

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT
GENERAL COMMITTEES

Public Bill Committee

STALKING PROTECTION BILL

First Sitting

Monday 9 July 2018

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CLAUSES 1 TO 15 agreed to.
Title amended.
Bill, as amended, to be reported.

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

Friday 13 July 2018

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The Committee consisted of the following Members:

Chair: JAMES GRAY

- | | |
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| † Atkins, Victoria (<i>Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department</i>) | † Pow, Rebecca (<i>Taunton Deane</i>) (Con) |
| † Berger, Luciana (<i>Liverpool, Wavertree</i>) (Lab/Co-op) | Prentis, Victoria (<i>Banbury</i>) (Con) |
| † Bradshaw, Mr Ben (<i>Exeter</i>) (Lab) | † Reynolds, Emma (<i>Wolverhampton North East</i>) (Lab) |
| † Chalk, Alex (<i>Cheltenham</i>) (Con) | † Sandbach, Antoinette (<i>Eddisbury</i>) (Con) |
| † Champion, Sarah (<i>Rotherham</i>) (Lab) | Saville Roberts, Liz (<i>Dwyfor Meirionnydd</i>) (PC) |
| † Charalambous, Bambos (<i>Enfield, Southgate</i>) (Lab) | † Sheerman, Mr Barry (<i>Huddersfield</i>) (Lab/Co-op) |
| † Foster, Kevin (<i>Torbay</i>) (Con) | Williams, Dr Paul (<i>Stockton South</i>) (Lab) |
| † Graham, Richard (<i>Gloucester</i>) (Con) | † Wollaston, Dr Sarah (<i>Totnes</i>) (Con) |
| Lamb, Norman (<i>North Norfolk</i>) (LD) | † Wood, Mike (<i>Dudley South</i>) (Con) |
| † Maclean, Rachel (<i>Redditch</i>) (Con) | Adam Mellows-Facer, Kenneth Fox, <i>Committee Clerks</i> |
| † O'Brien, Neil (<i>Harborough</i>) (Con) | |
| † Phillips, Jess (<i>Birmingham, Yardley</i>) (Lab) | † attended the Committee |

Public Bill Committee

Monday 9 July 2018

[JAMES GRAY *in the Chair*]

Stalking Protection Bill

4.30 pm

The Chair: I welcome hon. Members to the Committee, which will consider the Stalking Protection Bill line by line. This is a warm day but, unless anyone requests otherwise on a point of order, I think that we should maintain our usual dress standards.

Kevin Foster (Torbay) (Con): On a point of order, Mr Gray. Are you prepared to exercise your discretion to allow gentlemen to remove their jackets, and perhaps their ties as well?

The Chair: Mr Foster knows perfectly well that my personal inclination in these matters is to be traditional, and therefore to say no. However, as he is a very close friend of mine, I will allow gentlemen to remove their jackets, if they so wish.

Jess Phillips (Birmingham, Yardley) (Lab): Can I take my shoes off?

The Chair: I think shoes might be taking it a little too far. Perhaps hon. Members would remember to switch their electronic devices on only when they leave the room.

We now come to line-by-line consideration of the Bill. We will first consider clause 1 stand part, with which I am prepared to allow a more general debate on the rest of the Bill.

Clause 1

APPLICATIONS FOR ORDERS

Question proposed, That the clause stand part of the Bill.

The Chair: With this it will be convenient to consider amendment 1, in the title, line 1, leave out “protecting” and insert “orders to protect”.

This amendment would ensure that the long title of the Bill better reflects the content of the Bill, which is limited to stalking protection orders and related matters.

Dr Sarah Wollaston (Totnes) (Con): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Gray. I will start by thanking the many people who have come forward to talk openly about their own harrowing personal experiences at the hands of stalkers—including those who have been bereaved as a result of stalking—and the many organisations that have provided support and expertise: the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, the Gloucestershire stalking support service, Paladin, the Alice Ruggles Trust, Protection Against Stalking and, of course, many members of the

police and the police and crime commissioner lead. I am very grateful to all of them for sharing their expertise. I am also grateful to the Minister’s Bill team, who have been extraordinarily helpful in providing support.

Clause 1 creates a new civil protective order to protect victims of stalking, called a stalking protection order. I am delighted that the Bill has received such strong cross-party support. I really welcome this consensus, on behalf of those who have been victims of stalking in the past and, more importantly, those whom we can protect in the future. It is worth reiterating why we are here to create the new orders. Responses to a public consultation launched in December 2015 stressed the need for earlier intervention in stalking cases to protect victims and to address emerging patterns of behaviour in perpetrators before they become entrenched or escalate in severity, as well as for putting in place vital extra protections. They identified a clear gap in the existing protective order regime, particularly in cases of so-called stranger stalking, where the stalking occurs outside a domestic abuse context or where the perpetrator is not a current or former intimate partner of the victim.

The Bill is therefore intended to provide the police with an additional tool with which to protect victims and deter perpetrators at the earliest possible opportunity, and to fill the gap in the protective order regime. Stalking protection orders will be available on application to a magistrates court by the police, ensuring, importantly, that the onus to take action is not placed on the victim and that the police have end-to-end sight of the entire process, from application to enforcement of the orders, and if there is reasonable cause to believe that the proposed order is necessary to protect another person from the risk of stalking.

I should inform the Committee at this point that I am exploring the possibility of the British Transport police and the Ministry of Defence police also being able to apply for these orders. I hope to provide an update on Report.

Crucially, the orders will be available in cases of stranger stalking because, unlike with existing protective orders, clause 1 contains no requirement for stalking to have occurred in a domestic abuse context or for there to be a current or former intimate partner relationship between victim and perpetrator. The clause also contains no requirement for the orders to be made on conviction. Again, that is unlike what happens with existing protective orders.

Alex Chalk (Cheltenham) (Con): I congratulate my hon. Friend on her vision and stamina in promoting the Bill, which have been a lesson to us all. The fact that there is no requirement for a conviction is the strength of the provision. However, I am interested in the burden and standard of proof to be established before an order can be made. One can well imagine that they would be contested; and they should be imposed only where it is fair to do so, given that breach of such an order could result in a custodial penalty.

Dr Wollaston: I thank my hon. Friend for the extraordinary work that he has undertaken on behalf of victims of stalking. He is right to draw attention to that matter. Orders could be made on the balance of probability, but breach of an order would be a criminal offence. That is the important distinction, and I know that he welcomes those arrangements.

As I mentioned, clause 1 includes no requirement for orders to be made on conviction—an important distinction—or for the behaviour giving grounds for the application to have met the criminal threshold. That is what my hon. Friend the Member for Cheltenham was pointing out, and it is because stalking protection orders are designed specifically to permit early intervention when the criminal threshold has not yet been met but where it is known that there is a serious risk of harm as a result of stalking. If the police are gathering evidence and preparing a criminal case for court—for example if they are pursuing a stalking conviction—that takes time. The orders are not intended to replace such prosecutions. They can protect victims at the earliest possible opportunity and also are a way of stepping in to address the perpetrator's behaviour before it progresses into an obsessive campaign. Breaking the cycle is much more difficult if the behaviour is allowed to continue for longer.

To address the behaviour in question effectively, orders would make it possible to impose prohibitions and positive requirements on the perpetrator. Clause 1 would allow the police to propose to the court a bespoke intervention to protect the victim from harm but also, crucially, address the perpetrator's behaviour. Requirements to be imposed on a perpetrator by orders include notification requirements similar to those for registered sex offenders. Those are provided for in clause 9 and would help ensure that the police had the right information at the right time to manage the risk posed by perpetrators effectively. A perpetrator who did not comply with the conditions of a stalking protection order would face a criminal penalty for breach under clause 8, with a maximum sentence of five years' imprisonment.

Finally, clause 12 makes provision for the Government to issue statutory guidance to the police on the use of the orders. That will be developed in collaboration with criminal justice partners and sector experts and will help ensure that the police have the knowledge, understanding and confidence to use stalking protection orders to their full potential. It is only right to acknowledge that a new stalking protection order will not in itself deliver a better response to stalking; that will require an improved awareness of stalking on the part of all professionals working in that space, and a continued focus on improving the criminal justice response through the provision of high-quality training, guidance and professional development.

Other measures, beyond the scope of the Bill, were suggested on Second Reading. One was a stalking register. I know that the Government are committed to looking at wider options to improve the response to stalking, and to linking those considerations to wider work on supporting vulnerable victims. However, it is important to note that the notification requirements that could be imposed on a perpetrator under clause 9 are similar to those that can be imposed on registered sex offenders. I look forward to hearing the Minister's thoughts on that point.

I am sure that Committee members will agree that any further changes with respect to stalking should be introduced following rigorous and comprehensive consultation. That brings me to the reason I tabled an amendment to change the long title of the Bill: to ensure that it better reflects its content, which is limited to stalking protection orders and related matters. It is a minor, technical amendment that I hope provides neatness and clarity and will smooth the Bill's passage through Parliament.

I hope that I have made clear how the Bill provides the police with a welcome additional tool, the purpose of which is to protect victims of stalking and deter perpetrators at the earliest possible opportunity, even before the stage is reached at which a prosecution could commence, or to put in place protection while evidence for a prosecution is being gathered. It is imperative that we are able to provide effective support for victims of this devastating crime.

Emma Reynolds (Wolverhampton North East) (Lab): I congratulate the hon. Lady on introducing the legislation. Will she explain in more detail the provision for interim stalking protection orders in the Bill?

Dr Wollaston: I thank the hon. Lady for asking about that. It can take time to bring together all the evidence needed for a full stalking protection order, but we all recognise that time is of the essence—I am sure we have all heard compelling evidence of serious harm ensuing. The point is to bring forward an interim order at the earliest possible opportunity, not to replace either a full stalking protection order or the pursuit of a stalking conviction where possible, but to ensure that we recognise that time is of the essence. In the most serious cases we would expect the police to use their existing powers regarding pre-charge bail conditions. I hope that answers the hon. Lady's question.

I hope that Members will give their full support to the Bill and I welcome the cross-party support and constructive debate.

Sarah Champion (Rotherham) (Lab): It is always a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Gray. I may need your wise guidance as we go forward with the Bill.

It is also a great pleasure to serve on the Committee. The unbelievable passion, vigour and determination with which the hon. Member for Totnes has fought to get the Bill to this stage is something we must all learn from and admire—I am very grateful for it. I also pay tribute to the Minister, who has been superb on preventing violence against women and girls. As a team, they are a formidable force, and one of which I hope perpetrators are mindful.

I really welcome the new powers that the Bill gives the police to protect victims from strangers who cause them fear and harassment. The stalking protection order is welcome because of the criminal sanctions incurred for breaching it and because it will function as a responsive tool that the police can apply to protect victims while a case is being built against the perpetrator.

The Government, in their violence against women and girls strategy, promised to publish new authorised professional practice on stalking and harassment by the end of 2016, but they did not fulfil that commitment. I now understand from the Suzy Lamplugh Trust that the College of Policing intends to produce guidance in a more accessible form for police officers. The police force in my constituency is South Yorkshire police, and information sourced by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust through freedom of information requests found that in 2013 the force recorded only eight cases of stalking. By 2016 the figure had increased to 76, and in 2017 it was 305. That is positive news, suggesting that the police are already becoming increasingly attuned to the specific nature of stalking and more adept at responding to it.

[Sarah Champion]

The 43 police forces in England and Wales train their officers in various different ways in relation to stalking, resulting in inconsistency across the country in the police's ability to recognise and respond to it. In May 2018 the Crown Prosecution Service made a commitment to provide refreshed stalking and harassment training to all prosecutors over the coming months, but there is no national mandatory stalking training programme for police officers. Does the Minister agree that there should be? We will see as we go through the Bill that there are issues relating to guidance, so perhaps the Minister will respond to those.

4.45 pm

Mr Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield) (Lab/Co-op): I, too, congratulate the hon. Member for Totnes. I was one of the original members of the commission on stalking, which had members from the House of Lords and the House of Commons. It was pretty new, and it was a very good group. All of us who are still in contact think that the Bill builds on the foundations we created. We thank her immensely and hope the Bill comes to fruition quickly.

Alex Chalk: I want to reflect on how far we have come on this issue in such a short time. It is hard to think that stalking was made a criminal offence only in 2012. Prior to that, it was the stuff of almost amusement. It is only now that we, as a society, have come to realise its appalling and corrosive impact. We have made that progress because of great campaigners such as my hon. Friend the Member for Totnes, who has been ably and graciously supported by the hon. Member for Rotherham.

I have one observation. This is an excellent Bill that will provide an important tool for early intervention. Critically, it allows to be placed on the individual not just a prohibition, but a requirement potentially to get some sort of treatment. We all want the stalking to stop, and sometimes the critical factor is to ensure that the individual gets treatment, be that talking therapy or whatever, to address the fixation that has got into his or her head. I hope that magistrates courts will take the opportunity that this excellent piece of legislation provides to protect victims and assist perpetrators.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Victoria Atkins): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Gray. I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Totnes for introducing this important issue to the House of Commons through her private Member's Bill, and for all the hard work that she and those who assist her have put into the Bill. It has been a real pleasure to work with her and to see how she has drawn together all the charities that do so much invaluable work in this area, and how she has created cross-party consensus. I was very pleased when I saw the list of Committee members, because everyone present has worked so hard in this area.

I place on record my thanks to Mr and Mrs Ruggles, whom I met through my hon. Friend in our preparations for the Bill, and to Mr and Mrs Gazzard. I met Mr Gazzard when I visited my hon. Friend the Member for Gloucester, to whom I am also grateful, and we talked a lot about safeguarding and what more we can do to prevent terrible incidents of this nature. Similarly, I must thank

my hon. Friend the Member for Cheltenham, who did so much to increase the maximum sentence available when such crimes have been committed.

I reiterate that the Bill has the Government's wholehearted support and that the question of stalking is of great importance to the Government. The provisions in the Bill will provide the police with a vital additional tool with which to protect victims of stalking and deter perpetrators at the earliest opportunity, but we know that there is much more to do.

I will answer a couple of sensible questions posed by the hon. Member for Rotherham about the consistency of police training and the police response to investigating stalking across the country. The Home Office continues to work with the national police lead, Deputy Chief Constable Paul Mills, and will deliver the updated police guidance shortly. That is being overseen by the Home Secretary, who chairs the national oversight group, which I also attend and which does a great deal of work. The hon. Lady also made a valid point about mandatory police training. Clause 12 provides for statutory guidance to the police on stalking and we are committed to working with the College of Policing to deliver refreshed training across public protection portfolios, because we understand that some forces do much better than others, and we need to bring them all up to the same high standard.

We will continue to work closely with criminal justice partners to address the findings of last year's joint inspectorate report on the police and CPS response to stalking and harassment, including through the national oversight group. In addition, we have provided £4.1 million through the police transformation fund to the police, in partnership with the Suzy Lampugh Trust, which is such an important charity in this area, for a multi-agency stalking interventions programme to share best practice and learning on the development of effective interventions for stalking. The proposed stalking protection orders will form part of this bigger picture to tackle stalking, as a vital additional tool at the disposal of our police forces. I very much pick up on the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Cheltenham about these orders placing positive requirements on the defendant to address their own behaviour to see whether we can break that cycle of stalking.

Antoinette Sandbach (Eddisbury) (Con): In today's digital world, we see a lot of stalking online and through social media; in fact, the very first contacts with a victim can be via that means. Can the Minister confirm that the orders established by the Bill will cover the digital spaces as well as the real-world space, as it were?

Victoria Atkins: I am extremely grateful to my hon. Friend, who has done so much to further the cause of women and girls who are the victims of violence, for that intervention. She is absolutely right: the Bill covers the online world as well as the offline world, because we know—sadly—that nowadays obsessive perpetrators will try to reach their victims in any way they can.

However, it is important that we consider protecting women and girls, and indeed men and boys, from all forms of violence, which is why the cross-Government violence against women and girls strategy, published in 2016, sets out our ambition that no victim of abuse should be turned away from the support they need, and we have committed increased funding of £100 million to support that work.

Sarah Champion: I cannot let the Minister off the hook on that one, because one of the key things that we need to be able to implement that support, and the whole raft of protections against domestic violence and other forms of violence against women and girls, is the ratification of the Istanbul convention. I know the Minister said she was going to tie that into the draft domestic abuse Bill, which of course has been put back another year, but could she give us any news on that at this point?

Victoria Atkins: Very much so; in fact, I gave evidence before the Women and Equalities Committee last week on this issue. We have the clear intention of ratifying the convention in the domestic abuse Bill. To ratify it, we need to have met the conditions. We are very nearly there—there is just an issue about extraterritorial jurisdiction in relation to a few offences—but we are going to make it happen, as it were, in the domestic abuse Bill, which will then enable us to ratify the convention. That is happening, it will happen, and I look forward to receiving the support of colleagues from all parties in ensuring that it does happen.

Richard Graham (Gloucester) (Con): I am particularly pleased about this Bill, which I know my hon. Friend the Minister is so enthusiastic about, and I support the work that my hon. Friend the Member for Totnes has done on this issue. When my neighbour—my hon. Friend the Member for Cheltenham—and I worked on this, one of the key things that came out of it was that if we were going to send people to prison for longer for aggressive stalking, there had to be some remedial work that would make them less of a threat when they came out. I think this positive requirement of the defendant will make a real difference. Does she agree?

Victoria Atkins: I do. Again, I am grateful to my hon. Friend for all the work that he has done in this very important area. What I like about the way in which the Bill is drafted is that it gives flexibility to the police and the courts to offer a bespoke package, as it were, to the perpetrator, so that if experts feel that a particular measure will stop the cycle of violence, then they can propose that.

I hope that over the coming years, particularly with the development of technology and so on, we might see some interesting innovation in this area. I also hope that we will see similar innovation when it comes to the domestic abuse Bill, because, of course, this Bill goes hand in hand with that one, and there is a great deal of co-ordination that we can achieve in tackling both forms of violence.

Rebecca Pow (Taunton Deane) (Con): I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Totnes and the Minister for their great work. I believe that in the consultation a huge proportion of people simply felt that we did not have the correct legislation to deal with this stranger stalking, which is why I am very pleased that the Bill is being introduced. So many people have been affected, from celebrities to ordinary people, some for 20 years—for many years. Will the Minister give some assurances on how much evidence will need to be built up, and how quickly the great powers in the Bill can be used, after one spots a potential stalker?

Victoria Atkins: Of course, stalking can present in many different ways. As we have discussed, what is key is that the police are aware and conscious of patterns of behaviour that may constitute stalking, as is helping to educate the public through the invaluable charities that we have already named and raising awareness of what may constitute stalking behaviour.

I had an interesting meeting last week with the police and crime commissioner for Sussex, who is doing a great deal of work in that county to develop police and public awareness of stalking. As education and awareness have developed, reporting of such instances has risen. We do not have not any reason to believe that there is more stalking in Sussex than anywhere else; I think it is a question of more awareness-raising meaning that people know that they should not have to put up with such behaviour and reporting it to the police. The Bill will give the police the powers they need to protect those people immediately.

Alex Chalk: On the practicalities, collating the evidence for one of these civil orders may be quite a laborious exercise. Gloucestershire police are a national leader on stalking issues. Can the Minister provide assurances that other police forces will be given sufficient training to ensure that they know how to present these applications in a cogent way and discharge the appropriate obligations to the person being considered for such an order?

Victoria Atkins: Very much so. That is the expectation, particularly through the statutory guidance. We will very much be led by the National Police Chiefs' Council lead, Paul Mills. Tackling stalking is his focus, so we will work with him and the College of Policing to ensure that chief constables and police officers on the beat across the country understand not only their powers but how to spot the signs of stalking and harassment.

Mr Sheerman: I realise that I am pushing my luck after being late coming in; I was awaiting the Prime Minister's statement. I found during the 10 years that I chaired what became the Children, Schools and Families Committee that fine words come from Ministers on how to identify the deep-seated causes of stalking in individual personalities, but that there is a shortfall in the therapies and the people trained in delivering them. Are we conscious of that shortfall, because we need to make sure that these people are available?

Victoria Atkins: This is a developing area. An early analysis of the responses to the consultation on the domestic abuse Bill shows an emphasis on perpetrator programmes. This is clearly an area for development, and I am pleased that we have granted £4.1 million to the police and the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, through the police transformation fund. I very much hope that through that programme they will be able to share best practice, with a view to ensuring that the high standards we hope for and expect are met across the country.

Bambos Charalambous (Enfield, Southgate) (Lab): I congratulate the hon. Member for Totnes on her excellent Bill. Clause 12 says:

“The Secretary of State must issue guidance to chief officers of police about the exercise of their functions under this Act.”

[*Bambos Charalambous*]

I am concerned that the police may use interim orders as a way of extending police bail when bail limits run out. Will the Minister comment on that? Might we train the police on it?

5 pm

Victoria Atkins: If I understand the hon. Gentleman correctly, he is suggesting that the police may use the powers in the Bill as an alternative to police bail. Is that correct?

Bambos Charalambous: Yes.

Victoria Atkins: Of course, the statute sets the parameters of the order. It will be for the magistrates court to decide whether the police have met the thresholds in that statute. That is why I think it is important—mindful as we are of the public policy interests of having this order—that we bear in mind that the judicial system has to act with fairness to the victim and the person accused. That is why the role of the magistrates court in the orders will ensure that police have met the standards they must meet. I hope that answers the hon. Gentleman's question.

As this debate has demonstrated, we need to look at these issues in the round and look to promote empathy with victims. Whether the victims are very famous or do not enjoy fame—fame plays no part—the fear can be intense and on a minute-by-minute basis. It is not just fear felt by the victim, but by their family members, neighbours and friends.

We need to understand and recognise patterns of behaviour, prioritise early intervention and prevention, and ensure that there is appropriate victim care and support in place. That is how we start to identify solutions for assessing risk and managing perpetrators in a targeted way, ensuring a joined-up response to violent intimate crime.

We have used our recent public consultation on our landmark draft domestic abuse Bill to explore further the legislative and non-legislative steps that Government can take to transform the response to domestic abuse across all agencies, and how these measures can equally support victims of crimes such as stalking. The 3,200 responses that we received are being analysed.

My hon. Friend the Member for Totnes quite properly raised the point about a stalkers register. We know that convicted stalkers will already be captured on the police national computer. Where appropriate, they may also be captured on other police systems, such as the Visor system, which stores information on offenders who pose a risk of serious violent harm. We want to ensure that the existing systems work. While I am listening to

colleagues on this, I want to ensure that the police are correctly using the systems we have at the moment in order to protect people before I look at new and additional systems.

The Government are committed to drawing on the expertise and experience of victims, survivors, academics, the voluntary sector, communities and professionals, to do all we can to improve the response to all forms of violence against women and girls. The same is true in relation to stalking. I hope Committee members will join me in giving their support to this Bill today, including amendment 1, tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Totnes, as it is our priority for the Bill to have a smooth passage and for stalking protection orders to be implemented as soon as possible so that the police can start using these vital tools to protect victims of stalking at the earliest possible opportunity.

Dr Wollaston: I thank everybody who has taken part in the debate. We had a contribution from the hon. Member for Huddersfield, who has been talking about this issue for a very long time, and I pay tribute to him for his long-standing commitment. We also had contributions from my hon. Friend the Member for Cheltenham, the hon. Members for Rotherham and for Enfield, Southgate, my hon. Friend the Member for Gloucester, the hon. Member for Birmingham, Yardley, my hon. Friend the Member for Taunton Deane, the hon. Member for Wolverhampton North East, and my hon. Friends the Members for Eddisbury and for Torbay. The right hon. Member for Exeter also provided vital support, as did the hon. Member for Liverpool, Wavertree and my hon. Friends the Members for Redditch and for Harborough.

Mr Gray, thank you for your excellent chairmanship. Finally, I warmly thank the Minister for her ongoing dedication to this cause. I also thank the Home Office team, Christian Papaleontiou and Emily Stewart.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 1 accordingly ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 2 to 15 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Title

Amendment made: 1, in title, line 1, leave out “protecting” and insert “orders to protect”.—(*Dr Wollaston.*)

This amendment would ensure that the long title of the Bill better reflects the content of the Bill, which is limited to stalking protection orders and related matters.

Bill, as amended, to be reported.

5.5 pm

Committee rose.