Community Council of Gateshead
 CSWB 70 Keser Girls' School, Gateshead
 CSWB 71 Nagalro - further submission
 CSWB 72 Dr F H Mikdadi
 CSWB 73 Liberty
 CSWB 74 The Adolescent and Children's Trust (TACT)
 CSWB 75 Mrs Alex Bemrose