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**HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT**

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES**

(HANSARD)

Wednesday 27 January 2021

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The House met at half-past Eleven o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Virtual participation in proceedings commenced (Orders, 4 June and 30 December 2020).

[NB: [V] denotes a Member participating virtually.]

Oral Answers to Questions

SCOTLAND

The Secretary of State was asked—

Covid-19 Vaccine Roll-out

Rob Roberts (Delyn) (Con): What assessment his Department has made of progress on the roll-out of the covid-19 vaccine in Scotland. [911209]

Antony Higginbotham (Burnley) (Con): What assessment his Department has made of progress on the roll-out of the covid-19 vaccine in Scotland. [911212]

Dr James Davies (Vale of Clwyd) (Con): What assessment his Department has made of progress on the roll-out of the covid-19 vaccine in Scotland. [911214]

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr Alister Jack): The Government are procuring vaccines on behalf of all parts of the United Kingdom and supplying them to the devolved Administrations. It is for the Scottish Government to manage the roll-out of the vaccines in Scotland. However, our British armed forces are supporting the NHS in Scotland in this vital task.

Rob Roberts [V]: The vaccine roll-out has been excellent, with the United Kingdom again having among the strongest responses in the world. As there are varying degrees of success in the four different parts of the Union, will my right hon. Friend confirm what discussions he has had with the vaccines Minister—the Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, my hon. Friend the Member for Stratford-on-Avon (Nadhim Zahawi)—in order to guarantee that the four constituent parts of the UK will receive sufficient vaccinations to hit their targets of the first four groups by the middle of February?

Mr Jack: The devolved Administrations are receiving their shares of vaccine based on population, and the schedule of deliveries will fully support vaccinations of the first four priority cohorts by 15 February. All parts of the United Kingdom therefore have an equal chance of meeting that mid-February target.

Antony Higginbotham: Throughout this pandemic, we have seen the incredible work done by the armed forces to support us up and down the country, and in my constituency and across Lancashire, that has been help with testing. We know that in Scotland, the armed forces are now supporting vaccination centres, ensuring that life-saving treatment can get to those who need it. Does my right hon. Friend agree that this shows the strength of the United Kingdom family, with help and assistance ready to be sent to any corner of it?

Mr Jack: I am absolutely delighted to echo my hon. Friend's comments. Our British armed forces have played a number of essential roles in Scotland during the pandemic. They have airlifted patients to mainland hospitals from islands. They have delivered personal protective equipment. They have run mobile testing centres in rural areas and, at present, as he alluded to, the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards are setting up 80 vaccination centres across Scotland.

Dr James Davies [V]: The most recent statistics for the number of covid-19 vaccination doses administered per 100 people stand at 11.4 for England, 9.8 for Northern Ireland, 9.2 for Wales and 8.1 for Scotland. Does my right hon. Friend agree that directly comparable statistics across the UK can be incredibly helpful to drive up performance in the NHS, and will he outline the plans that he has to pursue this agenda further?

Mr Jack: Government Ministers in both the UK and the devolved Administrations are committed to transparency around the numbers of people who have been vaccinated. There are also a number of mechanisms for sharing best practice between Ministers and officials of all Administrations. The faster we can vaccinate, the more lives we can protect and the quicker we can return to normal.

John Lamont (Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk) (Con): May I start by thanking the GPs and other NHS staff across the Scottish borders, who have been working incredibly hard over the last few weeks to get vaccines into people's arms? I have been speaking to GP practices across my constituency. One of them said:

"Our English counterparts over the border seem to have access to a lot more vaccines than us and that is causing a lot of unrest within the community."

She went on to say that

"if we could have a guarantee of a definite amount of vaccines"

from the Scottish Government, it would make it a much easier job to plan and administer. What assistance can the UK Government provide to ensure that vaccines are delivered to GPs more quickly and efficiently across Scotland?

Mr Jack: The UK Government are ensuring that NHS Scotland gets an equitable share of those vaccines. How it is distributed is a matter for NHS Scotland and, rightly, as health is devolved, that is a matter for the Scottish Government. If my hon. Friend's constituents are concerned about any aspects of distribution, the best thing for them would be to take up their concerns with the Scottish Government.

Strength of the Union

David Linden (Glasgow East) (SNP): What recent assessment his Department has made of the strength of the Union. [911210]

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr Alister Jack): Scotland benefits greatly from being part of a strong United Kingdom. The most obvious recent examples are the unprecedented economic support offered to people and businesses in Scotland and the rapid supply of vaccinations to all parts of the United Kingdom currently taking place. Neither of these would have been possible if Scotland was not part of the United Kingdom.

David Linden: Finland, a small independent country in the EU with a population comparable to Scotland, right throughout the pandemic has been paying workers' benefits equivalent to their full pay if they are required to self-isolate. If tiny little Finland can pay people their full wage, what does it say about the strength of the Union that we pay Scots a measly £95 a week?

Mr Jack: There has been unprecedented support. The sort of support that the United Kingdom has delivered through the furlough scheme, the self-employment income support scheme, the coronavirus business interruption loan scheme, business grants and the £8.6 billion delivered to the Scottish Government to help with the pandemic has not been delivered anywhere else within the European Union.

David Mundell (Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale) (Con) [V]: Does my right hon. Friend share my concern that, at a time when my constituency has its highest ever level of coronavirus infections, rather than focusing solely on beating this pandemic and planning for a recovery, Nicola Sturgeon and the Scottish Government are prioritising another independence referendum and breaking up the United Kingdom?

Mr Jack: I absolutely agree with my right hon. Friend. People in Scotland want to see politicians across the United Kingdom working in partnership to focus on defeating the coronavirus. That remains the top priority of the UK Government, who have supported jobs and businesses across the United Kingdom through the pandemic—as I say, there has been unprecedented support—and now more than ever, we should be pulling together to strengthen our country, instead of trying to separate it.

Mhairi Black (Paisley and Renfrewshire South) (SNP) [V]: On this Holocaust Memorial Day, let us remember those who were persecuted and those who are persecuted now, and never forget the horrors that can happen when bigotry goes unchallenged.

I do not remember that same sense of responsibility when Brexit was being bulldozed through during the same pandemic that the Secretary of State has just mentioned. If he is so sure of the strength of the Union, why is he so afraid to test that strength in another independence referendum?

Mr Jack: First, I align myself with the remarks that the hon. Lady made about the holocaust.

The referendum took place in 2014. We respect that; it was a democratic outcome. The hon. Lady mentioned Brexit: that referendum took place in 2016, and again, it was a democratic outcome. We are the party that respects democracy.

Mhairi Black: I know the Secretary of State is aware that a lot has changed since 2014. Scotland has been taken out of the EU against its will; we have had three Tory Prime Ministers we never voted for; and now, 20 consecutive polls have shown that a majority of people in Scotland now support independence. Given that he is the defender of democracy, I ask him how, with that in mind, can the people of Scotland secure that preferred choice of independence?

Mr Jack: Scotland receives over £1,600 more in support per man, woman and child than the UK average—that is incredibly important. Added to that is the £8.6 billion of extra coronavirus support, and on top of that, the furlough support. An independent Scotland would have the largest deficit in the European Union, and it would break member state rules. I remind the hon. Lady of what the SNP's own economic adviser, Andrew Wilson, said: that an independent Scotland would face austerity like it had never seen before, with increases in taxation and cuts in public spending. I believe that as we focus on coming out of the pandemic, all being in the rowing boat together and pulling on the oars in these choppy waters is the best place for Scotland and for the United Kingdom.

Mr Speaker: On his birthday, let us go to Douglas Ross, who will be having a virtual cake for us.

Douglas Ross (Moray) (Con) [V]: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker; I will share it with you when we come back to Westminster.

As we have just heard from the SNP spokesperson, the hon. Member for Paisley and Renfrewshire South (Mhairi Black), the SNP would rather obsess over another independence referendum than focus on Scotland's recovery from covid-19. Does the Secretary of State agree that this once again demonstrates that the nationalists' priorities are all wrong, because right now, people want us to focus on vaccine roll-out, defeating covid-19 and rebuilding our economy?

Mr Jack: I wish my hon. Friend many happy returns, and my birthday present to him is to say that I could not agree with him more. Rather than waste time on a divisive separatist agenda, the Scottish Government should be working with us to defeat the pandemic and to recover our economy.

Pete Wishart (Perth and North Perthshire) (SNP) [V]: I did not quite detect an answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Paisley and Renfrewshire South (Mhairi Black) when she asked how the Scottish people could now secure a referendum on independence. We can dispute the merits of that, and I am sure we will, but does the Secretary of State accept that this is now what the Scottish people want? Twenty opinion polls in a row indicate that, so how do the Scottish people democratically acquire the right to have what they want in a referendum?

Mr Jack: I say again: now is not the time. Now is the time for us to focus on rebuilding our economy and protecting jobs. I see the hon. Gentleman up there with his gold disc behind him, and I have to say that, from Scottish questions to Scottish questions, he is beginning to sound like a broken record.

Neale Hanvey (Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath) (SNP) [V]: The UK now officially has the highest covid mortality rate anywhere in the world, and we know from the in-field accuracy of lateral flow tests that they have a 50% chance of being wrong. As the Prime Minister and his entourage are relying on such inaccurate test results, and given the PM's disastrous handling of the pandemic, why is the Secretary of State risking lives by backing his futile Union-Jackery trip to Scotland against public health advice when he knows that the PM has the ability to insult our intelligence from London?

Mr Jack: That is ridiculous. The Prime Minister is the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, and wherever he needs to go in his vital work against this pandemic, he will go.

Seed Potato Industry

Duncan Baker (North Norfolk) (Con): What recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on support for the Scottish seed potato industry. [911211]

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr Alister Jack): Ministers and officials from my Department are in regular contact with counterparts from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. The UK has applied for third country equivalency to overcome the ban on the export of seed potatoes to the European Union. We believe we have a strong case as British standards currently match the EU's, and Scotland in particular has world-leading plant health provenance.

Duncan Baker [V]: I thank the Secretary of State for that optimism. Even businesses in my constituency of North Norfolk are affected by the ban on exporting seed potatoes into the EU. It is wonderful to have a deal, but in my part of the world agriculture is an enormous way of life, so can he assure me that everything is being done to obtain an agreement on seed potatoes for Scotland and all of the UK, to give food security and flexibility to the sector and to protect our farmers and growers?

Mr Jack: I know this is an important issue for my hon. Friend's constituency, as it is for many farmers in Scotland, and I can confirm that absolutely everything is being done to find a solution.

Trade Deals

Gary Sambrook (Birmingham, Northfield) (Con): What discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the opportunities for Scotland arising from the signing of trade deals with other countries. [911213]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Iain Stewart): We regularly discuss opportunities for Scotland arising from the signing of trade deals. This Government have already struck deals worth £217 billion a year with more than 63 countries around the world,

including Canada, Japan and Singapore, and with many more to come. This will create new markets for Scotland's exporters.

Gary Sambrook: For the first time in my life, we will be in control of our trade policy, which will allow us to strike ambitious trade deals, allowing us to level up all of our United Kingdom. Does the Minister agree that this will help to benefit exporters, particularly in the Scottish food and drink industries, who will be able to take advantage of new markets?

Iain Stewart: I fully agree with my hon. Friend. The new free trade agreements we strike, such as those we are currently negotiating with the US, Australia and New Zealand, on top of the ones we have already done, will grow our GDP, increase our trade with the rest of the world and create new opportunities for our exporters. This is particularly true for the Scottish food and drink sector.

Iain Murray (Edinburgh South) (Lab) [V]: Today is Holocaust Memorial Day, as we have heard, and we should use this day to remember the horrors of the holocaust by lighting a candle in our windows at 8 pm tonight, as the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust has asked us to do. I am sure that the Secretary of State will join us in that. Also, I wonder if I may just wish my fellow shadow Scotland Minister, my hon. Friend the Member for Ogmore (Chris Elmore), all the best, as his wife is due to have a baby in the next seven days.

One of the jewels in the crown of the Scottish economy is the Scotch whisky industry, and distillers are deeply angry that they continue to pay the price for a trade dispute with the United States that is not of their making. They are losing £30 million a month in trade with the imposition of tariffs, and that is on top of the collapse of their markets due to covid. No progress has been made, so can the Minister guarantee that the Government are fully singing from the same hymn sheet to end tariffs on Scotch whisky?

Iain Stewart: First, may I associate myself with the hon. Gentleman's remarks on the holocaust?

On whisky, I absolutely agree with the hon. Gentleman that this is a vital industry for Scotland's economy and the tariffs are hurting. Britain unilaterally made a bold and generous offer to the US to try to break its impasse with the EU. Unfortunately, we were not able to secure a deal with President Trump before he left office, but I spoke to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade yesterday, and she reassured me that it will be her top priority in engaging with the new Biden Administration.

Iain Murray: The UK has taken all the tariffs off US products but there are still tariffs on Scottish products, so I hope they are able to resolve this soon. Of course, trade deals with other countries will not make up for what we have lost by leaving the EU. Day after day, we see chaos at our ports, exporters being overwhelmed by paperwork and, as a result, Scottish businesses being damaged. This Government's lack of planning and no provision for services, matched with growing bureaucracy at our borders, is severely hampering our industries. The Prime Minister said on Christmas eve that the EU Brexit deal would mean "no non-tariff barriers to trade".

That is demonstrably false. Will the Minister take this opportunity to apologise to Scottish exporters, who are completely hampered by the very non-tariff barriers to trade that the Prime Minister said would not exist? What are the Government doing to resolve these issues today?

Iain Stewart: First, on the US point, there was an impasse with the EU, and we decided it was the right move to make a unilateral offer to try to break that impasse. I hope the new Biden Administration will engage positively with us on that.

Secondly, I do not think it is fair to paint a picture of chaos and tailbacks at the ports. The traffic is flowing freely at most ports. There have been some short-term issues with paperwork, and any new system has some short-term bumps, but we are engaging directly with the exporters affected. We are providing compensation, where necessary, and what we need is some confidence across all sectors.

Covid-19 Vaccination Programme

Mr Toby Perkins (Chesterfield) (Lab): What recent discussions he has had with Scottish Ministers on the covid-19 vaccination programme in Scotland. [911215]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Iain Stewart): I was sorry to hear that the hon. Gentleman had contracted coronavirus at Christmas, and I hope he is making a full and speedy recovery.

I and other UK Government Ministers are in frequent contact with Scottish Ministers on all aspects of the response to covid, including the vaccination programme. The virus will be combated most effectively by the UK Government and all the devolved Administrations working together as closely as possible.

Mr Perkins [V]: I thank the Minister for his kind words, and I assure him that I am in rude health.

The Minister will be aware that Scotland's over-80s population has been left more vulnerable than those in England due to far fewer being vaccinated. If the rate of over-80s vaccination in Scotland were equivalent to that in England, 28,875 of the most elderly people in Scotland would now have been vaccinated. What steps can the Minister take to ensure that the Scottish Government get on with protecting the most vulnerable?

Iain Stewart: I am delighted that the hon. Gentleman is very much on the path to recovery. As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said a few moments ago, the supply of vaccines is done equitably across all parts of the UK, but the administration is a matter for the Scottish Government. We have already provided many practical measures to help combat covid in Scotland, and we stand ready to supply any additional help that the Scottish Government may require.

UK-EU Agreement: Scottish Exports

Martyn Day (Linlithgow and East Falkirk) (SNP): What discussions he has had with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) industry leaders on the effect of the UK-EU trade and co-operation agreement on Scottish exports. [911216]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Iain Stewart): We regularly speak to ministerial colleagues and industry leaders on this matter. We are beginning a new chapter in our national story, one of great opportunity. This is an unparalleled chance for us to do things differently and better, increasing businesses' access to new markets and boosting our national prosperity.

Martyn Day [V]: Scottish exporters need clarity and certainty on how long it will take the UK Government to resolve the calamitous situation that has been created at the UK-EU border, so my question to the Minister is: has anyone in the Scotland Office worked out how long a piece of string is yet?

Iain Stewart: I repeat to the hon. Gentleman the reply I gave a few moments ago: we are engaging directly and providing very practical support to exporters who have encountered some short-term difficulties as they adjust to the new system. In the case of the fish and seafood sector, we have provided them with compensation for any losses that they encountered.

Chris Elmore (Ogmore) (Lab) [V]: The Minister will be fully aware of the chaos that Scottish fishing exports have been thrown into over the past few weeks because of his Government's broken promises on Brexit to the industry. I understand he has already said that the Department has announced an injection of funding for the hardest hit, but this is about timing and reputation as well, so how is he working with potential buyers of these world-class fishing exports to promote the sector? How is he ensuring that extra support reaches those hardest hit as quickly as possible, given the absolute devastation that these businesses have faced in this year so far?

Iain Stewart: First, may I wish the hon. Gentleman and his family every success and good fortune in the arrival of the new addition to their family?

As I have said, we are providing very practical support. This is not affecting the whole industry. The industry faces many challenges at the moment, not least the loss of some of its markets because top-end restaurants, at home and abroad, are having to close because of covid. In addition to that short-term compensation, we are providing a £100 million fund to grow and boost the capacity of our seafood sector. We have not broken promises to it. We were taking back control of our waters. We are out of the common fisheries policy and British fishermen will land more stocks year on year.

Kirsten Oswald (East Renfrewshire) (SNP) [V]: The EU is still our closest and most important trading partner, but Scottish businesses are suffering because of this disastrous Brexit we did not vote for, and the inability and unwillingness of the Minister's Government to effectively use the transition period. Will he now push for the grace period that businesses are urgently calling for? If not, why not? What is his answer to them?

Iain Stewart: As I have said repeatedly, we are engaging with all sectors to help them prepare for this transition. I respectfully point out to the hon. Lady that she voted for a no-deal Brexit, and she and her fellow separatists want to impose additional trade barriers within Britain.

UK-EU Agreement: Scottish Economy

Rachael Maskell (York Central) (Lab/Co-op): What assessment his Department has made of the effect of the UK-EU trade and co-operation agreement on the Scottish economy. [911219]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Iain Stewart): We have agreed a deal with the EU that fully delivers for Scotland and the rest of the UK. Our deal provides Scottish businesses with exceptional access to the EU's market: it is the first time the EU has ever agreed a zero-tariffs, zero-quota deal. But of course we also now have the freedom to strike new deals with the fastest-growing parts of the global economy.

Rachael Maskell [V]: But almost one in six jobs in Scotland is based in the financial and business services sector, which is dependent on the UK Government negotiating a trade in services agreement with the EU, having failed to do so before the end of last year. What progress have the Secretary of State and his Cabinet colleagues made since leaving the transition arrangements in this area? What further steps is he taking to ensure that these jobs are secure for the future?

Iain Stewart: Alongside the agreement, we agreed a joint declaration on regulatory co-operation in the area of financial services. The parties will codify that in a memorandum of understanding by March.

COP26

Angela Richardson (Guildford) (Con): What discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the opportunities for Scotland arising from COP26. [911222]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Iain Stewart): I have frequent discussions with colleagues about the opportunities that COP26 offers for Scotland and the whole of the UK. The Government are committed to delivering an all-UK COP26 event in Glasgow. This will bring significant economic benefits to the community in Glasgow and those across Britain.

Angela Richardson [V]: My constituents in Guildford take a keen interest in environmental concerns and, along with me, are delighted that Glasgow is hosting COP26 this year. Does my hon. Friend agree that we are better placed to tackle climate change as a strong Union of nations?

Iain Stewart: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. I should also point out that it is disgraceful that, while we will be showcasing our global leadership on climate change and the world's gaze will be on Glasgow, the SNP would rather be pitting community against community in another divisive referendum.

PRIME MINISTER

The Prime Minister was asked—

Engagements

[911439] **Rehman Chishti** (Gillingham and Rainham) (Con): If he will list his official engagements for Wednesday 27 January.

The Prime Minister (Boris Johnson): Today, on Holocaust Memorial Day, I know that the whole House will want to join me in solemnly remembering the 6 million Jewish men, women and children murdered during the holocaust, and all other victims of Nazi persecution. Last week, I had the privilege of hearing from holocaust survivor Renee Salt and from Ian Forsyth, one of the last living British servicemen who liberated the camp at Bergen-Belsen. Their courage to share their testimonies must inspire us all never to forget the holocaust and the fight against all forms of hatred and prejudice, wherever they are found.

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

Rehman Chishti: I associate myself entirely with all that the Prime Minister said.

I thank the Prime Minister and the Government for all their hard work in these difficult and challenging times with regard to the delivery of the covid-19 vaccination. However, my constituents in Gillingham and Rainham and the wider-Medway towns would like me, as their Member of Parliament, to raise their concerns with regard to the availability of the vaccine in our local towns. I have constituents who are in their 80s and 90s who have not yet had the vaccination. Medway was one of the hardest-hit areas in the country, the mutant variant was discovered in Kent, and North Kent has some of the highest health inequalities in the country. Will the Prime Minister please ensure that we have a mass vaccination centre in Medway?

The Prime Minister: I share my hon. Friend's sense of frustration about the pace of the vaccine roll-out. In spite of the fact that we have the fastest roll-out anywhere in Europe, it is entirely right that a constituency MP should want to see more done as fast as possible. I can tell my hon. Friend that we have vaccinated more than 80% of those over 80 across the country, and we are certainly looking at establishing a large-scale vaccination centre near him. In his immediate vicinity, we have done 127,000 vaccines already, providing the hope of long-term immunity for the people of Medway and Gillingham and Rainham.

Keir Starmer (Holborn and St Pancras) (Lab) [V]: May I begin by joining the Prime Minister in his remarks about Holocaust Memorial Day? This evening, I will be joining the UK ceremony and lighting a candle to remember the 6 million Jews murdered in the holocaust, along with, of course, the other genocides and persecutions that have taken place around the world.

Yesterday, we passed the tragic milestone of 100,000 covid deaths in the United Kingdom. That is not just a statistic: behind every death is a grieving family—a mum, a dad, a sister, a brother, a friend, a colleague, a neighbour. The question on everyone's lips this morning is: why? The Prime Minister must have thought about that question a lot, so will he tell us why he thinks that the United Kingdom has ended up with a death toll of 100,000—the highest number in Europe?

The Prime Minister: Like the right hon. and learned Gentleman, I mourn every death in this pandemic and we share the grief of all those who have been bereaved.

Let him and the House be in no doubt that I and the Government take full responsibility for all the actions that we have taken during this pandemic to fight this disease. Yes, there will indeed be a time when we must learn the lessons of what has happened, reflect on them and prepare. I do not think that moment is now, when we are in the throes of fighting this wave of the new variant, when 37,000 people are struggling with covid in our hospitals. What the country wants is for us to come together as a Parliament and as politicians and to work to keep the virus under control, as we are, and to continue to roll out the fastest vaccination programme in Europe. That is where the minds of the public are fixed.

Keir Starmer: I am sure that the Prime Minister regrets the fact that 100,000 people have lost their lives. The question is: why—why has the United Kingdom the highest number of deaths in Europe? Why has the United Kingdom a death rate that is higher than almost anywhere in the world? The Prime Minister is going to have to answer that question one day and he should have the decency to answer it today. A few days ago, the chief scientific officer said, and this was his view: prepare to give it now. The lesson, he said, is:

“You’ve got to go hard, early and broader if you’re going to get on top of this. Waiting and watching simply doesn’t work.”

Does the Prime Minister agree with that?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, when you have a new virus and, indeed, when you have a new variant of that virus of the kind that we have in this country, and when you have dilemmas as hard and as heavy as this Government have had to face over the last year, I must tell the right hon. and learned Gentleman that there are no easy answers. A perpetual lockdown is no answer, but we will continue to do, as I have said to the House and to you, Mr Speaker, everything we can to roll out our vaccine programme to give the public the protection that they want and deserve. As I speak to you today, Mr Speaker, 6.9 million people in our country have had the vaccine. We are on target, if we can get the supplies, to deliver the target of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation on groups 1 to 4, the most vulnerable groups, by 15 February. I hope very much to set out in the next few weeks in much more detail how this country can exit now from the pandemic.

Keir Starmer: The problem with the Prime Minister avoiding the question of why is that vital lessons will not be learned. The reality is this: the Prime Minister was slow into the first lockdown last March; slow in getting protective equipment to the frontline; slow to protect our care homes; slow on testing and tracing; slow into the second lockdown in the autumn; slow to change the Christmas-mixing rules; and slow again into this third lockdown, delaying 13 days from 22 December before implementing it. I fear that he still has not learned that lesson. The latest example is the continued delay in securing our borders. We have known about the variants to the virus since early December, when it was announced in the House of Commons. We know some of those variants are coming from abroad, but we do not know the route. Surely the Prime Minister can see that what is required now is that everybody coming into the country from anywhere in the world should be tested and subject to quarantine in a hotel. Why can that not be put in place today?

The Prime Minister: Throughout this pandemic, it has been the habit of the Opposition first to support one approach and then to attack it and to twist and to turn. It was only recently that the shadow Transport Secretary was saying that quarantine measures should be relaxed. We have one of the toughest regimes in the world. We ask people to test 72 hours before they fly. They have to produce a passenger locator form, otherwise they are kicked off the flight. They already have to quarantine for 10 days and my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary will be setting out later today, if the right hon. and learned Gentlemen cares to wait for that, even tougher measures for those red list countries where we are particularly concerned about new variants. Again, what the people of this country want us now to do is to come together as a Government, as a Parliament, and to get this thing done.

Keir Starmer: The Prime Minister complains about the Opposition, but the greatest criticism of the Prime Minister at the moment in relation to borders is coming from his own Home Secretary. She is busy telling anyone who will listen that the Prime Minister did not do enough in relation to the borders last year. I fear that the Prime Minister is repeating the same mistake in relation to the new variants of the virus.

Let me turn to schools. Everybody agrees that reopening our schools should be a national priority, but that requires a plan, and the Prime Minister has not got a plan. So as a first step—as a first step—does he agree with me that, once the first four categories of the most vulnerable have been vaccinated by mid-February, he should bring forward the vaccination of key workers and use the window of the February half-term to vaccinate all teachers and all school staff?

The Prime Minister: Of course it follows that all teachers in JCVI groups 1 to 9 will be vaccinated as a matter of priority. I pay tribute, by the way, to the huge efforts that parents are making across the country struggling to educate their kids. I know how deeply frustrating it is: the extra burden that we have placed on families by closing the schools. No one has worked harder than my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education to keep schools open. We all want to open schools. I think what we want to hear from the Leader of the Opposition is that he will say loudly and clearly what he has refused to say so many times and what the public need to hear—that schools are safe. It is absolutely critical that he says that.

Keir Starmer: I am sorry, but I am none the wiser as to whether the Prime Minister agrees with me that school teachers and school staff should be vaccinated, taking advantage of the February half-term. That is two or three weeks away. It is a fantastic opportunity, and I am no wiser as to whether the Prime Minister thinks that is a good idea or a bad idea.

In the meantime, the Government have a duty to ensure that every single child can learn from home. Without access to a laptop, a computer or the internet, that cannot happen. The Government were challenged on this last summer; they were challenged on it last autumn; and here we are, nearly at the end of January—the best part of a year into this pandemic—and a third of families say they do not have enough laptops or home computers, and over 400,000 children still cannot get

online at home. Does the Prime Minister realise how angry many families are that he still has not got to grips with this?

The Prime Minister: As I said just now, I do fully understand the frustration and impatience of families across the country who are educating their kids at home. I know how difficult it is. I know how frustrated teachers are with educating through remote learning as well. That is why we have provided 1.3 million laptops. That is why we have provided a £1 billion catch-up fund. I will be making a statement in the House in just a few minutes setting out what more we propose to do with the reopening of schools and the way forward with schools, and what more we propose to do by way of supporting pupils and teachers and parents, if the right hon. and learned Gentleman will just wait a few minutes. But he has missed his opportunity, once again, to say what I think people need to hear if we are to get schools to reopen, because that is the best thing for pupils and the best thing for families across the country. I would like to hear from the Leader of the Opposition, in defiance of his union paymasters, that schools are safe.

Mr Speaker: I just remind the Prime Minister: it is Prime Minister's questions.

Keir Starmer: Every week the Prime Minister comes with his pre-prepared lines. I think when 100,000 people have died he should take the time to answer the question. When one in three families are saying that they do not have enough laptops or computers, his answers are simply not good enough. We are nearly a year into this pandemic—this has not happened in the last few weeks—and one in three families say they do not have the wherewithal to do home teaching. Those children are going without home schooling. That is the question that the Prime Minister should be answering. The UK is the first country in Europe to record 100,000 covid deaths. We also have the deepest recession of any major economy. Our schools are closed and our borders are open. My biggest concern is that the Prime Minister still has not learned the lessons of last year. I fear that as a result we will see more tragedy and more grim milestones.

This afternoon, I will be speaking to families who have lost loved ones to covid. The last time I did that, I asked the Prime Minister what he would like me to say to them on his behalf. He replied with a pre-prepared, childish gag. I can tell the Prime Minister just how badly that went down with those families when I spoke to them later that afternoon. I ask him again—I hope that this time he will have the decency to answer them properly—what would he like me to say to those bereaved families on his behalf this afternoon?

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to the right hon. and learned Gentleman for meeting the families of the bereaved, as I have done and I know Members of the House have done throughout the pandemic. It is important that we do that. The message that I would give those families is the same that I have given everybody I have met: I of course deeply personally regret the loss of life and the suffering of their families, but I think the best thing that we can do to honour the memory of those who have died and to honour those who are currently grieving is to work together to bring this virus down

and to keep it under control in the way that we are. Throughout this pandemic, I am sad to say that the Leader of the Opposition has never failed in his efforts to try to score political points when he could be doing just that. He has twisted, and he has turned. One week, he calls for tougher border measures after the shadow Transport Secretary called for a looser quarantine. He calls for schools to go back, but he will not even say this morning that schools are safe. He tries to associate himself now with the vaccine programme, because he senses that that may be going well, but he stood on a manifesto to unbundle the pharmaceutical companies—the big pharma—that made those vaccines possible.

I know you want me to sit down, Mr Speaker, but I want to make this point, because I tried to make it last week. The right hon. and learned Gentleman even attacked the vaccine taskforce for spending £675,000 on an effort to discover whether hard-to-reach groups would take a vaccine. I really cannot think of a better investment right now of public funds, and I hope that later on this afternoon, he might think of apologising for what he did and for that attack on the vaccine taskforce. The Opposition and the right hon. and learned Gentleman can go on making their party political points. We will go on, with or without his help, in taking this country forward, fighting the pandemic and getting coronavirus down.

[911440] **Mrs Pauline Latham** (Mid Derbyshire) (Con) [V]: The importance of levelling up to constituencies like mine is critical as we look to build back better from covid. With that in mind, can the Prime Minister commit to delivering the eastern leg of HS2 in full, creating 150,000 jobs and billions of pounds of investment in the midlands and the north, as well as unlocking the capacity for local transport schemes in Derbyshire, in which cycling and walking must play a crucial part?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is absolutely right, and she is right to be militating for the eastern leg of HS2. We will be publishing the integrated rail plan early this year, and I am delighted that the £161 million from the transforming cities fund for Nottingham and Derby includes £10 million for a new cycle route between Nottingham, Derby and East Midlands airport. I look forward to cycling it with my hon. Friend.

Mr Speaker: And the Chief Whip, I would expect.

Ian Blackford (Ross, Skye and Lochaber) (SNP) [V]: May I associate myself with the Prime Minister's remarks on the holocaust? We all remember the 6 million Jews who lost their lives and those terrible crimes against humanity. We should never forget that, nor, indeed, those who have sadly followed them in genocides around the world.

Last night, the Prime Minister claimed that "we truly did everything we could"

to avoid the deaths of 100,000 people across the UK from covid-19, but we all know that that is simply not true. The UK Government response has been defined by a lack of leadership, last-minute U-turns, mixed messaging and devastating policies. All of this has had an effect on the scale of the pandemic. Professor Linda Bauld has said that nearly a quarter of all deaths we

have seen have occurred in the last month. Since the start of the pandemic, the Prime Minister has promised to always follow the advice of scientists. This morning, scientists have said that this Government are responsible for a “legacy of poor decisions” during the pandemic. Does the Prime Minister still agree with the scientists?

The Prime Minister: We have throughout followed scientific advice and done everything we can to minimise disease and suffering throughout the country. The right hon. Gentleman will have heard my answer to the Leader of the Opposition: there are no easy solutions when we are facing dilemmas as tragic as the ones being confronted by countries around the world. But I think that everywhere in the UK can be proud of the efforts now being made by the NHS, by the Army, by volunteers and by pharmacists to roll out the fastest vaccination programme in Europe. That is something that the Government must do, can do, are doing and will do.

Ian Blackford: I must respectfully say that this is not about apportioning blame for honest mistakes; it is about learning lessons from a Prime Minister who has repeatedly ignored the scientific advice. When we called on the Prime Minister to introduce tough border controls last spring, he refused. When we told the Prime Minister it was a mistake to end lockdown prematurely and push millions of workers back to the office, he ignored us. When we said that tough restrictions and full furlough support were still needed, he dithered, delayed and left it too late. People have been asked to make huge sacrifices by his Government. They at least now deserve financial certainty. Tell people straight, Prime Minister: will this UK Government extend furlough, maintain the universal credit uplift and finally offer support to the 3 million excluded, or will he leave families struggling with the uncertainty while he dithers and delays?

The Prime Minister: On the subject of dithering and delaying, I am delighted that the British Army is helping the Scottish National party Government to roll out the vaccine faster. That is extremely important and one of the benefits of the Union of the UK.

On the right hon. Gentleman’s point about the support for people and families across this country, I do not think anybody could seriously deny that this Government have given absolutely unprecedented—and unequalled, by global standards—support throughout the pandemic. We will continue to put our arms around people across the whole UK throughout this crisis.

[911443] **Peter Aldous** (Waveney) (Con) [V]: The Government have put in place an extensive system of support to help employers and employees through the pandemic. However, a group that has been overlooked, many of whom are now really struggling, are those self-employed who set up their own businesses after April 2019 and were unable to submit a complete tax return. Ten months on, that obstacle to providing support no longer applies. To assist them, will the Prime Minister emulate the Northern Ireland Government’s newly self-employed support scheme, which is subject to straight-forward criteria and guards against fraud?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is right to raise those concerns, because there are some people in the self-employed group whom it has been hard to reach

and to support in the way that we want. They are fewer in number than is sometimes suggested in this House, and I can tell him that 2.7 million self-employed people have received support totalling over £18.5 billion. But the ideas that he suggests will, I know, be taken up by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor, and he can expect to hear more on 3 March.

[911441] **Caroline Lucas** (Brighton, Pavilion) (Green) [V]: There is a yawning gulf between the Government’s green rhetoric and their action. Hot on the heels of sanctioning the first deep coalmine in 30 years, Ministers have broken yet another election manifesto promise and will keep sending plastic waste to developing countries, where it is regularly dumped or burnt. Nine-year-old schoolgirl Lizzie knows that this is wrong, and she has a simple message for the Prime Minister: protect our oceans and people living in poorer countries by banning these dirty plastic exports now. Will he listen to Lizzie and to the 90,000 signatories to her petition and stop this damaging and unethical practice—yes or no?

The Prime Minister: First of all, I must absolutely contest and deny what the hon. Member has said about action. She talks about coalmines, and she may not know that in 1970—I was alive; she may not have been alive—this country got 90% of its energy from fossil fuels, from coal, and we now get 5%. That is thanks to the green, active, technologically optimistic policies driven by Conservative Governments, and I am very proud of it. I am also proud of what we are doing to ban plastic and ban the export of plastic waste around the world, which is in our Conservative party manifesto, which we will fulfil.

[911444] **Holly Mumby-Croft** (Scunthorpe) (Con) [V]: My constituent David Hopkins lives with grade 4 glioblastoma. The pioneering immunotherapy treatment he needs is not yet available in the UK. He and his wife Nicki continue to fundraise for his treatments in Germany, and I know that the wonderful people of Scunthorpe have been incredibly supportive in this. Will the Prime Minister join me in wishing the Hopkins family well, and will he work with me and the Brain Tumour Charity to improve research and treatments for patients like David?

The Prime Minister: Yes, indeed. I thank my hon. Friend for what she is doing to campaign for such an excellent charity and, indeed, for her constituent David. I can tell her that the Department of Health is working with Tessa Jowell’s Brain Cancer Mission, announcing £40 million over five years on brain tumours of the type that she describes. I would encourage my hon. Friend to continue the excellent work that she is doing in this area.

[911442] **Christine Jardine** (Edinburgh West) (LD) [V]: May I associate myself and the Liberal Democrats with the Prime Minister’s comments on the holocaust?

A year ago next week, in a speech at Greenwich, the Prime Minister said that it was “high time” that the US “cut their punitive tariffs on Scotch whisky.”

Since then, the industry has lost half a billion pounds in exports to the US, and the Government have failed to reach a deal to have the 25% tariff on single malt removed. So will the Prime Minister commit to working

urgently with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to comply with the World Trade Organisation rules that led to the issue, and can he promise that in the Budget his Government will take steps to support this vital industry and employer?

The Prime Minister: I do not want to anticipate the Budget, but I know that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor habitually does things to support fantastic industries such as Scotch whisky. But one of the reasons for leaving the EU is that we will be able to do a free trade deal with the US and to obviate tariffs of the kind that the hon. Member describes, which would be there in perpetuity if the Scottish nationalist party were to get its way and to take Scotland back into the EU.

[911447] **Damian Collins** (Folkestone and Hythe) (Con) [V]: This week, Kent's first covid mass vaccination centre opened in Folkestone, and is working now along with our three GP-led hubs in Folkestone, Hythe and Lydd. As we accelerate the delivery of this protection against the virus, does my right hon. Friend agree with the vaccines Minister that we need greater sharing of data at local level so that we can target the resources of the largest vaccination programme in our history at both hard-to-reach groups of individuals and the most vulnerable communities?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend makes a very important point, and I know that it is something that everybody wants to see across this House—the sharing of data at local levels. There are particular problems, obviously, with sharing medical records—detailed medical records—with local government, but what we are doing is giving public health officials at local level all the information we can give them, without breaching that confidentiality, to find those hard-to-reach groups, and to get them and encourage them to take vaccines. Wonderful work is being done to get people to take vaccines. I encourage all Members, in your constituencies, to get your constituents to take up this offer.

[911445] **Seema Malhotra** (Feltham and Heston) (Lab/Co-op): Almost four years on from the Grenfell tragedy, Government inaction on the cladding crisis means that hundreds of thousands of leaseholders, including my constituents, remain trapped in unsafe, unsellable blocks. Ministers have promised at least 15 times that leaseholders will not have to pay unfair costs, but, as ever with this Government, there have been a lot of promises not matched by delivery. So will the Prime Minister finally act, end this injustice and come forward with a plan to fix the cladding crisis that does not burden leaseholders with the cost?

The Prime Minister: Of course we will, and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government will be bringing forward a plan very shortly. It is also important that mortgage companies do not unreasonably refuse mortgages on properties that are perfectly safe.

[911448] **Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown** (The Cotswolds) (Con) [V]: This has been an extraordinarily difficult year for both the Prime Minister and the people of this country, since the coronavirus was first detected, and their fortitude is being severely tested. People need to

know when they can get their children back to school and businesses can start to reopen. Will my right hon. Friend assure the House that when he announces his comprehensive plan in mid-February, it will deal with how we lift every area out of its tier, and with the long-term problems with covid with which we will have to live? Furthermore, can we try to avoid making changes in future with 24 hours' notice, so that at long last the people of this country can start to plan their daily lives?

The Prime Minister: In a few moments, later this afternoon, I will set out in more detail what my hon. Friend would like to know about our approach to schools, and in the course of the next few weeks, assuming that the vaccine roll-out continues well, and assuming that we do not find new variants of concern or have to change our calculations, I will be setting out a broader roadmap for a way forward for the whole country, of a kind that I think my hon. Friend and his constituents would appreciate.

[911446] **Peter Dowd** (Bootle) (Lab) [V]: My grandmother received a war widow's pension for 67 years. My mother received one for 49 years. Two of my nephews are veterans, and a veterans' network operates in my constituency. They would agree that a pension should be paid at UK rates, wherever a veteran, or any pensioner, lives in the world. When will 96-year-old Anne Puckridge, a world war two veteran who lives in Canada, and 60,000 other veterans who served their country courageously and live abroad, stop being treated as second-class veterans and get the full pension they deserve? Will the Prime Minister commit to ending that injustice, and agree to meet representatives from the End Frozen Pensions campaign? As a start, that is the very least that a British Prime Minister could do for Britain's greatest generation.

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for raising that issue. I have come across this problem before, but the case he describes is obviously acute and I will ensure that he gets the meeting he desires with the relevant Minister.

[911450] **Sally-Ann Hart** (Hastings and Rye) (Con) [V]: In my constituency, Chapman's of Rye is acting as an export hub for consignments of local fish going across the English channel, but it is proving extremely challenging, expensive, and time consuming. Mr Chapman is creating an opportunity to develop Rye as a vital export hub for Kent and Sussex fishermen, but he is burdened with red tape. What steps is my right hon. Friend taking to support opportunities such as those in Rye to make exporting easier? Would he accept an invitation to visit that fantastic enterprise?

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for raising that, because in the last few weeks this has been an issue for many fishing businesses and communities. There has been too much red tape, and we are providing an immediate £23 million to help businesses with the problems they are encountering through no fault of their own. We are also investing £100 million in a long-term programme for the UK fishing industry, to help with equipment and processing, and to enable this country to be in a position to take advantage of the incredible access to our fisheries that we will have as the years go by.

[911449] **Steven Bonnar** (Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill) (SNP) [V]: Will the Prime Minister now do the right thing and commit to making the £20 a week uplift to universal credit permanent, or will he be responsible for pushing thousands of Scottish families further into an income crisis?

The Prime Minister: I repeat what I have said before: we will continue to look after the people of this country throughout this pandemic, and it is a feature of the strength of the UK Treasury that we can continue to do this.

[911451] **Christian Wakeford** (Bury South) (Con): I commend the Prime Minister for reaffirming his commitment to levelling up the nation. The best way to level up is through a good local education. The town of Radcliffe in my constituency has been without a high school since 2014. As the bidding process for free schools remains in the final stages, will my right hon. Friend help by supporting my campaign, alongside the people of Radcliffe, for the new school that the town desperately needs?

The Prime Minister: I thank my hon. Friend, who is a fantastic campaigner for his constituents. I can tell him that we are indeed looking at expanding the free school programme—wave 14 of free schools will be announced very shortly—and I hope that he will not have too long to wait.

[911453] **Bill Esterson** (Sefton Central) (Lab) [V]: Alison Powell's tax return showed that she was paid £10 more as an employee than her earnings in self-employment. As a result, she did not qualify, and still does not qualify, for any financial support. It is no good the Prime Minister saying that his Government have done "whatever it takes". As the Institute for Fiscal Studies said just today, 1.8 million self-employed people and 700,000 owner-managers have not had financial support. When are the Government going to start supporting those who have been financially excluded so that Alison Powell and millions of people like her can afford to stay at home and play their part in restricting this virus while the vaccine is rolled out?

The Prime Minister: I am conscious that, as the hon. Gentleman says, there have been difficult cases with self-employed people who have not qualified for some of the support that we have offered. I would invite him to send the details of Alison's case to us and we will see what we can do, but I must remind the House that we have spent about £18 billion supporting self-employed

people throughout this pandemic and, as I say, we will continue to put our arms around the British people for the duration of the crisis.

[911452] **Paul Bristow** (Peterborough) (Con) [V]: My constituents recognise the need for lockdown but are increasingly concerned about their mental health. Many of them asked me to raise this today. On Monday, more than 20 Peterborough schoolchildren told me how it was affecting them. They had organised their own mental health summit with me and the local clinical commissioning group. Does the Prime Minister agree that the country's mental health is suffering and should be a factor in deciding when to end specific restrictions?

The Prime Minister: I know the stress that people are under—not just school pupils, whom my hon. Friend is right to raise, but particularly NHS workers—during this current wave of the pandemic. It has been really gruelling the last few weeks and months. We are investing hugely in mental health support; on top of the £13.3 billion in 2019-20, we will see a further £2.3 billion a year by 2023-24, and that will support 380,000 adults and 345,000 children.

Carolyn Harris (Swansea East) (Lab) [V]: Given that the Prime Minister has already said today that he will take full responsibility for all the actions his Government have taken during the pandemic, will he confirm that that will include the woeful and reckless management of the covid outbreak at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency sites—Government sites—in my constituency? Will he also ensure that his Transport Secretary is held accountable for the inexcusable damage and devastation that that has caused?

The Prime Minister: I thank the hon. Lady for raising that question with me. May I offer her, by the way, my condolences on the death her father? I can tell her that we have been working flat out on the problem at the DVLA. All staff who can work from home are doing so, measures have been taken to minimise the number of people on the site at any one time, and more than 2,000 tests have been carried out by the DVLA in the last fortnight alone, with all the results so far coming back negative.

Mr Speaker: I am suspending the House to enable the necessary arrangements to be made for the next business.

12.39 pm

Sitting suspended.

Russian Federation: Human Rights

12.43 pm

Mr Speaker: I call Sir Roger Gale, who has two minutes.

Sir Roger Gale (North Thanet) (Con) [V] (*Urgent Question*): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs if he will make a statement on what further sanctions he will impose upon the Russian Federation following the arrest, over the weekend, of Alexei Navalny, his wife and hundreds of his supporters in clear and gross breach of the European convention on human rights.

The G7 has condemned the imprisonment of Alexei Navalny, and reminded Mr Putin that he is bound by international obligations to respect human rights. One of those obligations is to the Council of Europe. Tomorrow, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe will discuss the credentials of the Russian Federation. Does my hon. Friend agree that a nation that engages in state murder and that imprisons its political opponents and their supporters is in gross breach of the European convention on human rights and has forfeited its right to be a member of an Assembly that is founded on the very principles of democracy?

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Wendy Morton): The UK is appalled by the politically motivated detention of Alexei Navalny on arbitrary charges. As the Foreign Secretary made clear, Mr Navalny is the victim of a despicable crime, and we call for his immediate and unconditional release.

The Foreign Secretary has also condemned the Russian authorities' unacceptable use of violence against peaceful protesters and journalists last weekend, and we have called on the Russian Government to respect their international commitments and to release those detained during peaceful demonstrations.

The UK has galvanised the international community in condemnation of these deplorable detentions. As G7 president, the UK issued a G7 Foreign Ministers' statement on 26 January, emphasising our deep concern at these developments and calling on Russia to adhere to its national and international obligations.

The UK has led international efforts in response to Mr Navalny's poisoning in August. We have worked closely with our international partners at the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, to urge Russia to uphold its obligations under the chemical weapons convention. Last December, the UK led a joint statement in the OPCW, supported by 58 states parties, calling for Russia to be held to account.

We have also taken robust, bilateral action. In October, the UK enforced asset freezes and travel bans on six individuals responsible for the poisoning of Alexei Navalny, as well as one Russian organisation. We keep further sanctions designations under constant review. However, it would not be appropriate to comment at this stage on possible future designations, as that could undermine their impact. We carefully consider all options under the relevant sanctions regimes.

The UK has been clear in condemning in the strongest possible terms the chemical weapons attack against Mr Navalny last year. He was the victim of a nerve agent attack, and the UK has called repeatedly for the

Russian authorities to investigate and explain the use of a chemical weapon on Russian soil and to declare its Novichok programme to the OPCW.

The confirmed use of chemical weapons against opposition figures further undermines democracy and political plurality in Russia. More broadly, Mr Navalny's detention is a further demonstration of the concerning deterioration in the human rights situation in Russia. We raise that regularly with the Russian Government, making it clear that Russia must uphold its international human rights responsibilities. I raised the issue myself during my visit to Moscow in November 2020, and our ambassador to Moscow raised Mr Navalny's case immediately prior to his return to Russia, to underline that the UK was closely monitoring Russia's actions.

We condemn the detention of thousands of peaceful protesters and journalists on 23 January and the Russian Government's continued disregard for the fundamental rights of its people to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. The UK has also urged Russia to fulfil its commitments under the international covenant on civil and political rights, the European convention on human rights and all the relevant instruments of the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and to guarantee those rights, including the right to freedom of expression, to its citizens.

The UK's policy towards Russia is clear: we want a different relationship, but Russia must stop its destabilising behaviour towards the UK and its partners. Russia's pattern of aggressive behaviour undermines its claim that it is a responsible international partner upholding the rules-based international system.

Mr Speaker: We will go back to Sir Roger, in case he wishes to add something.

Sir Roger Gale: I am very grateful for that powerful statement. I am concerned because I spoke with the Russian ambassador, Andrei Kelin, who chose to call me this morning. He made it absolutely plain to me during that call that the Russians regarded Mr Navalny as a prisoner who had broken his bail conditions and therefore would not be released. Under those circumstances, I have to say that I still regard this as a gross breach of the European convention on human rights. I hope that my hon. Friend will do everything in her power to underscore that and make it plain that this conduct is completely unacceptable.

Wendy Morton: I would like to come back briefly on that point. We have been very clear. The Foreign Secretary has condemned the Russian authorities' unacceptable use of violence against peaceful protesters. We really have been leading from the front when it comes to taking action against this situation. We are absolutely appalled by the politically motivated detention of Alexei Navalny on arbitrary charges.

Mr Speaker: We now come to the shadow Minister, who has two minutes.

Catherine West (Hornsey and Wood Green) (Lab): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the right hon. Member for North Thanet (Sir Roger Gale) for his urgent question. Labour colleagues and I condemn the shocking but sadly predictable arrest of Mr Navalny, his wife and the many thousands of brave Russians who took to the streets at the weekend to protest at the detention. We welcome

[Catherine West]

the Government's condemnation of Mr Navalny's arrest and the condemnation by the new Administration in the United States. We also welcome the statement today from the Minister, and we want to emphasise the brutal nature of the police response last weekend. We understand that there will be similar protestations this weekend.

The House is united in condemnation of the attacks, but we would like to see action on the Russia report, which goes to the heart of the matter. In the end, warm words in the House will not assist Mr Navalny in his tireless campaign against corruption. Only the disruption of the corrupt financial networks and the flow of dirty money into the UK will put pressure on the Russian Government to change course. In 15 months, not a single one of the 21 recommendations in the Russian report has been fully implemented: no action on foreign agents; no action on golden visas; and the London laundromat is still very much open for business. The lack of urgency is truly staggering.

We cannot continue to turn a blind eye to this. I have four brief questions for the Minister. First, will the Government commit today to the review and expansion of Magnitsky sanctions to include the corruption heading? Secondly, will they commit to identifying and sanctioning those implicated in the attempted killing of Mr Navalny? Thirdly, will the Government commit to cleaning up the illicit money in UK jurisdictions, including London, identified both by the Russia report and the Panama papers? Finally, by what date can we as parliamentarians expect the Government to implement the 21 recommendations in the Russia report?

Wendy Morton: I am grateful to the hon. Lady for her support for the actions that we have taken in respect of the detention of Alexei Navalny. I set out the clear steps that the UK Government have taken. The Foreign Secretary has been leading from the front in that regard. The Government's response to the Intelligence and Security Committee's report on Russia was published on the same day as its release, on 21 July 2020.

Let me make it absolutely clear that Russia is a top national security priority for the Government. We will introduce new legislation to provide the security services and law enforcement agencies with the tools they need to tackle the evolving threat of hostile activity by foreign states. That Bill will modernise existing offences to deal more effectively with the espionage threat, and create new offences to criminalise other harmful activity conducted by and on behalf of states. We continue to step up our activity, both domestically and internationally, to tackle illicit finance entering our country. The National Crime Agency has increased the number of investigations into corrupt elites, and I hope that the hon. Lady welcomes that. We are also reviewing all tier-1 investor visas granted before 5 April 2015

Mr Speaker: I call the Chair of the Select Committee, Tom Tugendhat.

Tom Tugendhat (Tonbridge and Malling) (Con) [V]: It is welcome to hear the Minister's condemnation of the attack on Alexei Navalny, whose crime, it appears, is to survive an assassination attempt by the state that now holds him prisoner.

This is not the first of these incidents. Litvinenko, Skripal and now Navalny are three names that speak of Russia's brutality towards its own citizens. When will we see a proper list of the ill-gotten gains that President Putin has stolen from the Russian people over the past 20 years? When will we see a breakdown of his hidden wealth through UK jurisdictions or in areas where the UK has influence, so that the Russian people can know how much money has been stolen from them by this gangster elite, and when it will be held in trust, to be returned to them as soon as he is gone?

Wendy Morton: I think that I have set out very clearly the action that we are taking in response to the poisoning of Alexei Navalny. I have set out very clearly the sanctions that we have put in place against six individuals and one organisation. As for any future sanctions or measures that we may put in place, it would be wrong for me to speculate further at this stage.

Mr Speaker: The SNP spokesperson, Alyn Smith, has one minute.

Alyn Smith (Stirling) (SNP) [V]: I warmly congratulate the right hon. Member for North Thanet (Sir Roger Gale) on bringing this important issue forward. I welcome the Minister's statement as far as it goes. I agree with it and support the measures she has outlined. I do not doubt her sincerity in tackling this matter and I think it is important to put that on the record.

I declare an interest as one of the co-litigants in the case that is taking the UK Government to the High Court over the non-implementation of the recommendations of the Intelligence and Security Committee's report into Russian interference. It really does beggar belief that the UK Government can say they have been leading from the front on this. I really do not recognise that description. It staggers me that so few of the recommendations of that credible and serious report have not been implemented by the Government. I urge the Minister to commit to making a further statement to the House on the implementation of those recommendations.

I also ask the Minister for reassurance. I appreciate she will not indulge in speculation, but she needs to be aware that there is considerable support across the House for further Magnitsky sanctions against individuals. We all support Mr Navalny and the protestors across Russia. They need to be sure that there will be action, not just warm words.

Wendy Morton: When it comes to election interference, one of the issues raised by the hon. Gentleman, the Government concluded that

"it is almost certain that Russian actors sought to interfere in the 2019 General Election through the online amplification of illicitly acquired and leaked"

UK-US trade documents. As he rightly recognises, however, where a criminal investigation is ongoing it would be inappropriate of me to comment.

On the Russia report, I should perhaps just reiterate that we published our response on the same day as its release, 21 July. Russia is a top national security priority for the Government. We will freeze Russian state assets wherever we have the evidence that they may be used to threaten the life or property of UK nationals or residents.

Dr Luke Evans (Bosworth) (Con) [V]: Chemical weapons were used on British soil in Salisbury. Now, it appears they have been used on Russian soil. The Foreign Secretary tweeted on 18 January:

“Rather than persecute Mr Navalny, Russia should explain how a chemical weapon came to be used on Russian soil.”

Has the Minister’s Department received an answer to that? More broadly, what is her assessment of the worrying use of chemical weapons on British soil and abroad?

Wendy Morton: My hon. Friend raises a really important point. We have been very clear that the use of chemical weapons is an unacceptable breach of international norms. Russia absolutely must respond fully to the OPCW demand for a transparent investigation and, crucially, explain how a chemical weapon was used against a Russian citizen on Russian soil.

Layla Moran (Oxford West and Abingdon) (LD) [V]: Chelsea football club has been in the news a lot this week, though largely not for this issue. However, Alexei Navalny and his team released a list of names, drawn up by Navalny just days before his return and arrest, which included Chelsea FC’s owner Roman Abramovich and Everton FC’s Alisher Usmanov among those whom they believe should be sanctioned. Both individuals were described as

“key enablers...with significant ties and assets in the West.”

Is the Minister taking those allegations seriously? Will she provide an assurance that anyone, no matter their wealth or position, would be considered for Magnitsky sanctions?

Wendy Morton: As I have made clear in relation to Alexei Navalny, we enforced asset freezes and travel bans against six individuals and an entity involved with the poisoning and attempted murder of Mr Navalny on 15 October 2020. We did that under the EU’s chemical weapons sanctions regime. As the hon. Lady will recognise, try as she might to press me to speculate on further listings, alas I am not going to do that as it would be inappropriate.

Simon Jupp (East Devon) (Con) [V]: It is appalling that Alexei Navalny, the victim of a despicable crime, has been detained by the Russian authorities. His politically motivated arrest provokes further concerns about Russia’s respect for the rule of law and human rights. Will the Minister join me in calling for his immediate release?

Wendy Morton: We have been absolutely clear—the Foreign Secretary made it clear—that Mr Navalny is the victim of a despicable crime, and we call for his immediate and unconditional release. It is really important that Russia must account for itself and its activities.

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP) [V]: I thank the Minister very much for the firm response and strong words in response to the urgent question. We stand alongside the protesters and, in particular, Alexei Navalny. We value democracy; Russia clearly does not. Further to the early-day motion that I tabled just yesterday on the treatment of protesters by the Russian police, will she outline whether any of those arrested are British

citizens; what the status of any British citizens is in those areas; and further, what support is available for our people who are there?

Wendy Morton: I am aware that the hon. Gentleman takes a keen interest in human rights, as do so many on both sides of the Chamber. We are not aware of any British nationals requiring consular support as a result of detentions during the protest, but we always keep our travel advice under constant review.

Mr Andrew Mitchell (Sutton Coldfield) (Con): My right hon. Friend the Member for North Thanet (Sir Roger Gale) is absolutely right to bring to the House this matter and that of the very brave Alexei Navalny, whose rights under the UN convention on human rights have been trampled underfoot and so grievously disrespected by a fellow member of the United Nations Security Council. Will the Minister confirm that she is co-ordinating collective action with our allies on this matter to hold the Russian leadership to account? Will she also confirm that, through the Magnitsky measures and other ways, not just Russia’s leaders but other officials who abuse Alexei Navalny’s human rights can be held to account in a similar way?

Wendy Morton: I know that my right hon. Friend has taken the issue of sanctions and Magnitsky seriously for some time and championed it. When it comes to the case of Alexei Navalny, we have been absolutely clear from the start in terms of mobilising the international community. We galvanised the international community in condemnation of these deplorable detentions with the statement on 26 January through our role as G7 president. In that statement, we emphasised our deep concern about these developments, but we were also very instrumental in leading international efforts in response to his poisoning in August last year, when we worked closely with our international partners at the OPCW to urge Russia to uphold its obligations under the chemical weapons convention.

Mr Toby Perkins (Chesterfield) (Lab) [V]: The Minister’s angry condemnation of the Russian regime is unlikely to cause much lost sleep in Moscow while the British Government’s actions are so feeble. Last week, the Foreign Secretary was unable to name a single element of the Russia report that had been fully implemented. What we really need today, do we not, Minister, is not strong words, but the promise of actions to get the Russia report fully implemented?

Wendy Morton: I do not accept what the hon. Gentleman is saying. We have been very clear. We set out the six sanctions against individuals and then an entity involved in the poisoning and attempted murder of Mr Navalny. We have been very clear in our message to Russia that we want to see action, and we also want to see it respond to the OPCW demand for a transparent investigation. In addition, we have been very clear when it comes the ISC report of last year. On the day that it was published, the UK Government issued a response, and we have set out the actions that we will take in terms of introducing new legislation. We have increased the number of investigations through the National Crime Agency into corrupt elites and we are reviewing all tier 1 investor visas granted before 5 April 2015.

Dr Liam Fox (North Somerset) (Con): Thirty years after the fall of the Soviet Union, the Russian regime murders its opponents abroad. It poisons its challengers at home. It still has armed forces on the sovereign territory of Ukraine and Georgia. It believes in the Soviet concept of a near abroad and presents a clear threat to continental Europe's security. Does my hon. Friend have a message for those in Europe who still support the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, which will make Europe more dependent on Russian gas and give economic comfort to Putin's gangster regime?

Wendy Morton: The UK remains concerned about the impact that Nord Stream 2 will have on European energy security, and particularly on the interests of Ukraine. Our focus continues to be supporting resilient European energy markets, including measures that strengthen and diversify gas supply and competition. Obviously, this is a matter for Germany, but I can assure my right hon. Friend that we remain concerned about the impacts of Nord Stream 2.

Patrick Grady (Glasgow North) (SNP): There are some hon. Members on the Tory Benches who are openly rejoicing at the prospect of Brexit allowing deregulation of financial and investment markets. Given the massive flows of capital between Russian oligarchs and the City of London, how will the Government ensure that Russian officials responsible for human rights abuses are not allowed to profit in this way, and that there will be no diluting of standards and regulations that would get in the way of applying Magnitsky-style scandals?

Wendy Morton: I assure the hon. Gentleman that we continue to step up our activity, both domestically and internationally, to tackle illicit finance and dirty money entering our country. The National Crime Agency has increased the number of investigations into corrupt elites, and under the Criminal Finances Act 2017, we introduced a number of instruments that are being used to tackle illicit finance, including unexplained wealth orders.

Laura Farris (Newbury) (Con) [V]: The Biden Administration have already made it clear that they are going to take a more robust line with Russia, and the subjects of Russia's treatment of Ukraine and Mr Navalny's arrest were discussed by President Biden and President Putin during a call earlier this week. What joint steps does the Minister think the US and the UK can take, and has the Foreign Secretary yet had an opportunity to speak to Mr Blinken at the State Department?

Wendy Morton: We have already demonstrated the way in which the UK has been leading the international effort on the issue of Alexei Navalny, through the OPCW and also through the G7 statement of 26 January. Our Prime Minister spoke with President Biden on 23 January, and the Foreign Secretary spoke with the new US national security adviser on 22 January. During both calls, they agreed on the need to work together on shared foreign and security priorities, such as Russia.

Ruth Jones (Newport West) (Lab) [V]: Many people across Newport West and our country commend Mr Navalny and his supporters for their extraordinary bravery in standing up against this corrupt and repressive

Government in Moscow. Will the Minister show the same bravery, and set out in clear terms what action this Government, with international partners, will take to demand their immediate release?

Wendy Morton: The Foreign Secretary has made it absolutely clear that Mr Navalny is the victim of a despicable crime, and we will continue to call for his immediate and unconditional release. The Foreign Secretary has also condemned the Russian authorities' unacceptable use of violence against peaceful protesters and journalists, which I am sure many of the hon. Lady's constituents, like mine, have seen in the media. We have called on the Russian Government to respect their international commitments and release those who have been detained during peaceful demonstrations.

Jack Brereton (Stoke-on-Trent South) (Con) [V]: The UK, supported by 58 countries, led the joint statement in December calling for Russia to be held to account for what it does. Will my hon. Friend join me in asking the whole House to support and commend the UK on the leading role it is taking in these efforts, sending a very clear message to the Russian Government?

Wendy Morton: My hon. Friend makes a very important point about the need for a joined-up approach, and in supporting an international effort to tackle this issue. He is right to recognise that the UK did indeed lead the effort with respect to the poisoning of Alexei Navalny, as well as that joint statement in the OPCW, which was supported by no fewer than 58 state parties all calling for Russia to be held to account.

Mr Ben Bradshaw (Exeter) (Lab) [V]: Is not the reason that the Government have failed to implement a single recommendation of the now 15-month-old Russia report and have failed to apply Magnitsky sanctions to the eight individuals to whom Alexei Navalny himself had requested they be applied a simple one—that London is awash with dirty Russian money, as is the Conservative party?

Wendy Morton: I do not accept the assertion made by the right hon. Gentleman. The ISC Russia report, to which he refers, was released on 21 July, and the Government responded on the very same date. We have set out very clearly what our response is and that Russia remains a top national security priority for the Government. We have issued sanctions against six individuals and one organisation in relation to Alexei Navalny and, as I have made very clear, we will not speculate on who else we may or may not sanction.

Sir Bernard Jenkin (Harwich and North Essex) (Con) [V]: I thank my hon. Friend for her statements. Is it not clear that the lesson of watching Russia for the past few years is that Russia—or China, for that matter—does not have any respect for an adversary unless it can show strength? What do all our words of condemnation mean without much more comprehensive action? When will the integrated defence and security review be published, and will it address the role of the City of London in looted Russian money? What will we do to strengthen all our alliances to bring the free world together against both Russia's internal and external aggression?

Wendy Morton: We have been very clear on our policy towards Russia. It is that we want a very different relationship with Russia and that Russia must stop its destabilising behaviour towards the UK and its partners. While that continues, there can be no normalisation of our bilateral relationship. We will continue to support human rights in Russia and those who seek to defend them. My hon. Friend attempts to draw me on the integrated review, but I am sure he knows me better than to think that I would speculate on when that may be published.

Mr Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield) (Lab/Co-op) [V]: As a long-standing Member of Parliament, I do not know what the Government's policy is towards Russia. It is a corrupt regime that poisons people in our country and poisons its democratic citizens in other parts of the world. Is it not about time that we accepted that there is a Russian elite in London, in control of money in property, coming in on private jets with no hindrance, and that we took them on? Then the leaders, particularly Putin, would listen to what we say.

Wendy Morton: When it comes to the case of Alexei Navalny, we have been very clear about our action. We took the lead on the OPCW in signing up member states to demand that Russia follow up with a transparent investigation. We led the way with the G7 statement yesterday. In addition, we have put in place six sanctions against individuals and one organisation. We have been leading from the front when it comes to the case of Alexei Navalny, and when it comes to Russia, again, I have been very clear about our policy: we want a different relationship with Russia and there can be no normalisation in our bilateral relationship until its passive-aggressive behaviour changes.

Ruth Edwards (Rushcliffe) (Con) [V]: Does my hon. Friend agree that Russia should continue to be allowed a seat at the table of international partnerships only if it ceases its malign activities?

Wendy Morton: Again, we have been very clear what our expectations are when it comes to Russia and Russian behaviour. When it comes to the case of Alexei Navalny, Russia must fully respond to the OPCW demands for a transparent investigation and explain how a chemical weapon came to be used against a Russian citizen on Russian soil. Russia must start to account for itself.

Dame Margaret Hodge (Barking) (Lab) [V]: The best way in which we can show our support for Alexei Navalny is not by words but by actions, and not by investigations but by convictions. Navalny himself has said that he wants the international community to use sanctions against complicit Russian kleptocrats who live outside Russia. He has named Abramovich and Usmanov, both of whom have considerable wealth, property and links to English football clubs. On Facebook, Navalny has said that the sanctions have not worked because "the West has refrained from sanctioning the people with the money".

Is that true?

Wendy Morton: Sanctions send a clear message to those responsible that the use of chemical weapons is an egregious violation of the international obligations that

we must all uphold to keep societies safe. We continue to work to protect human rights and civil society in Russia. We are considering all options for further action, but as I have said, and as I am sure the right hon. Lady is aware, it would be inappropriate for me to speculate on any future listings.

Robert Largan (High Peak) (Con) [V]: The arrest of Mr Navalny is a disgraceful act by a Putin regime that is clearly terrified of being held to account by the Russian people. Last year, when Mr Navalny was poisoned, the Government took steps to freeze assets of senior figures in the Russian Government. Can the Minister confirm whether further asset freezes of both individuals and organisations are an option that the UK is prepared to consider this time?

Wendy Morton: When it comes to sanctions, we continue to look at this matter. We continue to work to protect and promote human rights, and we are considering all options for further actions. However, it would be inappropriate to speculate on future listings.

Stewart Malcolm McDonald (Glasgow South) (SNP) [V]: The Minister said that she is "appalled" by what has happened to Mr Navalny and described the event as "despicable". She went on to pray in aid the United Kingdom's current G7 presidency as "leading from the front" on Russia and said that the UK has "galvanised the international community". We only have to listen to what Members have said so far to know that it is not the international community that the Government need to galvanise—they need to galvanise themselves. They will not be trembling in Moscow at anything the Minister, who I like, has had to say this afternoon, and there certainly will not be any winds of relief in Mr Navalny's prison cell from what she has said. I do not want her to speculate; I want her to do something. I want her to implement the full recommendations of the ISC report. She owes this House and those protesting in Russia at the weekend an explanation as to why the Government flatly refuse to do so.

Wendy Morton: The hon. Gentleman quotes my words, so I will re-quote them: the UK has galvanised the international community in condemnation of these deplorable detentions. As the G7 president, we issued a G7 Foreign Ministers' statement on 26 January. When it comes to the issue of the Russia report, as I have set out very clearly, Russia is a top national security priority for the Government. We will be introducing new legislation; I have made that very clear. The National Crime Agency has increased the number of investigations into corrupt elites, and we are also reviewing all tier 1 investor visas granted before 5 April 2015.

Ms Nusrat Ghani (Wealden) (Con) [V]: I agree with the Minister that Russia is a destabilising force with little regard for human rights and international law. Of course, that affects us, especially as Russia continues to use its veto to stall the United Nations in investigating genocide. Does the Minister agree with the Government's position that the determination of genocide falls to international courts, but when they are in paralysis, with countries such as Russia having a hold over them, the obligation to investigate and prevent a genocide falls to domestic courts?

Wendy Morton: This particular urgent question in respect of Russia is very much about the issue of Navalny and the action that the UK has been taking. I have been clear about the way we approach this issue and have set out that we absolutely condemn the action and call for Navalny's immediate release.

Sir Edward Leigh (Gainsborough) (Con): I support everything that the Minister has said in her condemnation of the Putin regime in relation to Mr Navalny, and commend her balanced approach.

Ever since I married my Russian Orthodox wife, I have tried to understand Russia and the sensitivities of the Russian people. Will the Minister make it clear that, while we condemn the Putin regime, there will be nothing Russophobic about our attitude? That means we need to understand Russian cultural and historical sensitivities. On the Council of Europe, engagement with Russian parliamentarians may sometimes be useful—as Winston Churchill said, “Jaw-jaw is better than war-war.”

Wendy Morton: My right hon. Friend makes an important point. I have set out today the fact that we want a different relationship with Russia, but I absolutely accept that there are often people-to-people links, which are something entirely different, and when it comes to culture there are many links between our two countries. But let me be absolutely clear that Russia's pattern of aggressive behaviour undermines its claim that it is a responsible international partner that upholds the rules-based international system. We in the UK will continue to support human rights in Russia and those who seek to defend them.

Mr Speaker: I am suspending the House for a few minutes to enable the necessary arrangements for the next business to be made.

1.21 pm

Sitting suspended.

Covid-19 Update

1.26 pm

The Prime Minister (Boris Johnson): With permission, Mr Speaker, I will make a statement on the Government's measures to safeguard our United Kingdom against the new variants of covid until we have administered enough vaccinations to free ourselves from the virus.

I am acutely conscious that at this moment parents are balancing the demands of working from home with supporting the education of their children, businesspeople are enduring the sight of their shops or restaurants or other enterprises standing empty and idle, and, sadly, too many are coping with the anxiety of illness or the tragedy of bereavement.

I am deeply sorry to say that the number of people that have been taken from us has surpassed 100,000, as the House was discussing only an hour or so ago. I know that the House will join me in offering condolences to all those who have lost loved ones. The most important thing we can do to honour their memory is to persevere against this virus with ever greater resolve.

That is why we have launched the biggest vaccination programme in British history. Three weeks ago, I reported that the UK had immunised 1.3 million people; now that figure has multiplied more than fivefold to exceed 6.8 million people—more than any other country in Europe and over 13% of the entire adult population. In England we have now delivered first doses to over four fifths of those aged 80 or over, over half of those aged between 75 and 79, and three quarters of elderly care home residents. Though it remains an exacting target, we are on track to achieve our goal of offering a first dose to everyone in the top four priority groups by the middle of February.

I can also reassure the House that all current evidence shows that both the vaccines we are administering remain effective against the new variant that was first identified in London and the south-east, by means of our world-leading capability in genomic sequencing. The UK has now sequenced over half of all covid-19 viral genomes that have been submitted to the global database—10 times more than any other country. Yesterday, my right hon. Friend the Health Secretary announced our new variant assessment platform, through which we will work with the World Health Organisation to offer our expertise to help other countries, because a new variant anywhere poses a potential threat everywhere.

To guard against this danger, we must also take additional steps to strengthen our borders to stop those strains from entering the UK. We have already temporarily closed all travel corridors, and we are already requiring anyone coming to this country to have proof of a negative covid test taken in the 72 hours before leaving. They must also complete a passenger locator form which must be checked before they board, and then quarantine on arrival for 10 days. I want to make it clear that under the stay-at-home regulations, it is illegal to leave home to travel abroad for leisure purposes. We will enforce this at ports and airports by asking people why they are leaving and instructing them to return home if they do not have a valid reason to travel.

We have also banned all travel from 22 countries where there is a risk of known variants, including South Africa, Portugal and South American nations. In order to reduce the risk posed by UK nationals and residents

returning home from these countries, I can announce that we will require all such arrivals who cannot be refused entry to isolate in Government-provided accommodation such as hotels for 10 days, without exception. They will be met at the airport and transported directly into quarantine. The Department of Health and Social Care is working to establish these facilities as quickly as possible. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary will set out the details of our plans in her statement shortly. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster has this morning spoken to the First Ministers of Scotland and Wales and the First Minister and Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland and, as we have throughout this pandemic, we will be working closely with the devolved Administrations to implement these new measures so that, where possible, we continue with a UK-wide approach.

It was the emergence of a new variant that is up to 70% more transmissible that forced England back into lockdown, and I know that everyone yearns to know how much longer they must endure these restrictions, with all their consequences for jobs and livelihoods and, most tragically of all, for the life chances of our children. We will not persist for a day longer than is necessary, but nor can we relax too soon, because if we do, we run the risk of our NHS coming under still greater pressure, compelling us to reimpose every restriction and sustain those restrictions for longer.

So far, our efforts do appear to have reduced the R rate, but we do not yet have enough data to know exactly how soon it will be safe to reopen our society and economy. At this point, we do not have enough data to judge the full effect of vaccines in blocking transmission, nor the extent and speed with which the vaccines will reduce hospitalisations and deaths, nor how quickly the combination of vaccinations and the lockdown can be expected to ease the pressure on the NHS.

What we do know is that we remain in a perilous situation, with more than 37,000 patients now in hospital with covid, almost double the peak of the first wave, but the overall picture should be clearer by mid-February. By then, we will know much more about the effect of vaccines in preventing hospitalisations and deaths, using data from the UK but also other nations such as Israel. We will know how successful the current restrictions have been in driving down infections. We will also know how many people are still in hospital with covid, which we simply cannot predict with certainty today. We will then be in a better position to chart a course out of lockdown without risking a further surge that would overwhelm the NHS.

When I announced the lockdown, I said that we would review its measures in mid-February, once the most vulnerable had been offered the first dose of the vaccine, so I can tell the House that when Parliament returns from recess in the week commencing 22 February, subject to the full agreement of the House, we intend to set out the results of that review and publish our plan for taking the country out of lockdown. That plan will, of course, depend on the continued success of our vaccination programme, on the capacity of the NHS and on deaths falling at the pace we would expect as more people are inoculated.

Our aim will be to set out a gradual and phased approach towards easing the restrictions in a sustainable way, guided by the principles we have observed throughout the pandemic and beginning with the most important principle of all: that reopening schools must be our

national priority. The first sign of normality beginning to return should be pupils going back to their classrooms. I know how parents and teachers need as much certainty as possible, including two weeks' notice of the return of face-to-face teaching. I must inform the House that, for the reasons I have outlined, it will not be possible to reopen schools immediately after the February half-term. I know how frustrating that will be for pupils and teachers, who want nothing more than to get back to the classroom, and for parents and carers who have spent so many months juggling their day jobs not only with home schooling but with meeting the myriad other demands of their children from breakfast until bedtime.

I know, too, the worries we all share about the mental health of our young people during this prolonged period of being stuck at home, so our plan for leaving the lockdown will set out our approach towards re-opening schools. If we achieve our target of vaccinating everyone in the four most vulnerable groups with their first dose by 15 February—and every passing day sees more progress towards that goal—those groups will have developed immunity from the virus by about three weeks later, that is by 8 March. We hope it will therefore be safe to begin the reopening of schools from Monday 8 March, with other economic and social restrictions being removed then or thereafter, as and when the data permits.

As we are extending the period of remote learning beyond the middle of February, I can confirm that the Government will prolong arrangements for providing free school meals for those eligible children not in school, including food parcels and the national voucher scheme, until they have returned to the classroom. We can also commit now that, as we did this financial year, we will provide a programme of catch-up over the next financial year. This will involve a further £300 million of new money to schools for tutoring, and we will work in collaboration with the education sector to develop, as appropriate, specific initiatives for summer schools and a covid premium to support catch-up. But we recognise that these extended school closures have had a huge impact on children's learning, which will take more than a year to make up, so we will work with parents, teachers and schools to develop a long-term plan to make sure pupils have the chance to make up their learning over the course of this Parliament.

I know that the measures I am setting out today will be deeply frustrating to many hon. Friends and colleagues, and disappointing for all of us. But the way forward has been clear ever since the vaccines arrived, and as we inoculate more people hour by hour, this is the time to hold our nerve in the end game of the battle against the virus. Our goal now must be to buy the extra weeks we need to immunise the most vulnerable and get this virus under control, so that together we can defeat this most wretched disease and reclaim our lives, once and for all. I commend this statement to the House.

1.37 pm

Keir Starmer (Holborn and St Pancras) (Lab) [V]: I thank the Prime Minister for advance sight of his statement. To lose 100,000 people to this virus is nothing short of a national tragedy. It is a stark number: an empty chair at the kitchen table; a person obviously taken before their time. Today, we should remember that, and we should mark the moment by learning the lessons of the last year to make sure that the same mistakes are not made again.

[Keir Starmer]

Of course, any Government would have struggled with this pandemic—I get that and the British people get that—but the reality is that Britain is the first country in Europe to suffer 100,000 deaths, and we have one of the highest death rates in the world. The Prime Minister often says that he has been balancing the health restrictions against economic risks, but that simply does not wash, because alongside that high death toll we also have the deepest recession of any major economy and the lowest growth of any major economy, and we are on course to have one of the slowest recoveries of any major economy.

So for all the contrition and sympathy that the Prime Minister expresses, and I recognise how heartfelt that is, the truth is that this was not inevitable—it was not just bad luck. It is the result of a huge number of mistakes by the Prime Minister during the course of this pandemic. We were too slow into lockdown last March, too slow to get protective equipment to the front line and, of course, too slow to protect our care homes—20% of deaths in this pandemic have come from care home residents. I really do not think that the Prime Minister and the Health Secretary understand just how offensive it was to pretend that there was a protective ring around our care homes.

The Government had the chance over the summer to learn from those mistakes in the first wave and prepare for a second wave and a challenging winter. I put that challenge to the Prime Minister in June, but that chance was wasted. The Government then went on to fail to deliver an effective test, trace and isolate system, despite all the warnings. They failed to deliver clear and reliable public messaging, crucial in a pandemic—one minute telling people to go to work, then to do the complete opposite.

The Prime Minister has failed on a number of occasions to follow the scientific advice that the virus was getting out of control. First, in September, when that advice was given, they failed to implement a circuit break or lockdown over half-term as we suggested. Then in December, we had the fiasco over Christmas mixing. Once again, we had the 13-day delay from 22 December, when that further medical advice was given, to when the third national lockdown was finally introduced. As a result, we have seen a third wave more deadly than the first and second waves. Fifty thousand people have died since 11 November. That is 50,000 deaths in 77 days. That is a scarcely believable toll on the British people.

In isolation, any of these mistakes are perhaps understandable. Taken together, it is a damning indictment of how the Government have handled this pandemic. The Prime Minister says, “Well, now is not the time to answer the question why.” That is the answer he gave back in the summer after the first wave. He said the same after the second wave, and he says it again now, each time repeating the mistakes over and over again. That is why now is the time to ask and answer the question why.

The way out of this nightmare has now been provided by our amazing scientists, our NHS, our armed forces and hundreds of thousands of volunteers. The vaccine programme is making incredible progress. The British people have come together to deliver what is the largest peacetime effort in our history. Despite the Prime Minister’s

constant complaining, all of us—all of us—are doing whatever we can to help the vaccine roll out as swiftly and as safely as possible.

On schools, first I have to say that even for this Prime Minister it is quite something to open schools one day and close them the next, to call them vectors of transmission and then to challenge me to say that the schools he has closed are safe, only now to give a statement where he says that schools cannot open until 8 March at the earliest because it is not safe to do so. That is his analysis. It is the sort of nonsense that has led us to the highest death toll in Europe and the worst recession.

We of course welcome any steps forward in reopening schools, and we will look at the detail of how the Education Secretary plans to deliver that and the plans to deliver online learning. I also hope that the Prime Minister will take seriously our proposal—echoed, incidentally, by the Children’s Commissioner and the Conservative Chair of the Education Committee, the right hon. Member for Harlow (Robert Halfon)—that once the first four categories of the most vulnerable have been vaccinated by mid-February, he should bring forward the vaccination of key workers and use that window of the February half-term to vaccinate all school staff, including every teacher and teaching assistant. There is a clear week there when that could be done, and it should be done.

On borders, we will look at the detail—

Mr Speaker: Order. I hope that the right hon. and learned Gentleman’s comments are coming to an end; he is well past the five minutes allocated.

Keir Starmer: On borders, we will look at the Prime Minister’s statement in detail, and obviously hear what the Home Secretary has to say, but in due course there will be a public inquiry. The Prime Minister will have to answer the question. I hope that he can finally answer this very simple and direct question, because yesterday he was maintaining that the Government had done “everything we could to save lives.”

Is he really saying to those grieving families that their loss was just inevitable and that none of the 100,000 deaths could have been avoided?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. and learned Gentleman asks about mistakes, and I have said that there will be a time to reflect, to analyse, to learn lessons and to prepare. However, I say to him that I think the biggest mistake he has made is in seeking continually to attack what the Government have been trying to do at every opportunity, supporting one week and then attacking the very same policy the next week. He complains about confusion of messages. How much has he actually done, as Leader of the Opposition, to reassure the public, for example, about NHS Test and Trace, which has done a very good job, I notice, of confining him for the third time? What has he done to reassure people about messaging, rather than attacking, causing confusion and trying to sow doubt about what the Government are doing? There was a very different path open to him at the beginning of this pandemic and it is a great pity he has not taken it.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman knows perfectly well that the problem is not that schools are unsafe. They are not unsafe. Schools are safe—he should say it,

and his union paymasters should hear him say it loud and clear. The problem is that schools bring communities together, obviously, and large numbers of kids are a considerable vector of transmission. It is not that there is any particular extra risk to those involved in education.

I heard with interest what the right hon. and learned Gentleman had to say about his proposal for changing the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation priority list, and I really think he should reflect on what he is saying. The JCVI priority list, one to nine, is designed by experts and clinicians to prioritise those groups who are most likely to die or suffer from coronavirus. By trying to change that, and saying that he now wants to bring in other groups of public sector workers, to be decided by politicians, rather than the JCVI, he has to explain which vaccines he would take from which vulnerable groups, to make sense of his policy. That is what he is doing and that is what the Labour proposal would involve.

Indeed, by making it more difficult for us to vaccinate all those vulnerable groups in the fastest possible way, that Labour policy would delay our route out of lockdown and delay our ability to get kids back into school in the way they want. I urge the right hon. and learned Gentleman to think again, or at least to explain which members of those vulnerable groups would be deprived of vaccines in order to follow the Labour policy.

All I can say, having listened carefully to what the right hon. and learned Gentleman had to say, is that everybody will have to answer questions at the end of this and—let me put it this way—all politicians will be asked what they did, and what we did collaboratively, working together for the people of our country, to beat this virus. I am not sure that, on reflection, his choice was the right one for either his party or the country.

Jeremy Hunt (South West Surrey) (Con) [V]: On Monday, Baroness Harding said that 40% of the people asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace were not fully doing so. That works out at a worrying 30,000 people every day who are potentially still spreading the virus, many of them still going to work. Because that is such a big threat to our containment strategy for the virus, could the Prime Minister say what he thinks we need to do to deal with that issue? In particular, is it now time to consider making a blanket offer to those asked to self-isolate, that we will make good any salary they lose? In the end, that may be cheaper than having to extend furlough if the case rate remains high.

The Prime Minister: I very much respect my right hon. Friend's suggestion and I understand the logic of what he is saying, but I believe that the people of this country should be self-isolating, in the way that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition is rightly doing, on the basis that it is the right thing for themselves, for their families and for the country. They do get support, where needed, of £500, and there are very considerable fines for failing to do it. I think that is the right way forward and I hope he will join me in commending prompt action by everybody who is asked to self-isolate. It is the right thing to do for you, for your family and for the country.

Ian Blackford (Ross, Skye and Lochaber) (SNP) [V]: Let me thank the Prime Minister for an advance copy of his statement.

As we know, yesterday the UK reached yet another terrible milestone—100,000 covid-related deaths. Today, it is only right that we reflect on all those who have lost their lives during this pandemic. Our thoughts and prayers are most especially with their families and those who are left with the heaviest burden of grief. In time, there will be a reckoning on the UK Government's response to this virus and it is clear that that verdict may well be damning. In the here and now, though, it remains our job to focus on how we can support and save as many people as possible in the weeks and months ahead. That means a renewed commitment to maintaining public health, but it also must mean a renewed package of financial support for all those—all those, Prime Minister—who have been left behind by this Tory Government.

Right now, covid is the immediate threat to life, but poverty remains a killer, too. In 2019, the Institute for Public Policy Research revealed that Tory austerity cuts over the previous decade had resulted in as many as 130,000 preventable deaths. The Prime Minister promised not to repeat Tory austerity. If people are to believe him, he should start by making three important announcements today: extend the furlough scheme for the full duration of the pandemic; maintain the uplift to universal credit and apply it to legacy benefits; and put in place a package of support for the 3 million excluded.

Prime Minister, eleventh-hour announcements have to stop. These decisions cannot wait until the Budget in March. People need certainty now. I asked the Prime Minister these same questions at Prime Minister's questions, but I failed to get a straight answer, so please try again, Prime Minister. Will his Government extend furlough, maintain the universal credit uplift and offer support for the 3 million excluded? Finally, on international travel, both the Scottish and Welsh Governments want to go further on quarantining measures than what his UK Government are proposing. Will the Prime Minister stop his half measures and join the Governments in Scotland and Wales in stricter enforcements on international travel? That, Prime Minister, would be leadership.

The Prime Minister: I look forward to what the devolved Administrations do later, but I can tell the House that we are putting in the toughest measures virtually anywhere in the world, and my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary will be setting out the detail in due course.

I can tell the right hon. Gentleman that this country, through the might of the UK Treasury, as my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has said many times, has been able to look after people across the UK. It is thanks to the UK Government that we have the furlough scheme, the bounce back loans and the many other forms of support. It is thanks to the UK that we have, for instance, the Army able to move people in distress with covid in remote parts of Scotland to the hospitals where they need to get to, and indeed the British Army helping across Scotland, I am proud to say, to distribute the vaccines that are so essential for our fight back from this virus. So I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will abandon his narrow nationalist position and look at the achievements of the UK overall, and I think it is a fine, fine thing. It would be a wonderful thing, by the way, if the Scottish nationalist party for a moment stopped talking about its desire for a referendum while we are trying to deal with a pandemic.

Mr David Davis (Haltemprice and Howden) (Con): The Prime Minister is very properly concerned to protect our national health service, and particularly to prevent hospitals and intensive care units from being overwhelmed this winter. My question is about the scope to enhance primary care to reduce the need for covid patients to go to hospital in the first place. New Canadian studies of 4,500 people published this week show that the use of colchicine has cut hospital admissions by 25% and death rates by almost half. Similarly, some ivermectin studies have shown 75% reductions in death rates. What scope is there to act quickly this winter—this winter, not next winter—to enhance our primary care level to protect populations and hospitals?

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend makes a very important point. The therapeutics taskforce is currently reviewing both the drugs that he mentions, and I will make sure that he is kept up to speed with its findings.

Ed Davey (Kingston and Surbiton) (LD) [V]: As of 6.30 pm yesterday, the UK has the worst recorded death rate by head of population in the world. This is a grave moment for our country. I am sure all our hearts go out to the families who have lost loved ones. Last week, the Prime Minister told me he was still not prepared to launch the inquiry into the covid crisis that he promised six months ago. Instead, will he at least tell the country today that he will launch that inquiry sometime this year, so that we can find out why our country has seen the worst death rate from covid in the world, learn the lessons, and give bereaved families the answers and the justice that he owes them?

The Prime Minister: Once again, the right hon. Gentleman has the answer contained in his question. This country is going through a grievous bout of a deadly pandemic. He rightly draws attention to the death toll of 100,000 and, as he knows, there are currently 37,000 people in hospital. The entire British state is working flat out to bring the virus under control, and to get us through this pandemic and out the other side. As I have told him before, now is not the right time to consecrate the energies and efforts of officialdom, which would be huge, to an inquiry, though as I have said before—I said it last night and I will reassure him again today—of course there will be a time to learn lessons, to reflect, to understand and to prepare.

Richard Drax (South Dorset) (Con) [V]: I welcome and thank my right hon. Friend for his upbeat statement, which offers much-needed hope to a beleaguered nation, rather contrary to Captain Hindsight's contribution. With a successful inoculation programme in full swing, my right hon. Friend's plan to break free from lockdowns and restrictions is critical. Variants or no variants, does he agree that the lives and livelihoods of millions of our citizens now depend on a more proportionate response to this pandemic, which will require political courage to initiate?

The Prime Minister: I very much respect the point of view of my hon. Friend, who has long been a keen and justified campaigner for liberty. I share his instincts very strongly, but I must tell him that we will continue to be cautious in our approach because we do not wish to see more lives lost than we can possibly avoid. That is why

we will continue with the roll-out of the vaccine programme—the fastest in Europe currently—and on 15 February, as I have just said to the House, we will look at where we are. We will be setting out a road map, which I hope will be useful to him and to all colleagues throughout the House, on 22 February.

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP) [V]: I thank the Prime Minister for his statement. Would he confirm what discussions have taken place with his counterparts in education to give ample time for teachers to plan their online teaching, with special reference to children who cannot or will not be able to access their online classes? I agree with him that it is better that the children are back in their classrooms, but can he ensure that all the teaching staff, especially the special needs teachers, will be a priority for the vaccine roll-out? Can he also confirm that there will be no shortage of vaccine, as was indicated in the press today?

The Prime Minister: We are rolling out 1.3 million laptops, and we are making sure that kids—pupils—have access to online learning wherever possible. The most important thing, as the hon. Gentleman has rightly said, is to get kids back into school as soon as we sensibly can. That is what the Government are determined to do.

I want to reassure the hon. Gentleman about the vaccination programme. He mentioned anxieties about supply. As I stand before you today, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am confident that we will deliver on the 15 February pledge, and that we will continue to be able to drive up—[*Interruption.*] I see that the Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, my hon. Friend the Member for Stratford-on-Avon (Nadhim Zahawi), who is responsible for the vaccine roll-out, is confirming that we will be able to continue that accelerating curve of supply as well.

Christian Wakeford (Bury South) (Con): I join Members across the House in sending my deepest condolences to the families and friends of each and every individual who has tragically passed away as a result of covid. However, during this extremely difficult time I have nothing but admiration for the army of volunteers working tirelessly in my constituency and across the country. Will the Prime Minister join me in thanking organisations such as The Fed, the Jewish Volunteering Network, Headsup and Porch Boxes, along with all those who have done so much to protect the vulnerable and needy in Prestwich, Radcliffe and Whitefield?

The Prime Minister: I will indeed join my hon. Friend in paying tribute to those volunteers in his constituency. They join a huge constellation of shining points of light across our country. It has been one of the most extraordinary things; one of the few consolations of this crisis is the upsurge in volunteering.

Debbie Abrahams (Oldham East and Saddleworth) (Lab) [V]: May I associate my remarks with others that have been made, and express my sincerest condolences to everyone who has lost a loved one, particularly the constituents to whom I spoke last night?

Professor Sir Michael Marmot's recent report pointed to four drivers that have contributed to the high and unequal death toll in the UK. He identified the governance

and political culture that have damaged social cohesion and inclusivity; the widening inequalities in power, money and resources; the regressive austerity policies over the past 10 years; and the declining life expectancy—and of the healthy life expectancy—of the poorest, particularly women, which is among the worst in all comparable economies. Professor Marmot has called for the Government to address those issues and to build back fairer, so will the Prime Minister and his Cabinet listen to him?

The Prime Minister: I have a very high regard for Michael Marmot, and worked closely with him for many years. I believe that his advice is invaluable, and we will indeed make sure that as we come through the pandemic we look at the way in which it has impacted on the poorest and most vulnerable. We will indeed build back fairer.

Jane Stevenson (Wolverhampton North East) (Con) [V]: The vaccine roll-out now offers hope and relief to vulnerable people who have spent months living in fear and isolation. We hear that 6.8 million vaccines have been delivered, which is an amazing achievement, and I thank everyone involved in the roll-out. The mass vaccination hubs are an important part of the scheme, but many of my constituents with mobility issues are worried that they are going to miss out on their vaccine, as they cannot make the journey to one of those larger hubs. Can the Prime Minister give them reassurance that they will be offered a vaccine locally—even in their own home—and that anyone unable to travel will be fully supported?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend makes a very important point, and I hope that she will give reassurance to her constituents that they need have no anxieties about that. They do not have to go to the vaccination centres. They can either go to their GP surgery or, indeed, they will be visited in their own home.

Julie Elliott (Sunderland Central) (Lab) [V]: May I add my condolences to those already expressed to the victims, and their families and friends, of this awful illness? One of the challenges for children and adults working from home—the time now for children extended today by the Prime Minister—is, in addition to devices and connectivity, a lack of digital skills. This week I was made aware of an online scam asking people to put their financial information into a very plausible fake NHS website to get the vaccine. What is the Prime Minister doing to tackle this criminal activity, preying on often vulnerable people waiting for the vaccine? What is the Prime Minister doing to ensure that individuals, young and old, have the digital skills they need to protect themselves, learn from home and work from home?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Lady is absolutely right about the importance of digital skills and connectivity. That is why we are, for instance, massively increasing superfast gigabit broadband across the country and making sure that people have the technology they need. She raises a particularly important point about online scams. These are a problem. I can tell her that we are working across Government, led by the Cabinet Office, to beat the fraudsters and root them out. If she would be kind enough to send me details of the case she mentions, we will feed it into our system immediately.

Greg Clark (Tunbridge Wells) (Con) [V]: [*Inaudible.*]

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): Do we have the sound working for Mr Clark? [*Interruption.*] I apologise to the right hon. Gentleman. We appear to be hearing the sound engineers. Perhaps we will leave that for a moment and come back to the right hon. Gentleman. Meanwhile, we will go to York, hopefully, to Rachael Maskell.

Rachael Maskell (York Central) (Lab/Co-op) [V]: The evidence shows that the Government's approach to easing the lockdown before Christmas meant that crowds of people came to York despite my warnings, spreading infection in the retail, hospitality and transport sectors because they could travel to a lower tier and were off guard in my community. The result has been devastating. It was completely unsafe and completely avoidable. Will the Prime Minister commit not to return to a tiered system where people can freely move the infection from one place to another? What steps will he take to avoid this catastrophe from happening again? Can I meet one of his Ministers to discuss York's tragic experience over Christmas?

The Prime Minister: As soon as we were informed of the extra transmissibility—50% to 70% faster—of the new variant, we took all the action we could. I would just remind the hon. Lady that the best thing we can do for the people of York now is to ensure we keep the virus under control with the tough measures we have and ensure we all come forward for the vaccine. I urge her to get her constituents to come forward and take that vaccine. They are going great guns in Yorkshire. My memory is that in Yorkshire I think they have taken more vaccine than virtually anywhere else in the country. I congratulate the people of Yorkshire on what they are doing. We are now coming into the last furlong of the JCVI one to four and it would be great to get 100% of the people of Yorkshire in the course of the next few days.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): Now we go to my esteemed constituency neighbour, Robert Halfon.

Robert Halfon (Harlow) (Con) [V]: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. In all the gloom of the tragedy of covid, will my right hon. Friend pay tribute to the staff and volunteers who are working so hard to scale up the programme of vaccinations in Harlow and delivering the life-saving vaccines to thousands of residents in our new mass vaccination centre? I know he wants schools and colleges to open sooner rather than later. I really welcome what he has said today about catch-up, the extra funding, free school meals and, above all, the education plan for a covid recovery. Will he ensure the catch-up fund also helps children with mental health problems? Will he work with a coalition of the willing, such as the Children's Commissioner and other educationalists, to get all our children back in the classroom?

The Prime Minister: Yes, indeed, I join my right hon. Friend in congratulating not just the NHS, the Army and the pharmacies but the volunteers who are making the vaccine roll-out possible. We are putting extra funding into tackling mental health problems, particularly for children and young people, and the funding that we have announced of over £3 billion extra every year will go to help 345,000 children as well.

Judith Cummins (Bradford South) (Lab) [V]: Office for National Statistics data shows that key workers and those in manual and public-facing jobs are at the highest risk of dying from coronavirus. Bradford is a key worker city, and tragically, more than 1,000 Bradfordians have now died from the virus. When the most vulnerable groups have been vaccinated, will the Prime Minister ensure that priority is given to frontline workers who have played such a key role in keeping the country going during the pandemic, often with a high risk to their personal safety, including police officers, teachers, shop workers, bus and taxi drivers and many others who are unable to work from home? When will he publish his plan for the next stage of the vaccine roll-out?

The Prime Minister: I congratulate the hon. Lady on being so much more sensible than her party leader, who is saying that he wants to interrupt the vaccine roll-out for the vulnerable groups and decide politically who should get the vaccine. I think we should leave it to the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation to decide the most vulnerable groups. That is what we are going to do. That is the fastest way to deal with those who are most likely to die. I saw that she was shaking her head; she perhaps disagrees with the suggestion that she has just made, but I think that it is an excellent suggestion, and she should stick to it.

Joy Morrissey (Beaconsfield) (Con) [V]: I thank the Prime Minister for his commitment to reopen schools as soon as possible and for the vaccine roll-out. I am asking this question on behalf of children everywhere. As the mother of a nine-year-old, I can see that young children are struggling. Their cognitive development is determined at this age. We are storing up a lifetime of problems—*anxiety, mental health issues and obesity*—by having all our primary-age children at home. May I urge the Prime Minister to have courage in these final months and bring children—*particularly primary-age children*—back to school as quickly as possible?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is completely right, and I know that she speaks for millions of mothers and millions of parents across the country who want our kids to be back in school and who are anxious about the gaps in their learning that may be arising as a result of this pandemic. We are going to do everything we can to plug those gaps. She has heard what I have said about catch-up funds and the investments we are making in one-to-one tutorials, and that will go on not just this year but next year and throughout this Parliament, until we have made up the ground for those kids, because they deserve it. We will, of course, work as fast as possible to get schools open, but we must do it in a way that is cautious and proportionate.

Alison Thewliss (Glasgow Central) (SNP) [V]: Many people on low incomes and in precarious work still cannot afford to self-isolate on the UK's meagre level of statutory sick pay, and some are not even entitled to it. What impact does the Prime Minister feel that the UK's having one of the lowest rates of statutory sick pay has had on the death rate? Will he increase it as a matter of urgency, to help people do the right thing and stay safe?

The Prime Minister: In addition to statutory sick pay and universal credit, there is the £500 that we make available to those in need of it, and that is the right way

forward. I am afraid that the hon. Lady is not right in what she says about the level of statutory sick pay in this country; it compares favourably with countries around the world.

Mr Peter Bone (Wellingborough) (Con) [V]: The Government ordered the covid vaccine early, they have delivered it efficiently, and 11% of the population are now vaccinated. Compare that with the European Union. Because of the EU's bureaucracy, inefficiency and petty politics, it ordered the vaccine late, delivered it inefficiently and has only vaccinated 2% of its population. Prime Minister, it is not just a great credit to your leadership and your Government that we have delivered the vaccination so quickly. Is it not also one of the great advantages of having left the European Union?

The Prime Minister: What I will say is that we certainly were able to use speed and agility to deliver on the programme that we needed. It would have been a great pity if we had followed the advice of the Leader of the Opposition and the Labour party, who said, "Stay in the EU vaccines programme", who wanted to get rid of big pharmaceutical companies in the crazed Corbynite agenda on which the Leader of the Opposition stood at the last election, and who attacked the vaccines taskforce that secured 367 million doses of vaccine.

So I do think that we have been able to do things differently and better, in some ways, but it is early days and it is very important to remember that these vaccines are an international venture. We depend on our friends and partners and we will continue to work with those friends and partners, in the EU and beyond.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): Order. I did not want to interrupt the hon. Member for Wellingborough (Mr Bone) while he was in full virtual, rhetorical flow, but he knows that he must not address the Prime Minister as "you"—he must not say, "What are you doing Prime Minister?" He must address the Chair. He is setting a bad example as a senior Member of this House, as are many senior Members, to new Members who have yet to learn the proper mode of address. We must be careful during this time of virtual proceedings not to let standards fall.

Andrew Gwynne (Denton and Reddish) (Lab) [V]: I support the vaccination programme. My clinical commissioning groups have been among the best in England at rolling out the covid vaccine—a real success story for the communities that I represent, who have been placed under restrictions since 29 July. But today the NHS has said that it will cut by one third the future vaccine supplies to the north-west, so that the rest can catch up. That is worrying, if true.

Can I ask the Prime Minister about logistics? What impact does he think withholding vaccines to the north-west will have? Will second jabs be delayed still further or will the next cohort of first jabs need to be rescheduled, leaving those people unprotected for longer?

The Prime Minister: I can confirm to the hon. Gentleman that we will make sure that his constituents get exactly what they need for the roll-out to groups 1 to 4. I am assured by the Minister for vaccines, my hon. Friend the Member for Stratford-on-Avon (Nadhim Zahawi), that there is no such delay.

I am delighted that the hon. Gentleman now supports the vaccination programme; perhaps he could repudiate the policy, on which he stood, to destroy the pharmaceutical companies that have made the vaccines possible. Perhaps he could dissociate himself from previous Labour attacks on the vaccine taskforce, which secured the doses on which he now relies.

Laura Trott (Sevenoaks) (Con) [V]: I welcome the emphasis today on school return, which is absolutely vital; we know the devastating impact that being out of school has on children's mental health. The Prime Minister is absolutely right: schools are safe to return. There is now firm evidence that primary schools in particular do not contribute to the spread of this vicious disease. Will the Prime Minister commit to sharing that evidence with teachers, parents and students, so that they can be reassured that, regardless of vaccines, schools are safe to return?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is spot on. Schools are safe. The only issue with opening them is that, as I said to the House earlier, they add to the overall budget of transmission because lots of households are brought together—that, obviously, is what a school does. But schools are safe. They are wonderful places, and I support my hon. Friend in wanting to get them open as soon as possible.

Paul Blomfield (Sheffield Central) (Lab) [V]: I have self-employed constituents who are coming up to a year without support, businesses in supply chains that are unable to furlough staff and newly established businesses and others that have fallen foul of administrative deadlines, as obviously do other hon. Members. I welcome the support that has been provided, but will the Prime Minister agree to consider those who have fallen through the gaps? In answering, may I ask him not to repeat the list of what has been done but to say what he will do now to support those who have been excluded, including considering the cross-party proposal for a targeted income grant scheme?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman makes an excellent point, and one that has been made many times on both sides of the House. We will, of course, do everything we can to assist those who are hard to identify and whose incomes and entitlements, for HMRC purposes, are therefore not easy to calculate. The group is, in fact, far smaller than we sometimes hear in this House, and the cases can be very complex, but we remain committed to doing everything we can to help people throughout the pandemic.

Sir David Amess (Southend West) (Con) [V]: I join my right hon. Friend in celebrating the success of our vaccination programme, which is working well in Southend. I also welcome his remarks about education. However, will he join me in reminding people that if they accept an invitation to be vaccinated, they should keep that appointment? We should all help elderly people to do that, otherwise vaccinators will have to make a very difficult decision at short notice on what to do with those spare vaccines.

The Prime Minister: Absolutely. My hon. Friend makes a very important point, and we must get people to take up their appointments and take up the vaccines when

they are offered. Some groups are proving tough to reach, and I look forward to all hon. Members on both sides of the House working together to encourage people of the advantages of a vaccine. It is a wonderful thing. Go and get it, if you get a message to do so.

Ian Lavery (Wansbeck) (Lab) [V]: Healthy life expectancy for men at birth in the Hirst ward of my Wansbeck constituency is 52 years, whereas in Ickenham in the Prime Minister's constituency it is 71 years, and that trend looks only to be getting wider. Can the Prime Minister explain to the people of my constituency why his Government are so eager to avoid a vaccine postcode lottery by diverting our supply from the north-east southwards to more prosperous regions of the country, simply because the NHS in our area has done an absolutely fantastic job, while at the same time the Government have done nothing to tackle the postcode lottery of healthy life expectancy, which varies so widely across this country? Can I urge him to consider whether the same actions would have been taken if the shoe had been on the other foot?

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): Before I ask the Prime Minister to answer the question, I must beg for shorter questions from hon. Members. I know they are sitting at home and that the opportunity makes them want to speak for longer once they have the attention of the House, but we will never get on to the next statement or let the Prime Minister complete all the promises he has made today if we do not get this statement finished.

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member for Wansbeck (Ian Lavery) and I share an ambition. We want to unite and level up across the whole UK, and that is the mission of this Government. I am afraid he is totally wrong in what he says about the roll-out of the vaccines. We are making sure that everywhere gets what they need for JCVI groups 1 to 4 by 15 February. That is what we are doing and will continue to do. I am delighted by his conversion to the vaccine. I seem to have read somewhere that he seemed a bit sceptical. There he goes smirking away. It is not a smirking matter. It is absolutely crucial. He should tell his constituents to get a vaccination.

Sir Desmond Swayne (New Forest West) (Con): To lift lockdown, will my right hon. Friend focus exclusively on the progress of vaccinations of those who are most likely to be hospitalised if infected? Is it not the case that mission creep beyond hospitalisations would inevitably lead to the diminution of our sense of urgency to lift the restrictions?

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend is completely right and he gets to the heart of the problem in the pretend policy that has been announced by the Opposition party. If we were to interfere with the JCVI 1 to 9 list, which is intended to target those most vulnerable and those most at risk of dying or of hospitalisation, we would, of course, interpolate it with other people appointed by politicians, taking vaccines away from the more vulnerable groups and, as he has rightly said, delay our ability to move forward out of lockdown. He is spot on.

Sarah Owen (Luton North) (Lab) [V]: In Luton, like many places, we are challenged to reduce cases of covid as a large number of people work in jobs where it is not

[Sarah Owen]

possible to work from home. What are the Government doing to support businesses to reduce workplace transmission? Will those plans include decent sick pay and the rolling out of home rapid test kits to small and medium-sized employers to support reducing this risk?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Lady makes an excellent point about the need to roll out rapid test kits. That is happening in communities, towns and cities across the country, and I commend her for supporting them. They may not be the total answer—of course not—to fighting this disease, but they are extremely useful in isolating asymptomatic cases and helping us to drive down the R rate in local communities.

Bob Stewart (Beckenham) (Con): May I ask my good and right hon. Friend the Prime Minister whether priority lists for vaccinations will be reviewed after groups 1 to 4 are complete, particularly for groups from whom we are having emails, such as police officers, supermarket cashiers, teachers, home carers and people with learning disabilities, some of whom seem to be disproportionately afflicted by covid-19?

The Prime Minister: Of course my hon. Friend is right to raise that. I thank him, but I will just repeat what I said earlier to the right hon. and learned Gentleman, the Leader of the Opposition. It follows from everything that I have said that teachers are in that list of vulnerable groups 1 to 9; police officers are in those groups, as are supermarket workers, cashiers, and people with learning disabilities. They are our priority because it is by vaccinating them that we will be able to reduce—I am afraid—the tragic death toll that we would otherwise see.

Dame Diana Johnson (Kingston upon Hull North) (Lab) [V]: Staff at Hull Royal Infirmary and Castle Hill Hospital have been magnificent during this pandemic. They are used to making people better, however, and the number of deaths is taking its toll on staff, who are physically exhausted. What is the Prime Minister planning to do to support exhausted staff in dealing with the ever-growing waiting list that they will face once the covid threat has subsided?

The Prime Minister: I thank the hon. Lady very much. I think it was Simon Stevens, the chief executive of NHS England, who put it best yesterday when he talked about the best thing that we can do for our NHS staff. She is absolutely right in what she says about the stress and the pressure that the NHS has been operating under in these past few weeks. The best thing that we can do is to keep this infection rate going down, to roll out the vaccination programme and, indeed, to make sure that all NHS staff are vaccinated. As she knows, they are in the JCVI 1 to 4 group and are our priority for 15 February.

Greg Smith (Buckingham) (Con): The roll-out of the vaccine has been a truly heroic effort by absolutely everybody involved, not least to remain on track to get the top four priority groups their first dose by the middle of February. Every vaccine brings hope, but there is also an incredible amount of anxiety in the country, not least among business owners unable to

trade, and families juggling home learning with holding down jobs. I urge my right hon. Friend, as he looks at rightly lifting the restrictions, to be really clear with all our constituents precisely what “when the data permits” means, so that there can be absolute clarity on what needs to happen to lift each tier of restrictions.

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is absolutely right, and I will of course set all this out in the course of the next few weeks. What I can tell the House are some obvious things that the House can see for itself. We need to be sure that the vaccine roll-out continues to go at the pace, and with the success, that it currently is. We need to ensure that we are targeting all those groups, reducing the overall level of vulnerability in the population.

We need to ensure, clearly, that the vaccine is working—or the vaccines are working, because there are at least two now—in the sense that they are driving down the mortality rate in those elderly and vulnerable groups. We need to start to see that. There are promising signs from Israel. In this country, we have not yet seen the data that would help us to be absolutely confident of that point.

Then, of course, there are the pressures on the NHS and other important considerations—to say nothing of the very important economic considerations that my hon. Friend raises. I assure him that we will set out much more in the course of the next weeks to give reassurance and certainty, as far as we can, to all our constituents.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle (Brighton, Kemptown) (Lab/Co-op) [V]: When Australia had a second wave it held an inquiry that showed the failures of the private contractors in the system of quarantine that they were running. Australia learned from it, the Minister resigned, and it is better. Now, it is almost covid-free. The Prime Minister is so right in saying that of course every Government will make mistakes, but why will he not open an inquiry now so that we can learn from those mistakes, not keep repeating them, like delays in lockdown and in schools opening, and actually start to turn this thing around? Will he commit here and now to do a short, sharp public inquiry, as the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, on which I sit, suggested, so that we can all be the better for it?

The Prime Minister: I am very grateful to the hon. Gentleman, and indeed for the work of his Committee. I know that those conclusions, along with many others, will be studied with care. I know that you want brief answers, Madam Deputy Speaker, so I direct him to the answers that I have already given on that point to his right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition and to many others throughout the day. Of course we will learn the lessons, but at the height of the pandemic we would have to concentrate a huge amount of official and health sector time to an inquiry, when we need to get on with beating the virus.

Craig Tracey (North Warwickshire) (Con) [V]: The roll-out of the vaccine has been an undoubted success for the Government, but it brings us to a point where people want to understand the path ahead to give them something to aim towards. I welcome the clarity that the Prime Minister has given on schools, but in the coming days can he give a clear route map that sets out the potential for further easing of restrictions, such as

when outdoor exercise facilities such as golf courses can resume, hospitality events can restart and our high streets can reopen, to reassure people that there is light at the end of the tunnel, and that they will shortly realise some of the benefits of the incredible sacrifices that they have had to make over recent months?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is entirely right in what he asks for, and I will supply, I hope, exactly that. He will recall how last year we set out a series of dates by which we hoped to do certain things at the earliest—4 July for opening hospitality, and so on and so forth. I hope that in the course of the next few weeks we will be able to populate the diary ahead with some more milestones and assumptions about what we may be able to do, which I hope will give reassurance to him, to businesses in his constituency, and to us all.

Marion Fellows (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP) [V]: The First Minister of Scotland has today reinforced her message, telling people not to travel “when it’s not really, really, really, really essential”.

With new border restrictions, it is likely that there will be a reduction in the amount of travel into the UK, which will harm aviation and travel firms. Is sector-specific support coming in light of these new policies, Prime Minister?

The Prime Minister: We have supported the aviation sector throughout, through the time to pay scheme and others, and we have just introduced particular support for airfields with runways that are not in as much use as they could be. However, as the hon. Lady knows, the best way to get that sector and all others bouncing back is to continue on the path we are on, drive the virus down, vaccinate the population and open up sensibly.

Ian Mearns (Gateshead) (Lab) [V]: I should declare an interest, as I am a chair of school governors and trustee of a joint schools board. In my youth, I was a Scout, and our motto was “Be prepared.” I congratulate school leaders and their staff on keeping schools open for vulnerable children and children of key workers where possible during the lockdown. Could the Prime Minister get his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education to share with school leaders as soon as possible his plan for the reopening of schools—because he tells us he has a plan—so that those school leaders will be prepared to put in place the measures necessary to reopen schools fully, in such a way that parents, children and school staff can have confidence that their schools will be ready and truly safe for everyone?

The Prime Minister: I very much join the hon. Gentleman in congratulating schools on what they have done to make themselves covid-secure, and the incredible amount of work they are doing to educate the 14% of kids who are in school now, to say nothing of all the home learning that is going on thanks to the efforts of teachers. I thank our schools for that.

I think you would agree, Madam Deputy Speaker, that I have set out a little bit today about what we plan to do to get schools back—the extra support we are giving, and the timetable. However, of course, as the hon. Gentleman suggests, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education will say more in due course.

Rob Butler (Aylesbury) (Con) [V]: The pubs, restaurants, hairdressers, gyms, and many excellent shops of Aylesbury are desperate to reopen. Can my right hon. Friend reassure them that the measures he has announced today, combined with the vaccination roll-out, will speed up when that will happen, and that there is a route out of lockdown for us all?

The Prime Minister: I do not think I could agree more vehemently with my hon. Friend if I tried; I have nothing to add to his excellent question. Yes, of course that is the way ahead.

Dame Angela Eagle (Wallasey) (Lab) [V]: Is the Prime Minister proud that he spent half a billion pounds of public money on the eat out to help out scheme, which it is now estimated increased the spread of the virus by up to 17%?

The Prime Minister: I wonder whether the hon. Lady is proud of attacking the vaccines taskforce for spending £675,000 on whether vaccines would reach the most vulnerable people in our society.

Dr Jamie Wallis (Bridgend) (Con) [V]: Will the Prime Minister join me in thanking the British military personnel who have performed an incredible service in helping to roll out the vaccine at pace across every part of the UK, including the 92 personnel helping in Wales, and does he agree that their service shows how the UK is stronger when all four of our nations work together in the fight against this pandemic?

The Prime Minister: As I say, it has been one of the few consolations of this pandemic to see the way the country has come together to fight it, particularly to see the way that great national institutions—great UK institutions—such as the British Army have been absolutely indispensable in Wales, in Scotland and around the whole of the UK in fighting this pandemic. I know that it is appreciated across the whole of the UK.

Jeff Smith (Manchester, Withington) (Lab) [V]: In Greater Manchester, there are 20,000 pupils out of schools and with no decent access to online learning. Can the Prime Minister assure me that the £300 million that he has just announced in catch-up and tutoring money will be targeted at areas like Greater Manchester, where pupils have suffered disproportionately because of deprivation and because of high rates of infections that cause multiple periods of isolation, keeping them off school?

The Prime Minister: Yes, indeed. The hon. Gentleman is right to raise the problem of differential learning. Unquestionably, some kids, and some families, in some parts of the country have suffered more of a break in their education than others; there is absolutely no doubt about it. That is why we are going to focus so much on the catch-up funds that I have identified. Of course, Greater Manchester will be targeted for all the measures that we have outlined this morning and more to come.

Dean Russell (Watford) (Con) [V]: Across Watford we have incredible teachers. Will the Prime Minister, like me, thank them for the incredible work they have been doing in keeping schools open for key workers’ children?

[Dean Russell]

Will he also confirm his priority to make sure that schools can reopen as soon as it is safe to do so, in line with the advice from our scientific and medical advisers?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend and I have visited wonderful schools in his constituency together; we know the fantastic job they are doing. I know from talking to those teachers and those pupils how much they will be looking forward now to getting back into school. I can tell my hon. Friend that we will do everything we can to speed it up, but we must be cautious; we must make sure that we do it in tandem—*pari passu*—with the roll-out of the vaccine.

Barbara Keeley (Worsley and Eccles South) (Lab) [V]: The Prime Minister has talked about the important support from the British Army in the vaccination roll-out. Salford's programme has been supported by troops from the Royal Lancers. We do appreciate that, but we have been told that this military support is being withdrawn next Monday, giving less than a week to recruit and train 30 people—and that would mean that Salford would be able to deliver 500 fewer vaccines a day. Delays to vaccinations cost lives, so will he ensure that this vital military support is not withdrawn from Salford?

The Prime Minister: I am very doubtful that the people of Salford would be deprived in the way that the hon. Lady describes, but I will of course look into it urgently and my hon. Friend the vaccine Minister will be taking it up immediately.

Steve Brine (Winchester) (Con): Many parents will have faced home schooling last year with a sense of necessary resignation. My sense is that many of them are now quite desperately worried about their children. So it is fantastic news that the Prime Minister has said today that as the vaccines roll out and the most vulnerable are protected, that will move in lockstep and we will get the country back to school. However, do all schools have to wait for the 8 March date, even primary, given that we all agree, as he has said today at the Dispatch Box, that schools are safe?

The Prime Minister: I hear my hon. Friend loud and clear. I know his views will be shared by many in this House. I just want to go back to the key thing that we need to establish: it will not, alas, be until the middle of February that we have real, material evidence that the vaccines are working in terms of driving down the mortality rate among those crucial groups. So if we were to give schools decent notice to come back, we are driven more towards 8 March by that logic rather than coming back earlier. Believe me, we have been round and round this many times, and it is about as fast as we think we can prudently go. I think that is what the country would want; people would want schools open but they would want them open in a cautious and sensible way.

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

2.44 pm

Sitting suspended.

Health Measures at UK Borders

2.48 pm

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel): With permission, I would like to make a statement. First, I want to begin by echoing the Prime Minister's remarks. The scale of the suffering that this virus has inflicted is truly heart-breaking, and my thoughts are with those who have tragically lost loved ones.

Yesterday, when I addressed the House, I said that the Government's focus was on protecting the UK's world-leading vaccination programme—a programme that we should be proud of—and reducing the risk of the new strain of the virus being transmitted from someone coming into the UK. Yesterday, the Foreign Office announced support for more countries to access the UK's world-leading gene sequencing capabilities to increase early identification of any new strains of the virus. This is a vital step forward to support the global response to coronavirus, but it is simply not enough on its own to reduce risks to the United Kingdom.

It is clear that there are still too many people coming in and out of our country each day. Today I am announcing further action to strengthen the health measures that we already have at the border, in order to reduce passenger flow—so that only the small number of people for whom it is absolutely essential to travel are doing so—and therefore reduce the risk to our world-leading vaccine programme.

For those entering the UK, there will be a number of measures. First, the police have stepped up checks and are carrying out more physical checks at addresses to ensure that people are complying with the rules on self-isolation. Secondly, we will continue to refuse entry to non-UK residents from red list countries that are already subject to the UK travel ban. Thirdly, as the Prime Minister has said, we will introduce a new managed isolation process in hotels for those who cannot be refused entry, including those arriving home from countries where we have already imposed international travel bans. They will be required to isolate for 10 days, without exception. The Department of Health and Social Care will set out further details on this approach next week.

For those travelling out of the UK, we will also be enhancing and stepping up enforcement of the rules, because despite the stay-at-home regulations, we are still seeing people not complying with the rules. The rules are clear: people should be staying at home unless they have a valid reason to leave. Going on holiday is not a valid reason.

We will introduce a new requirement so that people wishing to travel must first make a declaration as to why they need to travel. This "reason for travel" will be checked by carriers prior to departure. That approach effectively mirrors the checks on arrivals that are already in place with the passenger locator form. Secondly, working with policing partners, we will increase the police presence at ports and at airports, fining those in breach of the stay-at-home regulations. Anyone who does not have a valid reason for travel will be directed to return home or they will face a fine. Thirdly, we will urgently review the list of travel exemptions to make sure that only the most important and exceptional reasons are included.

These are crucial new measures to protect us all. They also complement the robust action that we have consistently taken at the border. While these new measures

are being operationalised, I would like to remind anyone seeking to enter our country to comply with the rules. This includes providing evidence of a negative covid test before entering the United Kingdom, self-isolation on arrival for 10 days and the completion of the passenger locator form. Immediately stepping up enforcement means that if someone does not follow the regulations, they will face a fine.

These new measures at the border are a necessary step to protect the public and our world-class vaccination programme. Every layer of protection that we have put in place will help to reduce the risk of transmission of this virus and any new potential strain from entering the UK. As we have done throughout this global health emergency, we will continue to take all steps necessary to protect the public and help prevent the spread of the virus. I commend the statement to the House.

2.52 pm

Nick Thomas-Symonds (Torfaen) (Lab): I am grateful to the Home Secretary for her statement and for advance sight of it. We stand here today with knowledge of the terrible fact that more than 100,000 people have died as a result of this awful virus. We mourn all those lost and think of the families for whom life will never be the same again. In marking that fact, it is not enough to say, "Let us wait to find out why Britain has fared so badly." We must learn from past mistakes and, crucially, act now. One of the key areas where the Government have clearly fallen short is on protecting our borders. I am deeply concerned that the measures outlined today are yet another example of that—too little, too late.

Yet again, the Government are lurching from one crisis to another, devoid of strategy. Limiting hotel quarantining to only the countries from which travel for non-UK residents was already banned means that the Home Secretary's proposals do not go anywhere near far enough. Perhaps that is why it appears that there has been briefing to newspapers that the Home Secretary is personally not in support of the policy that she is now advocating to the public.

Mutations of the virus risk undermining the efficacy of the vaccines, threatening life and hope. We cannot know where these mutations will emerge from next. The truth is that the Government are once again behind the curve. Labour is calling for comprehensive hotel quarantining. Today's announcement is too limited. It leaves huge gaps in our defences against emerging strains. We know that the strains that emerged in South Africa and Brazil have already reached these shores. That is little wonder given that controls have been so lax, with just three in every 100 people quarantining having been successfully contacted and border testing introduced only 10 months after our first lockdown—and even then the start had to be delayed, because the Government could not get the necessary systems in place.

We have seen this reluctance to be decisive from the start of crisis. From 1 January to 23 March last year, only 273 people were formally quarantined, when more than 18 million people entered the country by air. That was at a time when the Government's chief scientific adviser said:

"A lot of the cases in the UK didn't come from China... They actually came from European imports and the high level of travel into the UK around that time."

In April, I wrote to the Home Secretary to ask her to learn the lessons, but by May the UK still was an international outlier, with no travel controls.

As the Home Secretary today belatedly announces very limited hotel quarantining, many questions remain, and I would appreciate it if she addressed them. First, how can we be assured that travellers will not arrive with emergent strains via countries that are not on the control list? Secondly, what support is being made available to ensure improvements to quarantine compliance and the isolation assurance service? Frankly, why has it taken so long to step up checks, as the Home Secretary said today, when we know that the system has been failing for months? What discussions have taken place with hotel chains to ensure the availability of rooms? Again, for those travelling out of the UK, why is the enforcement being stepped up only now?

Will the Home Secretary ensure that sufficient support and resources are made available for these very important tasks? When will the Government announce a sector-specific support package for aviation? Getting this policy right is absolutely crucial. The Government cannot allow our border policy to continue to be the Achilles heel of the heroic efforts of the British people during this pandemic.

Priti Patel: I would like to make a number of comments before I come to the hon. Gentleman's questions. I was here yesterday reeling off the endless measures at the border that have been put in place since January last year, including Foreign Office advice; statutory instruments, regulations and powers under the Coronavirus Act 2020; quarantine; passenger locator forms; test and release; and banning flights and travel from specific countries. It is important to recognise the incredible work we have done in this country on the vaccine, with our world-leading vaccine programme.

However, we are in a very different situation from last year because of the additional risk to public health caused by new variants. We should be focused on the new variants, because they could be less susceptible to and have implications for the vaccine. So it is important that we reduce risk by reducing the number of people who enter our country who could be a new threat in terms of the variants and mutations. We have already implemented numerous measures and protections to reduce that risk, but we are announcing today a number of new, additional levels of protection at our disposal. Some are forthcoming with regard to hotels, and I will come on to the specifics in a moment.

The hon. Gentleman made the point about travel. The fact of the matter is that there are reductions in travel already; the number of people travelling has reduced by 90% compared with the number travelling at this time last year, but obviously that number will become lower through the various travel bans that have been put in place. He has touched on enforcement measures, the isolation assurance service and police enforcement. A number of new measures—enhanced measures, I should say—will increase the checks that will take place. For example, from tomorrow the IAS will be checking more than 5,000 people and will also contact those who have arrived 10 days prior, in the way in which it has been doing and is naturally being asked to do with regards to self-isolation.

I have spoken today about an enhanced police presence at ports, borders and airports. There will be an increase of about 1,000 targeted follow-up visits a day, and that

[Priti Patel]

at a time when the numbers are reducing. That speaks about the stringency of these measures and speaks to the point about giving assurance on these particular enforcement measures.

It is disappointing that the hon. Gentleman, naturally, is being critical of Government measures. As I said yesterday, and as I have said on a number of occasions and will say again today, from January last year we have had a layered approach to our measures at the border. That is clearly about the travel ban—a ban on travel from countries that pose a risk, or high-risk countries. Measures are in place that I have outlined, and we are building on those. For Labour Members to claim that they have been calling for tougher restrictions since the start of the pandemic is nonsense; that is simply not the case. Labour has been flip-flopping, as I said yesterday, by calling quarantine a blunt tool or a blunt instrument. The shadow Transport Secretary, the hon. Member for Oldham West and Royton (Jim McMahon), said that quarantine measures should be lessened. There is clearly inconsistency in the position of the Labour party, and we have always taken an approach of managing risk.

The hon. Member for Torfaen (Nick Thomas-Symonds) made a point about support packages, and work is taking place with other Government Departments—we are working together on that. Discussions with hotel chains are naturally under way. It is not for me to talk about them right now, but a lot of work is taking place. Again, it is important to recognise that these measures—indeed, all measures—have logistical and operational implications as well as challenges. We will work through those practicalities with all our stakeholders and partners. My colleagues in government will come to the House, as the hon. Gentleman would expect, to provide those updates, whether that is on hotels, sectoral packages, or the dialogues that are taking place.

The British public recognise that this is a deeply challenging period for our country. No one would dispute that these are difficult times throughout the global pandemic, but there is no simple or single binary approach that can be taken. It is right that we manage risk and that we do so with this layered approach. The British public, our constituents, would like all political parties to come together at this important time, to consider how we can bring in and support these measures, so that we can protect public health.

Huw Merriman (Bexhill and Battle) (Con): I thank the Home Secretary for her statement. I welcome the evidenced and nuance-based approach that she has outlined today, as opposed to the blanket approach that seems to be advocated by the shadow Foreign Secretary, which I believe would lead to impacts on trade and those who need essential business, as well as on our ability to hotel quarantine so many people. I know that the hon. Member for Torfaen (Nick Thomas-Symonds) takes seriously the needs of the aviation industry, and I do not believe that a blanket approach would do anything for that. I welcome the Government's approach.

Given that some countries may be added to or removed from the list of countries from which hotel quarantine is required, will those criteria be published? Will they be subject to further scrutiny, and perhaps to votes in this place?

Priti Patel: My hon. Friend raises some important points, and he is right. I stood at the Dispatch Box yesterday, speaking about the importance of freight and the work that the Government have done over recent months, and in the run-up to Christmas, to keep freight moving, despite the various border closures that took place. Indeed, that makes my hon. Friend's point, because we simply cannot have that approach—there are logistical and operational challenges, and the Government are working through many of those.

My hon. Friend makes an important point about changes to guidance and advice across Government, and the Department of Health and Social Care, the Department for Transport and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office all play an important role in public communications and assurances regarding countries and any changes that take place. Clearly, the Government will publish that information and come to the House to share it. However, current guidance is clear that people should be staying at home unless they have exceptional reasons to travel. Going on holiday is not a justifiable excuse or reason.

Joanna Cherry (Edinburgh South West) (SNP) [V]: I thank the Home Secretary for her statement and for advance sight of it. My Scottish Government colleagues are concerned, as she knows, that her proposals do not go far enough; I would be grateful if she confirmed that she will listen to their representations.

It is, of course, the Home Secretary's Department's responsibility to control the United Kingdom's external borders. Her Department holds the passenger data and the UK Border Force reports to her, so it is right that the Home Secretary should be the one to address the risks raised by the transmission of the virus by arrivals from abroad. I am going to repeat the questions that I asked during the exchanges on yesterday's urgent question on this same topic, which the Home Secretary did not answer. I hope that, having had 24 hours' notice to think about my questions and discuss them with her colleagues and advisers, she will now answer them.

In April and May of last year, I wrote to the Home Secretary asking for comprehensive health protections at the UK's external borders, and I referred to the measures that were being introduced in other countries in Europe and around the world. Other Home Affairs Committee members were making similar requests, backed up by evidence. Last week, the Home Secretary admitted that we were right, and said that she thought that the United Kingdom should have closed its borders earlier, so why did she fail to take precautions that she knew were needed at the start of the pandemic? What stopped her from closing the borders? Was it her Cabinet colleagues? If so, why did she not resign and speak out, given the risk of increased transmission from people entering the country?

Finally, have the Government commissioned an assessment of what contribution the failure to close the borders earlier has made to the dreadful death toll across the United Kingdom? Will the Home Secretary put the results in the public domain? These questions concern not just my constituents and those of my SNP colleagues, but people throughout the four nations, so will she please answer them?

Priti Patel: First, I very much repeat what I said yesterday about working with all the devolved Administrations—clearly the Government are doing that, and the right hon. and learned Lady will be well aware of that.

With regard to everyone now going retrospective in thinking that they were the first advocates of bringing in health measures at the border, that was clearly not the case, as I recall from the Select Committee last April—I mentioned that yesterday, too. If I may, I shall reacquaint the right hon. and learned Lady with the measures that were brought in from January 2020: from the minute that self-isolation advice was given by the FCO at the time to the SAGE recommendations on self-isolation for those coming from specific countries; the new regulations and statutory instruments that were brought in on 10 February, with new powers for medical professionals and the police to detain individuals suspected of covid symptoms; the guidance to UK airports; and the travel advice put out by the FCDO—all between February and March.

Self-isolation measures were introduced for specific countries; we introduced mandatory quarantine and the passenger locator form back in June last year; we closed the border to Denmark after the first identification of a new strain—which, of course, we were able to deal with because of our genomic sequencing capacity in the UK; we introduced test and release and the ban on flights from South Africa, which clearly is still in place; and we introduced carrier liability for pre-travel testing.

Each of the measures we have introduced has added another layer of protection against transmission of the virus, and that reduces the risk of dangerous new strains being imported into the UK. The right hon. and learned Lady should reflect on the fact that there is not one single measure that mitigates risk entirely. Every measure that has been brought in helps to reduce risk, protect the vaccine and, importantly, protect the British public and public health.

Sir Graham Brady (Altrincham and Sale West) (Con): I agree with the Chairman of the Transport Committee, my hon. Friend the Member for Bexhill and Battle (Huw Merriman): with a million British jobs and much of British commerce dependent on aviation, the Government must be right to be taking an evidence-based approach, not a blanket approach.

We all hope we will discover that the new variants are combated just as effectively by the vaccines as the existing variants in this country, but if new countries need to be added to the red list, will the Home Secretary speak urgently to our right hon. Friend the Chancellor about the support that our aviation sector will need to prevent a massive haemorrhaging of jobs and prospects throughout much of the country?

Priti Patel: My hon. Friend is absolutely right in speaking of the sector, for which he is a powerful advocate. I know of his constituency interest in respect of Manchester Airports Group and the work that he has conducted with it. There is no question, as I said yesterday—I will emphasise it again—but that the sector is our partner. It is an operational partner with which we work every single day. My colleagues in Border Force, for example, work with the sector.

On new additional lists or travel bans to specific countries, that work is always under review. Alongside that, we continue to work with our operational partners and discuss with them the implications of this. Those discussions will always continue, and Government will always step up in whatever way they can to provide the necessary support.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): Now we go to the Chair of the Home Affairs Committee, Yvette Cooper.

Yvette Cooper (Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford) (Lab) [V]: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I welcome these measures, but they do not go far enough to deliver a comprehensive system. The Brazil and South Africa variants have been identified across several continents, and in the first wave, less than 1% of new cases came from China. The overwhelming majority came from European countries that the Government said were low risk at the time. May I ask the Home Secretary about the number of people likely still to be arriving who are not covered by quarantine hotels, who do not have to take further tests on arrival, and who will be able to go straight on to the public transport system from Heathrow or wherever they arrive? Can she confirm that that is likely still to be thousands of people each day, and does she think that that is wise?

Priti Patel: I thank the right hon. Lady for her question. First, it is important—and I come back to this point—that every measure that has been introduced across Government has provided degrees of protection; various layers and levels of protection against transmission of the virus. She has heard me say that travel is down 90% compared with this time last year. Travel bans are in place for countries that are red-listed, and that will continue. The announcement today will reduce the number of travelling passengers—I want to emphasise that—because people should simply not be travelling.

Border Force has given me examples, and I will call out some of them. At St Pancras, people have even been turning up with their skis, which is clearly not acceptable. We see plenty of influencers on social media showing off where they are in the world—mainly sunny places. Going on holiday is not an exemption, and it is important that people stay at home.

Regarding the measures that have been announced today and quarantining, the hotel measures and package in particular are under discussion right now, including their application and administration. The right hon. Lady speaks about people getting on to public transport. We want absolutely to reduce the risk of people travelling in that way, so the Government are working through measures right now on how people can travel to hotels and how they will quarantine. I have already spoken about the checks that will be put in place for individuals who are in self-isolation.

Mr Richard Holden (North West Durham) (Con): I thank the Home Secretary for her statement. Marjorie from Crook got in touch with me today. Like many of my North West Durham constituents, she is fed up with Labour playing politics with coronavirus. The shadow Home Secretary has criticised our border measures before as a “blunt tool”; today, he says that they do not go far enough. It is like some twisted version of “Goldilocks”, where the Government solution is never just right. Does my right hon. Friend agree with Marjorie that it is irresponsible to play politics with coronavirus, and will she ensure that if these measures need to be extended to other countries, that will be done at the earliest opportunity?

Priti Patel: My hon. Friend is absolutely right, and I agree with everything he says about the Opposition’s flip-flopping and their claims. I praise Marjorie for the

[Priti Patel]

points that she has made. She speaks for the British public, who are fed up with party politics being played at this critical time. They want to see unity, rather than the type of gripes we are hearing, or the approach of armchair generals in particular.

My hon. Friend asked an important question about rolling out travel bans to other countries. The Government will absolutely not hesitate. If new strains emerge in other countries the Government will take action, which is exactly what Marjorie and the British public would expect.

Mr Alistair Carmichael (Orkney and Shetland) (LD) [V]: I thank the Home Secretary for advance sight of her statement. Many of those who will be caught by these new measures will be travelling as the result of family bereavement and will already have incurred substantial costs, very often at short notice. Can she tell me if there will be some sort of financial assistance available for people of modest means who find themselves in this position at that most difficult of times?

Priti Patel: The right hon. Gentleman is absolutely right to highlight the exceptional and sad examples of circumstances in which people travel, bereavement being a terrible case. The Government are already in discussions with regard to exemptions, support packages and things of that nature. I am unable to confirm the details right now, because this work is under way, but it is a matter of time before my colleagues notify the House and share further information on that.

Sir David Amess (Southend West) (Con) [V]: I very much support and welcome my right hon. Friend's announcement of restrictions at our borders as a result of the current health crisis. Would she reassure me that regional airports, such as Southend, will be tasked to strictly enforce those rules, as a number of local residents have expressed concerns that coronavirus infections may be transmitted by arrivals through the airport?

Priti Patel: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. I understand why he raises the importance of regional airports throughout the pandemic. They have played an important role. All airport operators take responsibility for the way in which they work with us, but also for enforcing coronavirus measures and restrictions, such as social distancing and keeping passengers apart, particularly as they go up to PCPs—primary control points—and then come across Border Force officers. It is absolutely right that airports, who are our operational partners, work with us to take responsibility—that shared responsibility I have spoken about so frequently—in terms of checking with the carriers that the passenger locator form is completed, but also to ensure that they themselves put those protective measures in place to stop the spread of the virus.

Rachel Hopkins (Luton South) (Lab) [V]: I am very concerned about the continued threat of covid-19 to frontline Border Force staff at Heathrow, as the new draconian fixed-team working rosters have made social distancing difficult at the same time as covid transmission rates have been at their highest. Can the Home Secretary confirm reports that covid-secure bubbles have repeatedly been breached due to understaffing and the new fixed

rosters, and specifically outline what assessment she has made of the adequacy of all Border Force staff's working conditions?

Priti Patel: I thank the hon. Lady for her important question. Border Force staff are on the frontline day in, day out trying to protect the public from the spread of the virus. They are doing exceptional work, and yesterday I thanked them for the work they are doing. In terms of measures that are in place to protect them, I am absolutely focused on protecting our Border Force staff. It is absolutely right that that takes place. The head of Border Force and my colleagues across the Border Force team have been working assiduously with all Border Force colleagues, particularly at Heathrow airport, because it is a busy airport as we saw that on Saturday night, when queues formed because we are enforcing 100% compliance checks. With that, of course, I come back to my point about working with Heathrow Airport Ltd on the measures it is putting in place for social distancing, keeping passengers distanced from Border Force staff and, of course, ensuring that my staff are protected. That is my No. 1 priority.

Sir Robert Neill (Bromley and Chislehurst) (Con) [V]: I support the proportionate approach my right hon. Friend has adopted, but can she help me in relation to two linked matters? She said that she will be looking urgently at the exceptions. Will she particularly bear in mind the need to make provision for those who may be repatriated for urgent medical treatment? Should the extension—we hope it does not—involve any British overseas territory, will she bear in mind the need for early consultation with them? We hope it never comes to it, but we have medical and other obligations in some cases to them.

Priti Patel: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. Cases of medical exemptions and emergencies have always been on the exemption list, and the exemption list is under review right now. Colleagues across all Government Departments are reviewing the exemption list. When changes are made, they will be publicised through the usual channels. Anything that would also affect overseas territories will also be under consideration, and that will also be put in the public domain.

Kevin Brennan (Cardiff West) (Lab) [V]: I listened very carefully to the Home Secretary's earlier answer to the Chair of the Select Committee, my right hon. Friend the Member for Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford (Yvette Cooper), and she did not answer a rather direct and important question, which she will have estimates for, because this will be a policy based on evidence. How many people does the Home Secretary expect each day to have to go into quarantine in a hotel, and how many people entering the UK each day does she estimate will not have to go into quarantine under these new measures?

Priti Patel: First, it is important to recognise that we do have numbers in terms of how many people are coming through our border every single day. These new measures—it is important to put this in context—will bring those numbers even further down. We still have a lot of British nationals who are travelling, and the advice and the guidance are clear that people should not be travelling and should be staying at home. Through the enforcement measures, that will reduce dramatically.

The Government are already working out capacity in terms of hotel accommodation in the light of the period of self-isolation that will be required. The Government will happily share those figures with colleagues in due course.

Steve Double (St Austell and Newquay) (Con) [V]: It is absolutely right that the Government take the necessary and appropriate steps to keep our country safe from these new variants of the virus that are emerging around the world, and I welcome the Home Secretary's statement, but she will know that any additional restrictions on travel will further damage the aviation sector, which has been deeply impacted by this pandemic. When businesses in other sectors have been forced to close or are unable to trade because of restrictions, specific financial support has been made available, so will the Home Secretary talk to the Secretary of State for Transport and the Chancellor to see what specific support can now be provided for airlines and airports to ensure that they are in a position to help lead our recovery in the future?

Priti Patel: I give my hon. Friend every assurance that we are working together across Transport, the Treasury and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office on the aviation and travel sector. Conversations and discussions are under way. As I said earlier, they are our operational partners. We work collectively with them, so those discussions are under way, and I just give my hon. Friend that assurance.

Steve McCabe (Birmingham, Selly Oak) (Lab) [V]: How will the quarantine hotels be selected? Will the Home Secretary set a limit on how far such a hotel can be from the arrival airport, so as to minimise risks during transfers, for which I assume she will also be responsible?

Priti Patel: With regard to hotels and these measures, as I have already indicated, that work is under way to look at the procurement of hotels, who the partners are going to be and also further information around them. Government will be setting out over the coming days further information with regard to hotels and the processes around them. As I indicated earlier, discussions on logistical and operational aspects of that work are under way right now, so my colleagues will come back to the House and provide that information.

Dehenna Davison (Bishop Auckland) (Con) [V]: I thank the Home Secretary for her statement. Protecting the British people quite rightly has to be our priority, so it is right that our border measures have been under constant review since the pandemic began. In the light of today's announcement, can my right hon. Friend confirm that Border Force and other frontline emergency workers will be given all the support they need to enforce these rules, so that they can keep themselves and the British public safe?

Priti Patel: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. Border Force is doing incredible work on the frontline; I am seeing that and getting reports of that every single day. It is important that its staff stay safe, which is why we have strong measures in place for them. Enforcement, whether it is through policing or the IAS, has been accelerated, along with the checks. The fact of the matter is that we have clear checks: the passenger locator

form must be completed, there are fines for non-compliance, and there is a requirement for self-isolation for arrivals. These measures and checks are in place, and they will be increased to protect public health.

Steven Bonnar (Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill) (SNP) [V]: It has been widely reported that the Home Secretary called for tougher sanctions at the border than these somewhat reduced measures she has announced today. Has she been overruled and undermined yet again?

Priti Patel: I refer the hon. Gentleman to my statement and the measures that have been announced. It is important to recognise that every single measure that has been put in place, including a ban on international travel for high-risk countries, is to protect the British public. Those measures, along with all the other measures announced today, are part of the layer of protection to reduce transmission of the virus and reduce the risk of a new, dangerous variant coming into the United Kingdom.

Matt Western (Warwick and Leamington) (Lab) [V]: The Secretary of State said that a layered approach has been taken since January last year, but we saw rugby fans coming from Italy, and we saw football fans coming from Spain in early March. Those may not have been identified as dangerous or high-risk countries, but clearly they were. We seem to be shutting the arrivals gate after the virus has bolted. How does she suggest we will identify those nations across the globe where new variants will be developing? Clearly it is not just Brazil and South Africa. People continue to travel around the world.

Priti Patel: I mentioned in my statement that the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and the Department of Health and Social Care are now supporting other countries around the world when it comes to gene sequencing and genomic testing capabilities, which will help to identify new strains and new variants. That is important, because it is a vital step in the global response, in terms of not just protecting our public here but identifying new and dangerous strains that could go around the world and then come to the UK.

Mr Mark Harper (Forest of Dean) (Con): I welcome the proportionate nature of the Home Secretary's statement. May I take her back to the question I asked her during the urgent question yesterday? Given that these measures are to deal with the risk of a new strain of the virus coming to the United Kingdom that might not be susceptible to the vaccine, and given that the UK chief scientific adviser said that the virus will be with us forever, is this a permanent regime, with countries being added to and taken off the red list as appropriate? If it is not permanent, what is the trigger for removing it in the future?

Priti Patel: My right hon. Friend asks a very important question. In terms of permanency, we are living with this virus; that is a fact. In better news, we are just weeks away from seeing people who have had the vaccine develop immunity, so circumstances are changing. We have known throughout this situation that things change, so we keep all our measures under review—whether it is changes to travel bans for specific countries or other measures, they will always be under review. The Government

[Priti Patel]

will not hesitate to take measures when it comes to preventing a new strain from coming to the United Kingdom once it has been identified and making sure that we take the right measures to protect the public. As I have said a number of times, at every stage we will keep the House informed and, importantly, we will make sure that advice is communicated to the British public, so that when things change, including at the border, they are kept informed.

Clive Efford (Eltham) (Lab) [V]: Last week, the Home Secretary told a private meeting of Conservative party members that she was calling for borders to be closed back in March 2020. If it was right then, it must apply even more so in the face of this new variant. So can she reassure the House that she has told her Cabinet colleagues that the measures that she has announced today are sufficient to protect our borders and prevent a new variant from entering the country?

Priti Patel: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the point that I made earlier that there is no single measure that mitigates risk or eradicates risk entirely. I think that is a really important point to emphasise. Every aspect, every measure that has been brought into place, since January last year and more recently, has helped to reduce the risk of the spread of coronavirus and protect our world-leading vaccine programme. These measures today, within the context of the vaccine that we have—measures to protect the public—are absolutely the right measures. Of course, as I have said throughout, I appreciate that his party may want to write their own history on their positions on measures at the border and action on coronavirus, but the fact of the matter is they have been wrong throughout.

Martin Vickers (Cleethorpes) (Con) [V]: While I recognise the negative impact on businesses and individuals, I give my right hon. Friend my full support on these proposals and I am confident that that would be the overwhelming view of my constituents. Could I turn to those people who will be resident in hotels? Clearly, there will be an element of contact between them, however well policed it is. Could she give an assurance that there will be appropriate measures in place to limit mixing to the absolute minimum?

Priti Patel: My hon. Friend is absolutely right because it is social contact—contact with people—that spreads this virus, which is why the measures in place, but also the current advice with lockdown, are to stay at home and not to travel. I just want to restate: we are working quickly across Government right now—across the whole of Government—with the industry and with partners and organisations within the sector to bring in these new measures and work on the hotel package. Of course, further detail will be put out in due course.

Mrs Natalie Elphicke (Dover) (Con) [V]: Last month, the World Health Organisation and the EU Transport Commissioner censured France for its border closures, which disrupted vital food, medicine and other goods, as well as causing Christmas chaos at the door of the Dover border. Can my right hon. Friend confirm that the UK's proportionate public health border measures continue to exempt hauliers in line with recommended

international practice during the pandemic, and will she join me in calling on France to follow the UK's lead and remove unnecessary trade restrictions on the Dover-Calais route?

Priti Patel: That is absolutely right. My hon. Friend, like me, will recognise the incredible work that took place in December, and actually is still taking place when it comes to testing road hauliers to allow the flow of goods and freight, which is incredibly important. She is also right about the position of the World Health Organisation and the EU Transport Commissioner, because it is that proportionality approach that is required when it comes to the flow of goods. We have good international practice behind us now, which is something that should be commended, but also something that should be shared with other countries.

Dave Doogan (Angus) (SNP) [V]: My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Edinburgh South West (Joanna Cherry) wrote to the Home Secretary last April raising concerns about passengers entering the UK via airports without health checks or quarantining. Five weeks later, the Home Secretary replied to her stating that, in her view, 8 June was the right time to introduce a requirement on passengers to self-isolate for 14 days, that they could be contacted to ensure compliance, and that any breach of compliance was punishable with a £1,000 fine. Can she update the House: how many £1,000 fines were issued as a result of this, and does she regret her role in the Government's dithering over quarantine while covid accessed our communities through airports?

Priti Patel: On Government health measures at the border, the hon. Gentleman will be very clear—I suggest that he reads my statement yesterday and the points that were made then—on the measures that have been brought in since January last year. The dithering is on his side in terms of actually reflecting the work that has been undertaken. On checks at the border, Border Force has checked over 3.7 million passengers and, specifically with regard to fixed penalty notices, thousands of FPNs have been issued; fines have been issued as well. As I have said repeatedly, Border Force is now enforcing 100% checks on passengers, which is absolutely the right thing to do.

Damian Collins (Folkestone and Hythe) (Con) [V]: As the Home Secretary knows, more than 8,000 people entered the UK last year by crossing the channel in small vessels in order to claim asylum when they arrived. Will she say what impact her statement today will have on the system for managing quarantine for people who arrive and enter the asylum system? Given the recent major outbreak of coronavirus at Napier barracks in Folkestone, where many have been accommodated, will she confirm that the Home Office is working to reduce the number of asylum claimants at Napier and that there will be no new people arriving until the covid outbreak is under control?

Priti Patel: My hon. Friend is absolutely right to speak of clandestine entry. First of all, rules will apply, and testing will apply, to everyone with regard to illegal entry to the United Kingdom and those seeking to claim asylum, although our policy is clear: they should be claiming asylum in the first safe country, not risking their lives by travelling by small boat or illegally being trafficked by people traffickers.

Secondly, with regard to Napier, my hon. Friend is absolutely right. We have covid-compliant measures in place already, in line with Public Health England. I commend our partner, Kent County Council, for the work that it is doing with us on safeguarding people at Napier, and we are going to enhance our measures even further to prevent the spread of coronavirus and protect public health. I give my hon. Friend that assurance, and I am very happy to speak to him further if he has any other questions that he would like to raise with me about Napier.

Layla Moran (Oxford West and Abingdon) (LD) [V]: In the week when we have counted 100,000 dead, the Home Secretary's announcement is, of course, welcome—better late than never—but these measures will not work without 100% compliance with isolation. Currently, only one in five people asked to self-isolate in the UK does so. Evidence that we have examined in the all-party parliamentary group on coronavirus shows clearly that carrots are often very much more effective than sticks when it comes to such measures, so does she agree that if the Government ensured that there was no loss of earnings from isolation, as other countries do, that might help improve compliance with self-isolation and so cut those chains of transmission?

Priti Patel: It is important to put this into the context of travel and the measures and checks that we have put in place around compliance. I have already stated that Border Force is undertaking 100% checks at PCPs. Also, when it comes to carriers, there is now a carrier liability measure in place; they have that burden, and they will be given a fine if they do not check their travellers before they get on their planes, in particular. These are stringent measures with significant penalties and significant fines in place, and the carriers, which are also operational partners that we work with, are very clear about that. However, the hon. Lady is right about self-isolation. Self-isolation must take place, and that is why across Government—not just the Home Office but health and the isolation assurance service, along with the police—we are working collaboratively across the board to ensure that those measures are being adhered to and enforced.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): I have now to announce the result of today's deferred Division. On the draft West Yorkshire Combined Authority (Election of Mayor and Functions) Order 2021, the Ayes were 553 and the Noes were 2, so the Ayes have it.

[The Division list is published at the end of today's debates.]

Point of Order

3.40 pm

John Nicolson (Ochil and South Perthshire) (SNP) [V]: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. On 10 December, when responding to my question on a recent Information Commissioner's Office report into political parties' data collection, the Minister for Media and Data, the right hon. Member for Maldon (Mr Whittingdale), claimed that, when the Conservative party collected the personal data of more than 10 million people based on their race and religion,

“the Information Commissioner...did not find that any breaches of the law had occurred.”—[*Official Report*, 10 December 2020; Vol. 685, c. 978.]

He repeated a version of that claim when appearing before the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee. However, the Information Commissioner appeared before that Committee yesterday and confirmed to me that the Conservative party had acted illegally—indeed, she had required the party to delete the data that it had illegally collected.

I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman will be mortified to learn that he has inadvertently misled the House on this important matter. I wonder, Madam Deputy Speaker, whether he could be afforded the opportunity to withdraw his false claim and commit that the Conservative party will not conduct illegal racial and religious profiling in the future.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for notice of his point of order and for confirming to me that he has also given notice of his intention to raise this matter to the Minister concerned, the right hon. Member for Maldon (Mr Whittingdale).

I can answer the hon. Gentleman in this way. In general terms, I can certainly confirm that, in the event that the answer that a Minister has given here in the Chamber transpires to be, for some reason, inaccurate, that Minister should, of course, correct the record at the earliest opportunity. But the hon. Gentleman and the House will appreciate that it is not, of course, for the Chair to adjudicate on whether that general injunction applies in any particular instance; I cannot confirm whether or not it applies in this instance.

However, I am quite certain that, if the right hon. Member for Maldon has inadvertently said something in the House that has transpired to be inaccurate, he will take the opportunity to correct the record as soon as possible. I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for raising this matter.

To allow the Chamber to be prepared for the next item of business, I will now suspend the House for three minutes.

3.42 pm

Sitting suspended.

Ministerial Interests (Emergency Powers)

Motion for leave to bring in a Bill (Standing Order No. 23)

3.46 pm

Owen Thompson (Midlothian) (SNP): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to require a Minister to give make an oral statement to Parliament if a contract is awarded under emergency statutory powers to a person in whom, or a company in which, a Minister has a personal, political or financial interest.

Today, I present an important Bill, which would help safeguard against the risk of procurement corruption and restore some trust in the integrity of our democratic processes at a time when that trust has been rocked to the core. Anyone in public office should be there to serve the public good, not to exploit their position to line the pockets of themselves, their pals, or their party donors. Yet during this crisis we have seen lucrative contracts go to firms with little experience in public procurement, but with very clear links to people in power. Issues with cronyism are not new, but there has been nothing of this scale before, nothing so blatantly disregarding due process. It could be said that a crony virus is threatening the health of our public services and emergency action is needed to get the Government under control.

I fully understand that there was a need to procure goods at a scale and speed never done before when the pandemic struck, so the usual processes to ensure best value for the public purse had to be set aside. But to many, it looks suspiciously like the emergency has been used as a catch-all excuse by this Government to bypass due process at every turn. The National Audit Office reported that a staggering £10 billion-worth of contracts had been awarded without competition by the end of July last year and more than a few of them have raised eyebrows. There are serious questions to be answered about why politically connected and relatively new companies with no track record in procurement were among those awarded contracts to supply our NHS.

To give just a few examples, the Good Law Project reports that, within two weeks of inviting tenders in March last year, the Government had 24,000 offers from 16,000 suppliers, many of whom had a wealth of experience in providing personal protective equipment for healthcare professionals. Yet three of the biggest beneficiaries of Government contract awards were a Florida-based jewellery company, with no experience of supplying PPE, a tiny vermin control operation called PestFix, valued at just £19,000, and an opaque family office owned through a tax haven, Ayanda Capital, whose senior adviser, also by chance, had a role on the Board of Trade. To make matters worse, 50 million masks purchased from Ayanda failed to meet NHS specifications and were never able to be used. Then, as reported in *The Guardian*, there was the awarding of a £30 million contract to the Health Secretary's former neighbour, who used to run a local pub in his constituency, after an initial conversation over WhatsApp. Now he may well be the best person for that role, but without greater scrutiny and clarity it is no wonder that questions are raised about the legitimacy of such deals.

In many ways, we could be forgiven for thinking that being a donor to the Tory party must carry an inherent specialism on delivering covid contracts, as Tory donors have really done very well out of this crisis. Millions have been awarded to firms such as Globus (Shetland),

which donated £400,000 to the Conservatives, or P14 Medical, owned by a Conservative councillor. Those issues and details are public only thanks to the efforts of many public-spirited citizens, academics, legal experts and investigative journalists, who are working so hard to shine a light on what is going on in the murky corridors, such as *Byline Times*, openDemocracy, Transparency International UK and the Good Law Project.

There are many more examples that deserve far greater time and scrutiny than I could give today as I present the Bill, so I look forward to its passing for a Second Reading, so that there is a chance for further debate and more hon. Members have the chance to have their say on the issue. In the full light of day, it may well be a scandal to rival or even surpass the MP expenses scandal, but even if it is not we should at least get the regulations in order to prevent any suggestion of corruption setting in. When processes to protect the public purse and ensure fairness are stripped away, it leaves open the clear risk of unscrupulous individuals exploiting the system for private gain, so it is important that the Government do all that they can to mitigate those risks. Instead, sadly, they seem to have revelled in the freedom to bypass due process.

The need for greater scrutiny is clear. The anti-corruption organisation Transparency International UK has been looking at the publicly available contract data since February last year, and found that at least 68 contracts, worth over £3 billion of public money, deserve further investigation. The Department of Health and Social Care awarded 57 of those contracts, 47 of which were for personal protective equipment, totalling £2.1 billion. It was found that 17 of those, worth just under £1 billion, relate to companies with political connections. There is no public record to tell us which of them were referred via the high priority VIP lane, which the Government set up to allow suppliers with links to politicians and senior officials to pitch directly. The criteria for that are not clear, and its existence was not mentioned in the Cabinet Office guidance note. In fact, we know about VIP lanes only as a result of the report from the National Audit Office.

We do know, though, that the mysterious VIP lane was the best bet for getting a contract. One in 10 offers were successful compared with just 0.7% through the normal channels. It is simply appalling that, while underpaid frontline staff struggle, billions of pounds in public contracts seem to be handed out like sweets to people with friends in high places. People with questionable experience but unquestionable links to power were fast-tracked towards big money deals to supply lifesaving equipment, without competition, behind closed doors and often producing faulty or substandard goods.

Meanwhile, those with a track record in public procurement or an expertise in NHS supplies, but who do not happen to rub shoulders with the right people, have struggled to get a toe in the door. It seems to be much more about who they know than what they know. There should be absolutely no question mark about the motivation behind covid-19 contracts. It cuts to the heart of how a Government operate and what their priorities are. Either it is in the best interests of the public, or it is in the interests of lining the pockets of their pals. All of us will pay for these contracts through our taxes for years to come, and tragically some have paid with their lives for PPE mistakes. The Government must be held to account for the decisions that they have taken.

The great thing about the Bill is that if the right people and companies are getting the jobs it should put an end to any question marks hanging over the decision-making process—something that surely the Government would welcome. It is about Ministers having to answer in Parliament for their reasoning—taking back control. They will have a chance to convince us that it is a mere coincidence that a contract has been given to an old school chum, the local pub landlord, a colleague's wife, a Tory donor, or perhaps even a Vote Leave campaign colleague. If they are the best person for the job, it should be clear from their credentials, skills and record. There is nothing to fear from the Bill if there is nothing to hide. Indeed, I imagine the Government will want to seize the opportunity to put this simple measure into law. Given the damage being done to public trust, they will be keen to help to set the record straight and show that there is nothing shifty going on.

For the moment, these contracts look like public scandals being hidden in an overgrown, privileged public schoolboy arena. Those of us asking inconvenient questions are not going away. Of course, much more needs to be done to improve transparency over public contracts, both during and after the emergency. The UK is well behind the curve internationally on this front, but declaring ministerial interests is one simple, important and effective step we could take now, with no cost, to enshrine greater accountability in law. I very much welcome the cross-party support that this proposal has received, from every single party in this place except the governing one. This is a chance for us to restore some badly bruised faith in democracy, and bring back the principles of accountability, public service, and public good and fairness for all. I urge the House to back this Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Ordered,

That Owen Thompson, Dan Carden, Deidre Brock, Liz Saville Roberts, Wendy Chamberlain, Caroline Lucas, Stephen Farry, Claire Hanna, Jim Shannon, Patrick Grady, Alyn Smith and Richard Thomson present the Bill.

Owen Thompson accordingly presented the Bill.

Bill read the First time; to be read a Second time tomorrow, and to be printed (Bill 247).

COVERT HUMAN INTELLIGENCE SOURCES (CRIMINAL CONDUCT) BILL (PROGRAMME) (NO.2)

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

That the following provisions shall apply to the Covert Human Intelligence Sources (Criminal Conduct) Bill for the purpose of supplementing the Order of 5 October 2020 (Covert Human Intelligence Sources (Criminal Conduct) Bill (Programme)):

Consideration of Lords Amendments

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

Subsequent stages

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

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

Question agreed to.

Covert Human Intelligence Sources (Criminal Conduct) Bill

Consideration of Lords amendments.

Clause 1

AUTHORISATION OF CRIMINAL CONDUCT

3.57 pm

The Solicitor General (Michael Ellis): I beg to move, That this House disagrees with Lords amendment 1.

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

Lords amendment 2, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendment 3, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendment 4, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendment 5, and Government amendment (b) thereto.

Lords amendments 6 to 14.

The Solicitor General: This Bill is an important piece of legislation that places a long-standing tactic on a clear and consistent statutory basis. It provides certainty for those who engage in important and dangerous operations on our behalf that they are able to utilise the tools needed to keep us safe and prevent crime. It also rightly provides assurance to the men and women who may find themselves in risky and dangerous situations in order to provide vital intelligence that the state will not prosecute them for activity that the state has asked them to commit.

Since March 2017, MI5 and counter-terrorism police have together thwarted 28 terror attacks, a figure that is higher than that which the Government provided on Second Reading a few months ago. As the director general of MI5 said when this Bill was first introduced:

“Without the contribution of human agents, be in no doubt, many of these attacks would not have been prevented”.

There is a real threat out there, and it is critical that our partners have the tools they need to stop it.

I thank the other place for its detailed and thoughtful debate on this legislation. The other place considered the Bill at length, and has brought forward several amendments to it, which I will now speak to in turn. However, I will first take the opportunity to pay tribute to my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (James Brokenshire), who is the Bill Minister on this legislation and has taken a typically collaborative and thoughtful approach to it. I think I can say on behalf of the whole House that we wish James all the best for a speedy recovery. [HON. MEMBERS: “Hear, hear.”]

Lords amendment 1 introduces the requirement that an authorising officer must “reasonably” believe that an authorisation is necessary and proportionate. The Government cannot support this amendment because it is both unnecessary and risks creating inconsistency, thereby casting legal doubt on the position in other legislation.

4 pm

As I previously confirmed in this House to my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Kenilworth and Southam (Jeremy Wright), the former Attorney General, it is indeed the case that the belief of an authorising officer should be reasonable. That is, as it were, axiomatic. The revised code of practice confirms this and, in response to concerns raised in the other place, it was further amended to make that clear.

The Government therefore cannot accept this amendment, as it creates problematic inconsistency with the position in other legislation. For example, under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, the belief of an authorising officer that an authorisation for the general use and conduct of a covert human intelligence source is necessary and proportionate must be reasonable. Section 29 of that Act simply states that there must be a belief, but it does not use the word “reasonable”. If the word “reasonable” were to be added before the word “belief” in this Bill, it would cast into doubt whether the belief must be reasonable where it is not specified elsewhere.

However, I make it clear that the legal position is already that the belief must be reasonable, as a matter of public law. I say that clearly from the Dispatch Box, as I have done before in answer to a question from my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Kenilworth and Southam, the former Attorney General. That is why we cannot support Lords amendment 1.

Lords amendment 2 places express limits on the conduct that can be authorised under the Bill. This House has already discussed the issue in some detail, but I will reiterate the reasons why the Government cannot support this amendment. First, the limits on what could be authorised under the Bill are provided by the requirement that any authorisation must be necessary and proportionate, and must comply with the Human Rights Act. Any authorisation that is not compliant with the Human Rights Act would be unlawful, and nothing in this Bill seeks to undermine the important protections in that Act.

However, were we to place explicit limits on the face of the Bill, it would create a risk to the operational tactics involved and, I might add, to the safety of the covert human intelligence source and the general public at large. This assessment has been put to the Government explicitly by operational partners—the people who are actually operating these tactics. The decisions we have made throughout this Bill, particularly on this issue, are based entirely on the reality that our operational partners have experienced in the field, and that is what they are telling us.

By creating a checklist on the face of the Bill, Lords amendment 2 makes it very easy for criminal gangs and others to develop initiation tests. It will certainly be the case that some criminals, in seeking to demonstrate that they are not a covert human intelligence source, will go away and do what is asked of them, and perhaps even commit rape or another serious offence to demonstrate their loyalty to the cause and prove, as it were, that they are not a CHIS—a covert source. Those who do not will instead risk the consequences of wrongly being thought to be a source. Of course, that does not mean that if a covert human intelligence source were asked to commit any crime as part of an initiation process, they could do so, not least because the Human Rights Act 1998 and the test of necessity and proportionality already provide limits. It is not as though there are no limits, because the Human Rights Act and the test of necessity and proportionality provide those limits; it is simply that we need to avoid presenting criminals and criminal gangs with a means to test those people they suspect are agents. The consequence of presenting such a checklist would be felt ultimately by the public, because this tactic will not be able to be deployed to the same degree, and so more successful crimes, terrorist attacks and serious crimes would be committed.

Amendment 3 seeks to confirm that a person who is, at present, able to access the criminal injuries compensation scheme will be unaffected in their ability to access it because of this Bill. As I have outlined, it is dangerous to get into a discussion of the limits of conduct of our operational sources—those that can be authorised—but I will say that, in practice, the operation of the criminal injuries compensation scheme is unaffected by the Bill, and the amendment is therefore unnecessary.

Amendment 4 deals with the safeguards in place for the rare occasions when a juvenile is authorised to participate in criminal conduct. It also deals with the authorisation of vulnerable adults. I recognise that this is an important and emotive issue. None of us likes to contemplate a juvenile being involved in criminal activity. I understand and respect the honourable motivation behind these concerns; it is, no doubt, a desire to protect young people, and Her Majesty’s Government also have that motivation. The Bill does not seek to give public authorities new powers to authorise juveniles as covert human intelligence sources; it simply creates a clear and consistent legal basis for the authorisation of a covert human intelligence source to participate in criminal conduct where that is necessary and proportionate. The Bill also introduces increased safeguards from those that existed before, such as the requirement for all authorisations to be notified to the independent Investigatory Powers Commissioner in close to real time.

Mr Kevan Jones (North Durham) (Lab): On juveniles, the right hon. and learned Gentleman is correct that the Bill does not give authorisation to allow for CHIS, because it happens already under the CHIS code of practice, which is also legally enforceable under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Juveniles) Order 2000. Given some of the concerns that people rightly have, would it not help to put that into the Bill?

The Solicitor General: The right hon. Gentleman makes a perfectly reasonable point, as he very often does. The issue with putting the code of conduct into the Bill is, in part, that the code of conduct is, I think, hundreds of pages long. There are also issues of precedent in terms of codes of practice and codes of conduct elsewhere. However, I will give careful consideration to what he says and hope to come back to it.

Juveniles are authorised as covert human intelligence sources only in exceptional circumstances. There are significant additional safeguards in place for these authorisations, including authorisation that must be given by a more senior-level officer, an enhanced risk assessment process, and a shorter authorisation of only four months, with reviews of that authorisation having to take place at least monthly. Several safeguards will be in place, over and above, in respect of juveniles. There is also a requirement that an appropriate adult would be present in any discussions between the handlers and a young person under 16 years of age, and a rebuttable presumption that this is the case for 16 and 17-year-olds. Let me be clear on this point: the presumption is that an appropriate adult will be in place for meetings with 16 and 17-year-olds. That is the default position, if I can put it that way. If the public authority deems that it is necessary to derogate from that position, the rationale detailing the reasons why should be documented and then considered by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner.

The commissioner confirmed that, in practice, juveniles are not tasked to participate in criminality that they are not already involved in.

Bob Stewart (Beckenham) (Con): Thank you, Madam Deputy—Mr Deputy Speaker. Forgive me—a slip of the tongue.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): As always.

Bob Stewart: Forgive me—I am on my knees.

Having done this sort of thing, albeit in a relatively minor way, I want to clarify one thing. Often, information was given to people who were doing this kind of work in the field by juveniles. That does not make the juvenile a source. That information can still obviously be passed on, but clearly there are restrictions on using that juvenile in future. However, the information given by juveniles certainly must not be stopped.

The Solicitor General: Not for the first time, my hon. Friend makes a very powerful point by dint of his experience in these matters, and in a moment I will give an example that he might find interesting on that exact point. As I said, the Investigatory Powers Commissioner confirmed that, in practice, juveniles are not tasked to participate in criminality that they are not already involved in. The commissioner also noted that decisions to authorise were only made when that was the best option for breaking the cycle of crime and danger for the young person involved.

To demonstrate how authorisations for juvenile covert human intelligence sources are managed in reality by the police, let me give an example that can also be found in the IPC's most recent annual report:

“In one...case, a juvenile was carrying out activity on behalf of a ‘county line’ drug supply group”—

a gang. The juvenile owed money to the gang. He or she “approached the police wishing to provide information. A referral under the Modern Slavery Act was made by the police and a care plan was drawn up with Children’s Services, including relocating the juvenile and finding them a training course. Once this had been done, as an authorised CHIS, the juvenile was able to provide intelligence to the police regarding the ‘county line’ crime group.”

That is a particularly instructive example of the sort of circumstances in which that can apply.

Lords amendment 4 seeks to add further safeguards for the authorisation of juveniles and vulnerable adults when they are granted a criminal conduct authorisation. While the Government recognise the spirit of these amendments, Lords amendment 4 as drafted creates operational issues. For example, the amendment defines exceptional circumstances as

“where all other methods to gain information have been exhausted”.

That requirement has a tendency to risk the workability of the power and, crucially, the safety of the juvenile because there may be occasions, in the cut and thrust of these things, where there are other ways to gain the information, but those other ways may not be the safest way to extricate the juvenile from the situation that he or she finds themselves in and to lead to the best outcome for the juvenile involved. The words in the amendment are too prescriptive and create operational and workability issues.

4.15 pm

Similarly, the requirement for an appropriate adult to be present in all meetings with all vulnerable adults risks unintended consequences. The definition of a “vulnerable individual” in our legislation in this country is deliberately quite broad, to ensure that the additional safeguards apply to a wide group of people. Let me confirm that it includes victims of modern slavery. It is not clear, however, who could be approached to be an appropriate adult for all vulnerable individuals, bearing in mind, as I know the House will want to do, the duty of care that a public authority, be it the police or any other public authority, has to protect the identity of the CHIS—the covert human intelligence source. The fact is that these individuals may not have a parent, guardian or other person who is responsible for their welfare. So widening the number of people who are aware that a person is a CHIS is undesirable, to say the least, and it increases the risk of disclosure of their identity.

However, the Government are listening and I am listening. The Government are continuing to listen to the views of Parliament on this issue. I thank, in particular, the hon. Member for Walthamstow (Stella Creasy) for her detailed engagement on it, as well as colleagues on the Government Benches behind me. The Government recognise and agree with the spirit of the amendments, understanding the motivation behind them. I commit to continuing to work with parliamentarians in advance of the Bill returning to the other place. Her Majesty’s Government are willing to provide further additional safeguards on the authorisation of any juvenile or vulnerable adult, but Members of this honourable House will, I hope, agree that in doing so we need to get the right balance. We have to have the right balance to ensure that the result of the terminology here does not unwittingly create an unintended consequence for the safety of the CHIS or for the operational workability of this important tactic.

Lords amendment 5 would add further independent oversight to the authorisation process. Both this House and the other place considered and voted on the issue of prior judicial approval, and both Houses voted against that, recognising the operational challenge it would have created. The Government do, however, recognise the need for confidence as to the oversight process for this important power. As such, we supported amendments from Lord Anderson of Ipswich in the other place which require all authorisations to be notified to the Investigatory Powers Commissioner as soon as reasonably practicable, and within seven days. That will provide the IPC with real-time oversight of every authorisation. So the Government are bringing back an amendment in lieu of Lords amendment 5 that retains the notification process but removes the power of the commissioner to cancel an authorisation and stop activity. The cancellation provision to Lords amendment 5 rendered the notification process unworkable. Although this House should be in no doubt as to the seriousness with which public authorities hold the views of the IPC and the strong collaborative nature of their interactions to resolve any issues, the authorising officer has to be, and is, best placed to consider not only the necessity and proportionality of an authorisation, but the live operational environment and the safety of that CHIS. It has to be the authorising officer who has that responsibility. On the extremely rare occasions where a judicial commissioner may find issue with an authorisation, the public authority will

consult with the commissioner and may indeed stop, or not commence, the activity that they planned to commence. However, this should not be at the expense of the safety of the CHIS. We think, therefore, that the existing process of close collaboration to agree a way to resolve outstanding issues is the right approach.

Mr Kevan Jones: I welcome what the Minister has said, but would that information be contained in the annual report of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner?

The Solicitor General: That is a perfectly reasonable question, but I cannot speak to what might feature in the report of the Commissioner. However, there has been a clear indication from looking at previous reports that he has been as full and frank in his reports as one might expect in the circumstances. I think that is all I can say about what might feature in his reports.

The remaining amendments are either consequential on those discussed or they carve out devolved activity in Scotland. The Government have engaged extensively with the Scottish Government on this legislation, and we are disappointed that we have had to bring forward these amendments, but we do so in respect of the Sewel convention. The Scottish Government were unwilling to recommend legislative consent, despite movement from the UK Government on several issues, as they are requiring express limits on the face of the Bill. As I have mentioned, the Government's approach to this is driven solely by the advice that we are getting from our operational partners—the people at the coalface, the brave men and women who are doing the job—and I note that operational partners from all parts of this kingdom have advised of the risks to covert human intelligence sources and to the general public of this approach. So it will now be for the Scottish Government to bring forward their own legislation if they wish to place devolved activity on an express statutory basis. I hope and expect that, like the Government, they will strongly follow the advice of their operational partners to ensure that all parts of the United Kingdom retain access to a workable form of this vital tactic.

Mr Kevan Jones: I agree with the Minister on this point, but can he clarify whether the non-adoption of this in Scotland will affect the operational impact on, for example, MI5? I understand that that is a national jurisdiction, and not controlled by Scotland.

The Solicitor General: What I can say is that the Scottish Government will need to bring forward their own legislation if they wish to place devolved activity on an express statutory basis.

I hope I have outlined in some detail the issues and amendments that the House needs to consider today. The Government have shown a willingness to compromise on the Bill where that helps to reassure Parliament, but only where it does not threaten the operation of this critical tool that prevents crime and saves lives.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): Initially, I will not be putting a time limit on Back-Bench contributions, but if Members could be concise, that would be welcome.

Conor McGinn (St Helens North) (Lab): It is a pleasure to follow the Solicitor General, but I am sure he will understand when I say that I would much prefer to have

been following the Minister for Security, the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (James Brokenshire). We wish him well, and I want to thank him for his engagement with me and the shadow Home Secretary, my hon. Friend the Member for Torfaen (Nick Thomas-Symonds), on the progress of the Bill throughout its passage. I am grateful to colleagues in the other place who have shown their customary high standards of diligence and ensured that the Bill contains some robust and vital checks. It returns to us in substantially better shape than when it left us.

As I have said throughout the Bill's passage, my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Holborn and St Pancras (Keir Starmer) has made it clear that security is a top priority for the Labour party. Under his leadership and that of the shadow Home Secretary, we will support a robust policy in fighting terrorism and crime in all its forms. We consider it our first responsibility to keep this country, its citizens and our community safe. We are, of course, grateful to those in the police, the security services and wider law enforcement who put their own safety and lives at risk to protect us, and we will meet our duty to support them.

It is the responsibility of Members of Parliament to ensure that there is a system in place that allows our law enforcement to uncover, disrupt and ultimately bring to justice illegal and dangerous activity that threatens the safety and security of the British people. The Solicitor General reminded us of the sobering context of this debate, given the number of terror plots that have been disrupted. The latest figures show that in the last year alone covert human intelligence sources foiled 30 threats to life. It is therefore right that, finally, we should put on a statutory footing the activity of those who work to disrupt some of the vilest crimes imaginable. It is vital that through this process, in creating a statutory framework for the operation of the CHIS, we seek to make sure that there are formal checks, balances and safeguards that ensure that the Bill is fair and protects those who work under its jurisdiction, as well as innocent parties who may be affected by their activity.

Lords amendment 1 was proposed by Cross-Bench peers, and it seeks to ensure a fair and reasonable framework for those making an authorisation. It adds the word, "reasonably" so that, with an order to grant an authorisation, the person authorising would need reasonably to believe that it was necessary and proportionate. Without confusing the House with the use of too many "reasonables", that would seem eminently reasonable. When dealing with sensitive matters of this nature, that places trust in those authorising the activity required, but ensures that their judgment is guided by the parameters of what is deemed appropriate or reasonable.

Lords amendment 2 progresses an amendment that we tabled in the Commons on Report, and which has received support in both Houses. It adds so-called Canada-style limitations to the Bill, including on death, grievous bodily harm, perverting the course of justice, sexual offences, torture and the deprivation of liberty. The Solicitor General has sought to assure us that the Bill is explicit about the fact that the Human Rights Act is applicable in all circumstances, but there is merit at least in exploring the setting-out of specific limitations on the Bill for the sake of clarity and reassurance. Like him, I do not want to see circumstances in which these horrendous offences are set as a test for the CHIS in the field—I know that that view is shared by my right hon.

Friend the Member for North Durham (Mr Jones)—but if countries that are our allies, with similar criminal justice systems and with whom we co-operate on security matters, can do this, the Government need to set out a little more forcefully why we should not.

Lords amendment 3 builds on amendments that we introduced in the Commons, and ensures that victims of violent crime in particular are not ineligible for criminal injuries compensation by virtue of the fact that the crime was the subject of a criminal conduct authorisation. We heard many powerful arguments for the amendment during the passage of the Bill. It is vital that, as well as clarifying permissible action for agents working to keep us safe, the Bill ensures that victims are properly protected and can seek redress and compensation if those boundaries are broken. The amendment would ensure that victims can seek adequate redress from the criminal injuries compensation scheme. All victims deserve an unimpeded pass to attaining justice. Despite the unique and rare circumstances of what we are discussing, the provision none the less protects victims of any criminal acts with proper and due process.

Lords amendment 4 makes a change to the Bill that would ensure an authorisation involving children and vulnerable people could be authorised only in exceptional circumstances. I pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow (Stella Creasy), as the Solicitor General has done, for her strong campaigning, along with the right hon. Member for Haltemprice and Howden (Mr Davis), other Government Members and the shadow Home Secretary, my hon. Friend the Member for Torfaen, who has taken part in intensive discussions and lobbied on these incredibly important matters.

The amendment has also been supported by the Children's Commissioner, because it provides the necessary safeguards. The Children's Society urged the Government to look at the complex interrelationships between different forms of exploitation and abuse, and suggested that they need to be properly considered in policy, policing and child protection. The anomaly that would see 16 and 17-year-olds treated differently if they commit a criminal offence of their own volition, rather than one they are instructed to commit as CHIS, needs to be addressed. I hope the Government listen to the concerns of Parliament, as the Solicitor General outlined, and to those of experts, children's advocates and wider civil society on this issue.

4.30 pm

We also welcome Lords amendment 5, which we pushed for in this place on Report, which sets out that people granted criminal conduct authorisations must inform a judicial commissioner within seven days of the granting of the authorisation. That is vital to ensuring the immediate accountability of the authorisation and to enabling the commissioner to undertake proper scrutiny of decisions. There should be no reason why authorisation cannot be registered within that timeframe, and the amendment provides a clear and efficient process of record. It is right that, if a judicial commissioner thinks upon notification that the authority should not have been authorised, those activities cease forthwith. I am glad that the Government have noted that proposal and amendment—again, it was something that my hon. Friend the shadow Home Secretary raised on Second Reading. It gives necessary transparency to the process, and further assurances on the necessity and proportionality of what is being authorised.

Our amendment (a) to Lords amendment 5 builds on that spirit of oversight by ensuring criminal conduct authorisations may not take place until a warrant has first been issued by a judicial commissioner. We very much appreciate the fast pace at which developments move in an operational sense. However, I think it is similarly important to recognise that in many areas of law we have judges available 24 hours a day to give judgments on urgent matters and emergencies. Such prior judicial oversight in this process would provide even higher standards and additional reassurances, while having minimal impact operationally.

Sir Edward Leigh (Gainsborough) (Con): It is welcome that, under new management in the Labour party, the country can probably rest assured that after an interlude the Labour party has returned to the attitude that prevailed under the Blair and Brown leaderships and can be trusted on security issues. I hope therefore, in that spirit of bipartisanship, the Labour party will think carefully about dividing the House and recognise that many of the arguments promoted by the Solicitor General actually made a lot of sense. We might put our agents' lives at risk if we were to set limits on what could be authorised, so I hope the hon. Gentleman can give me a reassuring reply on that.

Conor McGinn: I think I might put the first part of what the right hon. Gentleman said on my election leaflets the next time around. On the second part of what he said, I respect entirely the point he made. I listened carefully to the Solicitor General and I will explain in my conclusion our approach to the Bill, which I think has been one where we have sought to co-operate, given its serious and sensitive nature. We rightly and understandably wanted to scrutinise the Bill in its entirety and would seek to improve it were we in the position of introducing it. I hope that will make sense in the next few minutes.

Before I come to that conclusion, let me say that it is unfortunate and disappointing that the Government and the Scottish Government have not been able to reach an agreement. We encouraged those discussions from the outset to ensure that the Bill covered the entirety of the United Kingdom. Even at this late stage, I urge them to work together, because it is important that the public in Scotland have confidence not only that their safety and security is protected, but that they have the safeguards that other parts of the United Kingdom will have, too.

In conclusion, we feel that the Bill has been improved by the amendments. It is not perfect—far from it—but it does provide an important legal framework for activity that previously operated with none. We recognise that it provides formal safeguards and protections for those who operate in this field at this precise moment and who seek to keep us all safe. It provides clarity and guidance for those who have to make difficult decisions in the interests of law enforcement in areas of serious and highly organised terrorism and crime, and it provides protection and the potential for recompense for those who may be adversely affected.

As I have said before, this is uncomfortable territory for the whole House and for many of us personally. It covers activity that operates, frankly, in the shadows, tackling serious and deadly crime and some of the most heinous and awful offences imaginable. The Opposition

[Conor McGinn]

are committed to working in the national interest to keep people, their families, our communities and the country safe. We know that it is not just the Government who have to make difficult decisions to do this but us as well. I want to be clear: we would and will put forward a different Bill with the safeguards we have outlined at its heart. But when it comes to national security and keeping the public safe, we are not prepared to allow these matters to remain outside parliamentary scrutiny and without any statutory footing. We have a duty to the public and to those who keep us safe.

We acknowledge the importance of putting CHIS activities on a statutory footing, and we have unapologetically worked to scrutinise robustly and responsibly the way in which that is done. We have hopefully ensured some vital safeguards, accountability and protections, and we will continue, as always, to place national security, human rights and support for victims at the centre of our approach to these matters.

Dr Julian Lewis (New Forest East) (Con): On behalf of the Intelligence and Security Committee, I entirely endorse the tributes and good wishes paid by the Solicitor General and the hon. Member for St Helens North (Conor McGinn) to my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (James Brokenshire). His professionalism, calmness and dedication as Security Minister and in other roles are a model for us all. We admire him greatly and wish him the best of health.

Despite extraordinary technical advances in surveillance and espionage methods, human sources in intelligence operations remain indispensable, especially in the counter-terrorist work of our Security Service. Going undercover to join terrorist groups or remaining in a terrorist group, having become disillusioned with its objectives, in order to frustrate them, calls for courage of the highest order. The Intelligence and Security Committee has been briefed by MI5 on specific instances of this, and we accept that, without the use of covert human intelligence sources, many of the attacks foiled in recent years would have succeeded in their horrific aims. That is what justifies the authorisation of specified criminal acts, on occasion, in order to maintain an agent's cover and in proportion to the potential harm that he or she is working to prevent.

As pointed out on Second Reading on 5 October, the report on Northern Ireland-related terrorism compiled by our predecessor Committee and presented to Parliament that same day firmly concluded at paragraph 39:

“While there are, rightly, concerns that criminal activity may somehow be being legitimised, the need for such authorisations is clear. What is key is that authorisations are properly circumscribed, used only when necessary and proportionate, and subject to proper scrutiny.”

Precisely because covert human intelligence sources are so effective, ruthless terrorist organisations have no qualms in devising tests of the utmost depravity to flush out agents infiltrating their ranks. That is why the provisions of Lords amendment 2 to prohibit the granting of criminal conduct authorisations, or CCAs, are certain to be as counterproductive as they are well-intentioned.

What the amendment proposes, if enacted, would soon come to constitute a checklist of atrocities that could be used to expose undercover agents known to be forbidden from carrying them out. As sure as night

follows day, it would also increase the number of such atrocities committed. In order to flush out MI5 agents by putting suspects to the test, paranoid extremists would resort to testing more and more of their group members, if they felt that their organisation was coming under pressure and suffering setbacks.

Mr David Davis (Haltemprice and Howden) (Con): My right hon. Friend does great service to this House and the Committee. Given what he has just said, does he believe that these terrorists are unable to read the Human Rights Act?

Dr Lewis: I have the advantage of having been present when my right hon. Friend made that very point on Second Reading, and therefore I was entirely prepared for that intervention. I will give a response that is perhaps slightly unorthodox, despite the emphasis put on the Human Rights Act by my right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor General.

In my previous role as Chair of the Defence Committee, it became more and more obvious that the Human Rights Act, and the European convention on human rights, had had serious, and perhaps largely unanticipated, adverse consequences for the operations of our military. I suspect that if applied too literally, they would have equally adverse effects on the operations of our security and intelligence services. As the years go by, and as experience shows, I fully expect that there will have to be amendments to the Human Rights Act. I believe that although terrorists could indeed read it, they would take rather more seriously a categorical list of forbidden offences in the Bill than they would the rather generalised content of the Human Rights Act. I do not expect my right hon. Friend to be wholly satisfied with that, but it is my honest opinion.

Consequently, terrorist groups whose operations might have been compromised by technical means, rather than by human infiltration, would be likely to ask their genuine members to commit more and more forbidden offences, simply to prove their loyalty. The outcome would inevitably be an increase in murders and other serious offences on their lordships' list, which would not have happened but for the incorporation in statute of such a collection of prohibited crimes.

As I said earlier, the ISC has had a comprehensive briefing from MI5, explaining how those authorisations are used in practice. We are convinced that the Security Service uses them appropriately and proportionately. We are also reassured that the measures in the Bill legalise only what is specified in each criminal conduct authorisation. That means that any other criminal behaviour not covered by the terms of a CCA may be subject to prosecution—a safeguard that will hopefully encourage the House to reject Lords amendment 2. This is one of those occasions when it is necessary—really necessary—to keep our enemies guessing.

Joanna Cherry [V]: I mean no disrespect to the Solicitor General when I say that, like others, I am sorry not to see the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (James Brokenshire) on the Government Front Bench today. He is a thoroughly decent man. I wish him all the best, and I have been in touch to tell him that privately.

The Scottish National party will support the Lords amendments, but we do not support the Bill. We voted against it on Third Reading for reasons that I set out in

some detail in Committee. We regard it as another milestone in the British Government's retreat from support for such basic rule-of-law principles as equality before the law, and another milestone in the rolling back of human rights protections. That is not to say that we do not see the necessity for some legislation, given the ongoing court proceedings, but we do not think the balance is right in this legislation at all.

4.45 pm

The Lords amendments go some way to addressing some of the concerns expressed by my hon. Friends the Members for Gordon (Richard Thomson) and for Glasgow North West (Carol Monaghan), and by me, during the Bill's passage through this House, and on that basis we will support them. However, by no means do they meet all our concerns.

The speeches from the Front Benchers and others have already addressed in some detail the scope of the Lords amendments, so I shall not waste time by going into that, but given the careful consideration that was given to the matter in the other place, we very much regret that the Government oppose Lords amendments 1 to 4 and seek to remove the second part of Lords amendment 5.

As we have heard already, the remaining Lords amendments remove the Bill's provisions in relation to matters devolved to Scotland. It is nice, for once, to see what is these days the rare sight of the Sewel convention actually being respected. The reasons why the Scottish Parliament voted to withhold consent to the Bill, on the recommendation of the Scottish Government, were set out in some detail in the Scottish Parliament last week, particularly in the speech of my friend and colleague, the Justice Secretary Humza Yousaf. It is noteworthy that all parties in the Scottish Parliament, apart from the Conservative and Unionist party, shared the Scottish Government's concerns about the Bill. Notably, the Labour party in Scotland has taken rather a tougher line than its colleagues in this place.

As I said, I outlined the SNP concerns regarding the Bill during its passage through this House. I am afraid to say that although the House of Lords amendments address some of those concerns, they do not go nearly far enough. For a rule of law and human rights-compliant system, we would like to see, among other things, prior judicial authorisation; the removal of the grounds of "preventing disorder" and "economic well-being"; and proper protections for trade union and other activist activities.

In respect of the speech by the right hon. Member for New Forest East (Dr Lewis), for whom I have the greatest respect, I should point out that the Bill is out of step with international practice, including that of other Five Eyes countries. The Government are being misleading when they seek to reassure the House that the Human Rights Act will provide sufficient safeguards to address concerns about the Bill. I explained in detail in Committee why that is wrong, and furthermore pointed out that the Government are in the course of reviewing that Act, so their arguments about it being a safeguard are far from reassuring.

It has been good to see the Lords address the concern about child covert human intelligence sources, and to see protections for children added to the Bill, which the SNP supports with great enthusiasm. However, our party has always stood up for women's rights, so I

emphasise that in the light of the spy cops scandal there is real concern that the Bill could affect a woman's right to know the true identity of the man with whom she wishes to form a sexual relationship. I do not see anything to address that in the Lords amendments.

Women Against Rape has signed a statement objecting to the Bill that has the support of more than 50 organisations, including the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers, Black Lives Matter groups and disability, women's and environmental justice campaigners. Of course, such groups worked hard with the Lords to ameliorate some of the Bill's effects, but I know that the unions will not be completely satisfied with the outcome in the Lords. Nevertheless, all those who worked to achieve the Lords amendments are to be commended. The SNP will support them, and we urge the Government to withdraw their opposition to Lords amendments 1 to 5.

We will support the amendments, but we do not support the Bill. Very real concerns remain in Scotland, and indeed across the four nations, that this Bill could be used to suppress dissent. That is not part of Scotland's enlightenment tradition, and we will not see it done in Scotland's name. The Scottish Parliament has withheld its consent, and in so far as the current litigation requires changes to the law of Scotland, we will deal with that ourselves in our own Parliament.

Sir Robert Neill (Bromley and Chislehurst) (Con) [V]: This is a very important Bill, not least because it touches on that really difficult balance that we often have to struggle with—perhaps not to this degree very often, in a democracy—between keeping the nation and our fellow citizens safe and our commitment to the rule of law. There are rare occasions when those can rub up against each other, sometimes uneasily, but whenever possible, I think we would all agree, the rule of law ought to be as paramount as it can be, subject to that duty to protect our citizens and our national interests. So are there ways in which we can reconcile this?

Can I, too, refer to my good and personal friend and constituency next-door neighbour, my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (James Brokenshire), and wish him well? I think the consensual and constructive approach that he adopted has done a great deal to smooth the passage of this Bill through potentially difficult matters.

I welcome the approach that the Solicitor General adopted in his opening speech, but can I perhaps press him on one or two matters precisely from the rule of law point of view? I would not seek to trespass on some of the expertise of others in relation to operational matters of the security services. I do not think anyone would wish to make life harder for those brave men and women who put their lives at risk to protect ourselves, and sometimes have to authorise operations that otherwise we might find unpalatable. I recognise that, but there are still rule of law issues that I think need to be addressed and ventilated. They were in the upper place, and we need at least to pay attention to them here.

In relation to Lords amendment 1, I hear what the Solicitor General says, but I am struggling at the moment to see why it is convincing to say that it is not reasonable to have, as the shadow Minister said, a reasonableness test. One would have thought that it was logical, if we are to have a statutory scheme, that that scheme should set out what the test shall be. By and large, I would have

[Sir Robert Neill]

thought that an objective test, of a high but well-established standard, would be sensible and potentially a safeguard for operatives should their use of the test subsequently be challenged.

I note and understand the Solicitor General's point about the potential inconsistency with the terms of different parts of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act, but as Lord Anderson of Ipswich and Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd pointed out in the other place—both highly experienced lawyers and people with experience in sensitive matters—there is potentially a greater inconsistency between the wording in the Bill, and therefore potentially the governing statute when it comes into law, and the code of practice. The code of practice, at paragraph 6.4, provides that

“it is expected that the person granting the authorisation should hold a reasonable belief that the authorisation is necessary and proportionate.”

As Lord Anderson pointed out, that of course is not law, but it is something that, should there be any challenge, would doubtless be taken into account. It seems undesirable that there should be a difference in wording between the code of practice and the statute that governs it.

Would the Solicitor General think again about what is so objectionable about the existence of a reasonableness test and how that would actually compromise the effective operation of operatives in the field? I do not see that. As Lord Thomas put it, at the end of the day

“it is very important to make sure that the language of the statute is clear. Nothing could be less desirable than the language of paragraph 6.4...using the words ‘it is expected’.”—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 11 January 2021; Vol. 809, c. 553.]

Basically, if it is a statutory scheme, the statute ought to be clear. I would like to hear some further justification from the Solicitor General on that, because it seems to me that if we are creating one inconsistency, we are potentially creating another. I think the words of the former Lord Chief Justice deserve some consideration.

In relation to Lords amendment 2, what was said by my right hon. Friend the Member for New Forest East (Dr Lewis), the Chair of the Intelligence and Security Committee, is right. Although the amendment is well intentioned, it seems to me that practical risks could arise. Those of us who have some experience of serious organised crime will know the lengths to which these gangs are prepared to go to prevent infiltration and the ruthlessness with which they operate. On balance, I think the Government's case against that amendment is made out.

In relation to Lords amendment 3, I do not think anyone would wish to have a situation where villains—people who would do us great harm, either as terrorists or as serious organised criminals—might seek an opportunity to use the criminal injuries compensation scheme or some other scheme to make claims against the state for circumstances that, in effect, they brought upon themselves, such as injury which they brought upon themselves because of the activities in which they were engaged. I am sure we would all agree with that.

I hope the Solicitor General will address the issue raised by Lord Cormack and others in the debate in the other place: what about the innocent victim, the person who is collateral damage? Say that in pursuant to a properly granted authorisation, a CHIS carries out an

activity that unintentionally—perhaps as a result of a car chase, which is the example that Lord Cormack gave—causes injury to a passer-by, a bystander or someone who happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Surely the Government would accept that morally there can be no justification for that person not being properly compensated. What is the scheme, therefore, by which they are to be properly compensated? I would have thought there was a way forward for the Government to achieve compromise on this. The suggestion is that the Government say, “There are means of doing this”, and I hope the Solicitor General can spell that out.

The person ought at least to be able to go to the criminal injuries compensation scheme. I am told that in Australia and some other jurisdictions, there is a separate indemnity scheme. Either way, the innocent victim of work that is necessarily and properly undertaken to protect the broader interests of the state and its citizens should not go without the scope for recompense. I hope the Solicitor General will address that when he responds to the debate.

Lords amendment 4 raises very sensitive issues. We all accept that there have to be particular protections in law for children and vulnerable people, so I am very sympathetic to the spirit of the amendment, but I do listen to what the Solicitor General says, and I take on board in particular the view of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner as to what actually happens in practice. I hope that the Solicitor General will undertake that the Government will continue to keep a most careful watch on how young people and potentially vulnerable people are used on the very rare occasions when it might be thought necessary to authorise activity involving them.

That brings me to Lords amendment 5 and the amendment in lieu, where it is the second part that is the issue. It was generally accepted that although in an ideal world judicial pre-authorisation would be preferable from a legal point of view, there were arguments about operational difficulties that could arise. Could the Solicitor General do more to address the very important point that Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd made in moving his amendment, which the Government seek to reverse by the amendment in lieu? We have set up a system with a judicial commissioner, who is to be notified, and who then has a duty to consider that notification and come to a view on it. If they are under a duty to do that, and their conclusion is that the authorisation should not have been granted, are we really to leave it hanging there and to leave it to a rather fudged system of, “Let's have a word and see what can be done”? If a judicial commissioner—in effect a judge, as Lord Thomas pointed out—says that something was not lawful, because that would be the ground on which they would find that was to be the case, are we then to have a means where something that is unlawful is to carry on, but without more ado? That does not seem to be consistent with our commitment to the rule of law.

5 pm

The Solicitor General made the point about the risk of safely unravelling that activity. I understand that point, but that is not the same as saying that the commissioner should not be able to insist on unlawful activity—improperly authorised activity—ceasing to take place. Rather than simply rejecting this in the way that is proposed, would it not be more constructive of the Government to seek a means by which that might be

balanced? If an Investigatory Powers Commissioner of the quality of Sir Brian Leveson, arguably the most significant criminal judge of his generation, or one of his deputies were to find that there was an improper authorisation, that would not be done lightly and I would have very great confidence indeed in any such finding and there ought to be action in consequence of it. At the moment, though, the Bill does not provide a satisfactory scheme for that being done. I would have thought that a commitment to upholding the rule of law would require there to be a satisfactory scheme to achieve that, and, given the gravity of the matters, that really ought to be—in some form or another—in the statute. Those are the areas where I hope that the Government will think again about their stance on improving the Bill and perhaps give appropriate assurances to us that could be addressed if the Bill goes back to the other place.

Mr Kevan Jones: May I join colleagues in the House in sending best wishes to the Minister for Security, the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (James Brokenshire), for a speedy recovery?

In his contribution to this debate, my hon. Friend the Member for St Helens North (Conor McGinn) said that we were talking about issues that take place in the shadows. Well, we are, because many of the activities that our security services undertake cannot, quite rightly, be talked about publicly. I wish to put on record my thanks to the men and women of our services who protect us.

The Chair of the Select Committee, the right hon. Member for New Forest East (Dr Lewis), said that covert human intelligence is important. It is, but there is an emphasis these days on the view that, because we have electronic eavesdropping, data collection and everything else, it is a thing of the past. May I recommend that you, Mr Speaker, and other Members read John Ferris's excellent new book on the history of GCHQ? It was always the case, even during the second world war, that human intelligence along with intercept was the way in which we got the full picture around intelligence. That is important.

Why do people become covert human intelligence sources? Having seen some of the cases, I can say that the reasons vary. In some cases, they are very brave individuals who put their lives at risk to protect others, and the interface with our security services is vital. I said on Second Reading that, sadly, certain labels got stuck on this Bill right from the beginning. It was felt that, somehow, it would allow the state suddenly to authorise everything from torture to murder. Certainly in my party, it is felt that if a Member is a true socialist on the left, they would have to oppose this Bill every step of the way. I am sorry, but I think that that is very unfortunate. People should read what is in the Bill. We should be welcoming the Bill, as my hon. Friend the Member for St Helens North said. What it is doing is putting on a statutory footing what is taking place anyway. If we look at the law as it stands at the moment, certain authorisation of and participation in criminality by CHISs has always been accepted as necessary by UK courts as long as it is proportionate to the safeguarding of the public. However, it is not on a statutory basis, so actually people who have concerns about the operation of our security services should welcome the Bill. Certainly, in MI5's case there is an implication about this in the Security Service Act 1989, but the Bill, for the first time, puts it on a statutory footing, which we should welcome.

Having said that, there are aspects of the Bill that need to be improved. Will there be situations in which the individuals that we are talking about have to be part of criminal activity? Yes, there will be. I have been a member of the ISC for a number of years now. I have been briefed, along with other Members, by MI5 not just on this Bill but on others. I have also, in a previous inquiry, read the transcripts between handlers and CHISs. I will not divulge their contents; all I can say is that the information and intelligence obtained in the transcripts that I read was vital to disrupt a number of terrorist plots. This will not go away if we just think that it is too hot to handle; it has a real impact on our daily lives in this country in terms of national security.

I understand what those who tabled Lords amendment 1 want. They want some protection in the Bill so that the list of things that can be authorised can be a checklist. As the Solicitor General and the right hon. Member for New Forest East have already referred to, setting that checklist will make the operation of CHISs very difficult. I do not necessarily agree with what the right hon. Member for New Forest East said about the Human Rights Act, but the idea that the Bill will allow murder, rape and everything else is just not true. That assures me that the justifiable and proportional approach in the Bill is important. We also have the cover-all in terms of the Human Rights Act, so I do not accept, for practical reasons, that Lords amendment 2 would either improve the Bill or make it easier for our security services to operate.

Bob Stewart: I thank the right hon. Gentleman, who happens to be a good friend, for letting me intervene. I am slightly worried that if we put something into statute and law, it would be utterly tragic if someone who was operating covertly was killed as a result of having a constraint on him or her—there are hers too—that identifies them, and the next thing we know they are stuck in a ditch somewhere with a round in the back of their head. That is the dilemma we face.

Mr Jones: It is, and there is another thing of which I would like to reassure the House, from a security point of view and from my position on the ISC. As I think I said on Second Reading, such decisions are not taken lightly by the security services. Senior officers authorise and control CHISs for good reasons. Do they have some difficult calls to make? Certainly, from one of the transcripts that I read, they do. Do they, on occasions, withdraw authorisation? Yes, if they think that the individual is doing something that is not justifiable or proportionate.

The other point is that we, and a lot of the Bill's opponents, have concentrated on the security services, but remember that it will be used by the police and others.

Mr David Davis: As I was listening to the right hon. Gentleman's very thoughtful speech, it occurred to me that it might be a mistake to have the same Bill cover the security services and everything up to and including the Food Safety Agency.

Mr Jones: I have to agree. One thing I do not agree with about the Bill is the scope in terms of some of the organisations that it covers; I raised my concerns about that on Second Reading.

[Mr Kevan Jones]

Use of CHISs disrupts child exploitation, county lines, organised crime and—increasingly, when it comes to the security services—right-wing extremism, for which human intelligence is part of the suite of intelligence gathering that those services need to use. I do not agree with Lords amendment 2.

Lords amendment 4 is about juveniles. I pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow (Stella Creasy), who has raised what is clearly an emotive issue. I think that covert human intelligence sources should be authorised for the investigation of juvenile criminality only in very exceptional circumstances. But as the Solicitor General said, the impression being given again is that somehow the Bill for the first time gives our security services or police the ability to authorise juvenile covert human intelligence sources. It does not: the ability is there already.

When I intervened on the Solicitor General, I referred to the CHIS code of practice. The Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Juveniles) Order 2000 sets out the additional safeguards relating to junior CHISs. The Government need to find some way of incorporating that in the Bill. The Solicitor General said that it was rather long, but something needs to be there, to answer the issues being raised. I accept—I have seen evidence of this—that there are occasions when junior CHISs are needed: work around county lines gangs is just one example. But the provisions need strengthening, and I ask the Solicitor General to look at that when the Bill goes back to the other place.

Lords amendment 5, on judicial oversight, is important. It is important that the Investigatory Powers Commissioner looks at these issues. Personally, I am not in favour of pre-authorisation because, having spoken to MI5 and seen the transcripts of at least one of the interviews in one terrorist case, I see that these situations are dynamic. It would be very difficult if authorisation had to be obtained every time.

However, I am very much in favour of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner having scrutiny over the authorisations afterwards; that would allow an extra tier of judicial oversight, which would certainly knock on the head some of the nonsense we have heard about the Government or the security services being given the powers to murder people. I asked the Solicitor General about the annual report because it is important for public transparency and scrutiny of this place. I welcome what the Solicitor General said about bringing back an amendment on the issue. That would also allow us on the Intelligence and Security Committee to have some scrutiny.

Like my hon. Friend the Member for St Helens North, I am a little disappointed that Scotland has not agreed to this; to protect the public, it is vital that it does. However, I am reassured by what the Minister said in the House of Lords about that not in any way limiting MI5 operations in Scotland in the national security interests of the whole UK.

Finally, I turn to the issue just raised by the right hon. Member for Haltemprice and Howden (Mr Davis). If I have one big concern about the Bill, it is the Christmas tree of other agencies that are to have these powers; I have not yet personally been given a good explanation of why the Food Standards Agency needs them, for example. I am quite comfortable and satisfied not only that the

security services, police and other agencies are able to run CHISs, but that they do it. They know what to do, they do it on a regular basis, and they have officers with huge experience. That gives me some reassurance that the operation of the Bill, when it becomes law, will be done properly. I would like some convincing that the Food Standards Agency and others that use these powers on a less regular basis will necessarily have that thoroughness.

Let me conclude by again thanking the Solicitor General and the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup, who have interacted on the Bill with Members across the House, and by once again thanking the men and women of our security services.

5.15 pm

Mr David Davis: May I, too, start by paying proper credit to the Minister for Security, my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (James Brokenshire)? James is a very old friend, a very long-standing colleague and an old protégé of mine. I spoke to him only a few days ago, and I have to tell the House that, given the seriousness of the operation that he is facing, he is both calmer and braver than I would be. We wish him well.

The origins of this Bill are, to say the least, somewhat doubtful. It started out with a circumstance where the state faced the prospect of being taken to the English courts over its current practice of giving many state agencies, including the Food Standards Agency, the right to authorise any criminal activity by their informants or agents, and having that power taken away from it. That is the origin of this Bill; that is where it comes from.

So what did the Government do? They cobbled together all the existing practices of their various police, intelligence and other agencies, good and bad—there were both good and bad—and set out to put them into law. That is not just theoretically problematic; it does not work perfectly today. For example, the Investigatory Powers Commissioner uncovered a case a couple of years ago where an MI6 agent or informant clearly very seriously broke the law, in breach of the guidelines he had been given, and the agency did not even inform the Minister before it carried on and allowed him to do the same again.

I am not prissy about the operation of our intelligence and police agencies. I was one of the Ministers who took through this House the Intelligence Services Act 1994. That is the one with the so-called licence-to-kill clause—the 007 clause, section 7 of that Act—which explicitly permits the action of the agencies to commit crimes under English law, but with restrictions and ministerial oversight built into it.

Nevertheless, this Bill, unamended, in my view goes too far, as is demonstrated by the fact that the amendments in front of us today were voted for in the Lords by a past Cabinet Secretary, a past Home Office permanent secretary, a past Foreign Office permanent secretary, a past National Security Adviser, a past Director of Public Prosecutions and a past reviewer of our counter-terrorism legislation—every single one of them more familiar at a close and tactical level than any Minister serving in Government. That is not meant as an insult; it is just a fact of life.

I have sympathy with many of the Lords amendments, but the business before us today contains, in my view, two vital amendments passed in the other place: Lords amendment 4, concerning the use of children as agents; and Lords amendment 2, placing limits on the type of crime that can be sanctioned. Both are entirely sensible amendments that significantly improve the Bill.

Let me start with child spies. The use of children as undercover informants is, in my view, very largely a morally repugnant policy. It results in children being put in dangerous positions during the investigation of serious and violent crimes with, frankly, minimal safeguards in place. The Investigatory Powers Commissioner has already confirmed that child spies can themselves often be part of violent gangs, or continuing victims—continuing: that is the important point—of child sexual abuse, when they are recruited as intelligence sources. We should normally be seeking to move heaven and earth to remove these children from their horrible situations. Instead, the Bill would allow them to be sent back into harm's way with minimal safeguards in place.

I am speaking from memory here, so I hope I get this exactly right, but in the other place, an example was given of a 17-year-old who was basically sold for sex to a variety of people, along with a number of other young women and children—legally, children—under one of these CHIS arrangements, and this was allowed to continue. The result was that the child involved was the witness to a murder, and not just the witness: she was effectively coerced by her circumstance into helping to cover up the murder, having to hide the evidence and so on. This was a youngster who had been a product of the care system, who had bounced from authority to authority—as we have seen happen in so many terrible cases—yet she was left in these circumstances in pursuit of getting more information about the criminal she was under the control of.

The Bill also raises the possibility of 16 and 17-year-olds being authorised by any of a number of different agencies to spy on their parents. These agencies include police forces and the intelligence services, but it also extends to the others that the right hon. Member for North Durham (Mr Jones) referred to earlier. Do we really want to give such arbitrary and unfettered powers to such agencies? I, for one, do not under any circumstances. Amendment 4 would limit the deployment of child spies to exceptional circumstances, where all other methods to gain information have failed, and only if there is no risk of any reasonably foreseeable harm. We are not talking about MI5 or MI6 here, but about police agencies that are dealing with people, no doubt in county lines operations, sex trafficking operations and so on. Their first duty is to rescue the child, so it is an entirely sensible amendment, which I will support. It introduces real, meaningful safeguards that have been endorsed by the Children's Commissioner.

However, on its own, amendment 4 is not enough. In its current form, the Bill also allows organisations to permit their employees and informants to commit criminal activity, with no express limit on the crimes that can be authorised—a point addressed by my right hon. Friend the Member for New Forest East (Dr Lewis), the Chairman of the Intelligence and Security Committee. In my view, this lack of an express limit is wrong. It can never be right for the state to authorise the gravest of crimes—we are talking about a narrow group of crimes here: torture, murder, or sexual violence—yet that is precisely what

this Bill will do if left unamended. I am as sceptical about the human rights protections as my right hon. Friend, but for different reasons, and I will explain why. For a start, allowing this type of behaviour puts us out of step with our international allies. Our Five Eyes security partners recognise the need for limits. Australia, Canada, and nowadays America all have common-sense limits on what their covert agents can do to prevent this line from being crossed. We must now do the same.

Lord Carlile of Berriew, who frankly is a long-standing opponent of mine in these things—he mostly takes the authoritarian state line, despite the fact that he is nominally a liberal—has described this Bill as the most constitutionally dangerous legislation presented in his working life. I agree, which is why I support Lords amendment 2, which places clear, common-sense limits on the crimes that covert agents can be authorised to commit, ensuring that the worst crimes such as murder, torture and rape can never be authorised. It mirrors an amendment I tabled in Committee in the Commons, and if the CHIS Bill becomes law without those limits, it is almost certain to be challenged in the courts and may eventually be overturned. This will not be the first time we have been here: those who have been here for some years will remember the Data Retention and Investigatory Powers Act 2014, which went through the same process. Tom Watson and I took it to court; we won, and the Government had to rewrite it. I hope we do not have to do the same with this Bill—it would be unwise to repeat that experience.

Let me explain why that is a risk. The argument made by some hon. Members, particularly those on the Intelligence and Security Committee—who have close involvement with this issue, and whose experience I recognise—has to be put up against one test: if it is impossible for us, why is it not impossible for Australia, America and Canada? They can operate; why can't we? The Government have to answer that question, otherwise I think they will find that this Bill will not stand.

There are real risks to providing these powers without limit. At the end of last year, the Investigatory Powers Commissioner reported that he had identified several weaknesses in MI6's agent-running practices in the UK, leading to several errors, and, even worse, that high-risk covert agents had indulged in serious criminality overseas. Only this morning, MI5 confirmed in court that it would authorise one of its informants to carry out murder as part of its activities. So much, frankly, for the safeguards of the Human Rights Act. If MI5 is willing to say that in court, where in this exercise is the protection of the Human Rights Act, which was the Government's defence last time and, indeed, the Minister's defence today?

There is a real need for legislation in this area; I agree about that with pretty much everybody who has spoken. This is better in law than in some standard written inside an agency, with all the influences that being inside an agency brings to bear on it. There is a need for legislation, but this legislation is, bluntly, thrown together. In many ways, it incorporates some of the worst elements of the preceding arrangements, which need to be put right. The Minister kindly said that he will be listening before the Bill goes back to the Lords for amendment. I think there are amendments that could meet most of the concerns of those who have spoken, and that is what I would like to see before it goes back to the Lords.

Stella Creasy (Walthamstow) (Lab/Co-op) [V]: The House is considering this Bill and these amendments at a time when we recognise the difficult job that we ask our security services, and indeed our police, to do to keep us safe. However, these practices have gone on for some years and it is right to legislate to give the protection of a framework as to how they can happen. It is important that that framework is protected. I therefore want to speak in support of amendment 4, tabled in the other place by Baroness Kidron and supported by a cross-party group including Lord Young, Lord Kennedy and Baroness Hamwee, which sets out the protections and safeguards that we should ask for if we expect children or vulnerable people to commit crimes on our behalf. Like others, I thank the people in the Lords who have done a huge amount of work to get us to this place on these protections. I also thank the previous Minister, the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (James Brokenshire), and his counterpart in the Lords, Baroness Williams, both of whom have listened to concerns with regard to this amendment. I know that the Minister has come to this matter late and he wants to listen too.

That is why I want to put on record how sorry I am that we have not yet got to agreement across this House and across this Parliament. If the Minister was listening to the right hon. Member for Haltemprice and Howden (Mr Davis), who I recognise also has strong feelings about this, he would see that there is concern across this House about how we best protect children. I think that everyone in this House knows that when it comes to other people's children, it is a fundamental principle that we should want for them what we want for our own. Sadly, some children will not be as loved as others, as well cared for as others or as well-behaved as others, but they are all children.

That is why, although I listened carefully to the Minister's comments on amendment 4 and why he will not accept it, I want the Government to go further and give assurances about what will happen next. Ministers have yet to acknowledge that if we do not include amendment 4 in the Bill, there is no alternative provision to cover this scenario and the inconsistencies in the arguments that they are making today. The Minister has said that there are no new powers in the Bill with regard to child CHISes, but there are no protections either. He will be well aware that the Government were taken to court by Just For Kids and the court said that children were put in harm's way as a result of these proposals. Therefore, this House does have to act. The Government's own guidance accepts that participation in criminality is an inescapable feature of being a CHIS, including for children. Ministers have said that there is increasing scope for young people to be used as they are increasingly being involved in criminality—that as the criminals use more children, so should we.

5.30 pm

That is particularly the case when it comes to county lines. The Children's Society estimates that there are 46,000 children involved in such gangs, with 4,000 in London alone. The Government are asking us to treat these often broken and scared young people as capable of consenting to engage in criminal behaviour. We spend so much of our time trying to get children out of harm, but the Government are now trying to argue that, in order for that to happen, we must put them directly in

harm's way. There is almost a risk in what the Solicitor General said of implying that these children have to help the police in order to be helped by the police; I am sure that that is not what he wishes to say. Many of us may argue, why use them at all? There is merit in the simplicity of simply prohibiting children from being CHIS, but we recognise that there may be circumstances—exceptional circumstances—in which we would consider that to be necessary, with careful supervision. That is what Lords amendment 4 does. It writes on the face of the Bill the principle that no child should be asked by the state to commit a crime except in exceptional circumstances, and by “exceptional” we mean when there can be no doubt that the child would not come to harm. It upholds our obligations under the United Nations convention on the rights of the child to treat all people under 18 as children.

Currently, if a child is arrested for shoplifting at the age of 16 or 17, an appropriate adult would oversee their interactions with the police. That is because we recognise that there is a fundamental power imbalance between anybody who is working with the police and a child. Under the Government's plans, the police will be under no obligation to appoint such a person for those 16 or 17-year-olds. That means that a 16 or 17-year-old could be recruited without anybody knowing—not their parents or a social worker. They could be asked to inform on anyone, including their own parents, or asked to remain in dangerous situations at great personal risk, without any legal advice, independent voice or help to say no if they want to.

Baroness Hamwee set out the case, described by the right hon. Member for Haltemprice and Howden (Mr Davis), of a young girl who was in a sexually exploitative relationship with a man and eventually witnessed a murder as a result of being in that relationship. She was maintained in that relationship in order to provide information to the police. What is crucial to our debate is that that young girl was 17. Under the Government's proposals, there is no guarantee that there would be an appropriate adult overseeing that relationship with her and raising the necessary questions. The Government say that this is because, by the time a child is 16 or 17, they become increasingly independent and mature. Are we really comfortable with the argument that if a child shoplifts, they are childish and need a guardian when they talk to the police, but if they spy and commit crimes for the police, they are mature and they do not?

Ministers simply cannot have it both ways: there is an apparent presumption of an appropriate adult, so we do not need to write that on the face of the Bill, and having an appropriate adult with a child raises the risk that they will be revealed as a source. When the Solicitor General makes that argument, he fails to explain why we then require an appropriate adult for under-16-year-olds. If having an appropriate adult involved raises the risk of a child being unveiled as a CHIS, that is surely true at any age, so why deny this to a 16 or 17-year-old?

By including Lords amendment 4 in the Bill, we would be in line with our obligations under the UN convention, which defines every person under 18 as a child. I hope Ministers can tell us whether a child rights impact assessment has been carried out on the legislation and, if so, why the Home Office feels that it can ignore those obligations to the UN when the Department for Education has recently said that we must reaffirm them.

Lords amendment 4 also extends the protection of having a second pair of eyes and the principle of exceptional circumstances, so as not to put somebody in the face of foreseeable harm, to vulnerable people and victims of trafficking or modern slavery. Those people may be older than 18 but are no less at risk of being placed in harm's way, and they, too, may struggle with notions of consent when faced with state authorities.

Lords amendment 4 is not prohibition. It is rooted in the real and dangerous world of criminality in which many of these children and vulnerable people already live. If the Government will not accept it, they must commit today to put on the face of the Bill the protections that they claim exist—the protection of not putting somebody knowingly in harm's way, the protection of an appropriate adult for all under-18-year-olds and the protection of the presumption that they would have that person. If what the Solicitor General says is true, none of those requirements should be onerous, and then he can understand why his objection and resistance to doing that is so worrying.

The Government argue that these children often want to help, and the more people who know that they are involved, the more at risk they are. But with the police offering them money for their work, and being in the scheme the sole arbiter of what is in their best interests, the conflicts of interest in this are manifest. That is why it is right that MPs should step in. Every one of us has a responsibility, to all the children we know, not knowingly to put them in harm's way. We act in loco parentis as if they are our child and ensure that their welfare comes first, even if it means that an investigation might be denied their insight. Today, every MP has an opportunity to let children be children, not child spies.

Sir Edward Leigh: I would like to associate myself with the arguments that have been adduced today by the Solicitor General and by my right hon. Friend the Member for New Forest East (Dr Lewis). I am afraid that I must disagree with my other very good friend, my right hon. Friend the Member for Haltemprice and Howden (Mr Davis). Nobody doubts his complete honesty and passion in these matters, and I hope that he does not accuse me of being an authoritarian, because I really am not. I hope I am as committed to civil liberties as anybody, but we are under a ruthless attack. The Minister mentioned 28 attacks, and we all know the appalling atrocities that have been committed on our streets in recent years. We all know about the Manchester bombing and about Lee Rigby. The list is endless. We all know that there are absolutely ruthless people who care nothing about our values and who are prepared to destroy and kill innocent people. This is not a game of cricket, and we cannot play and defeat these people by traditional policing methods. We cannot rely simply on bugging their mobile phones. As my right hon. Friend the Member for New Forest East, who speaks with more experience than anybody else as Chairman of the Intelligence and Security Committee, said, we rely absolutely on covert intelligence sources: people going into these organisations and acting with extraordinary bravery.

I understand the motivation of what has been said in the other place, and I can understand why people are adducing these arguments based on human rights, but there is a possibility that if we were to accept these Lords amendments we would be putting the lives of our

own people at risk. The most powerful point made by the Solicitor General was almost at the beginning of his speech when he said that the state should not prosecute people for actions that the state asks them to do. These people are working for us. They are working to defend our people, and I have to say to my right hon. Friend the Member for Haltemprice and Howden that if it is a choice between my daughters being blown up on the London tube and there being some slight and occasional infringement of the human rights of terrorists and potential terrorists, I know where my choice is. I think that the public are also on this space.

Mr David Davis: I do not think that my right hon. Friend was in the Chamber for the beginning of my speech, because I was going to refer to him and tell him that I did not agree with him that the Blairite approach to terrorism worked at all. Indeed, I think it made it considerably worse. In my speech I listed a whole series of people—the Home Office, the Foreign Office, security and prosecution specialists—who knew their way around this like the back of their hand, and they were not making the recommendations because they thought they needed to uphold some civil liberty. They were making the recommendations because they thought that what they were proposing worked better than what the Government were proposing, and that is what I think, too.

Sir Edward Leigh: I apologise for missing that. I was summoned in to see the Speaker, as I warned the Deputy Speaker, so I missed that part of my right hon. Friend's speech, but I listened to everything that was said in the early part of the debate, and I followed it carefully. I made an intervention on the Opposition spokesman, and I still believe it. I frankly trust Mr Blair and Mr Brown more than I trust the former leader of the Labour party on these issues.

Dr Julian Lewis: In support of my right hon. Friend, it will come as no surprise that I would simply say that, whether one trusts this expert or that expert, or this or that Committee Chairman, that is what is known in philosophical terms as the appeal to authority. I am happy to rely on the argument that I put forward, which is that, if we create a list of things that agents cannot do, we invite terrorists to use it as a checklist to test their own membership for spies and infiltrators.

Sir Edward Leigh: Of course I agree with that, and I wanted to make that point as best I could. It is quite a weak argument to say that, because certain people who have been in authoritative positions make a certain argument, that it is therefore a clincher in argumentation. Actually, the point put by my right hon. Friend the Member for New Forest East was far more powerful, frankly. He was adducing a specific example. If it is laid down in statute that a covert agent cannot take a particular action, that is an invitation to terrorist or gangster groups to have an initiation ceremony based precisely on what is forbidden by Parliament. I thought that that was a completely unanswerable argument.

Mr David Davis rose—

Sir Edward Leigh: But if my right hon. Friend wants to defeat it, let us hear it.

Mr Davis: I knew my right hon. Friend would live up the debate. The test is not the test of authority. It is an empirical test. America, Australia and the other Five Eyes all have these limitations, and their intelligence agencies seem to work perfectly well.

Sir Edward Leigh: So he says, but I am no expert.

Dr Julian Lewis: Just because an ally has a system that may leave its agents vulnerable to exposure and death, that does not mean that we should copy that.

Sir Edward Leigh: Exactly, and I hazard a guess—as we have seen with the covid outbreak—we are a uniquely open society. We have very large levels of immigration. We have large minority communities. By the way, 99.9% totally oppose terrorists, do not believe in that and all the rest of it, but we know we are fundamentally and hugely vulnerable as a nation, probably much more vulnerable than Australia or New Zealand, so the fact that Australia does certain things does not apply. Personally, speaking for myself, I would rather listen to arguments from my right hon. Friend the Chair of the Intelligence and Security Committee, who has been briefed by MI5 and MI6, than to arguments adduced at second hand by my right hon. Friend the Member for Haltemprice and Howden, who tells me that in New Zealand and Australia they do things in a different way and are at no higher risk. In any court of law, the evidence adduced by my right hon. Friend the Member for New Forest East is more powerful than the arguments adduced by my other right hon. Friend.

We have just heard a passionate defence of children. No one denies the commitment of the hon. Member for Walthamstow (Stella Creasy) to the welfare of children, but when I was reading about this debate in some Sunday papers and other parts of the media at the weekend, it gave the impression that we were almost going back to Stalin's Russia, and getting children to spy on their parents. This is ridiculous—we have to have a sense of proportion. We live in the United Kingdom. We have a system of law. Can we not trust our operatives in MI5, MI6 or the police force to act proportionately and in a necessary way?

Mr David Davis: No. That is why we have the law

Sir Edward Leigh: I am sorry, we already have human rights legislation—my right hon. Friend places a lot of faith in that. Like my right hon. Friend the Member for New Forest East, I think we have seen numerous instances where our armed forces have been treated appallingly in the past. There is great public concern about that. We do not want to put our security services, who are living in an infinitely more dangerous world, in the same position in which we put our armed forces. The Bill as it stands is proportionate and reasonable, and there has to be an element of trust. Personally, I think that it is extraordinarily unlikely in our country that MI5, MI6 or the police forces would act in such a way that if we knew what they were doing we would be horrified and think it was corrupt or that they were somehow abusing children. I suspect that if we use minors who are 16 or 17 in a certain way that is done very carefully. I suspect that we are not initiating any new behaviour at all and we are rescuing young people from cruel fate.

Bob Stewart: I thank my really good friend, my right hon. Friend, for letting me intervene. I speak from experience, because I have run an organisation—I will not be too precise—and there were several hundred people on my books. Not one was a child. We did not need a law to tell us not to use children. We did not use children, and there was no flipping law that stopped us.

5.45 pm

Sir Edward Leigh: I think that is powerful evidence. This is about common sense; it is about proportionality and being reasonable. We cannot use law or statute to provide a sort of envelope around every action that the security services do. In the real world that does not work. It may be counterproductive, dangerous, and could put our own people at danger.

Finally, perhaps the Minister can comment on the fact that Lords amendment 5 would require all criminal conduct authorisation to be notified to the judicial commissioners, as set out in the Investigatory Powers Act 2016. Again, that sounds reasonable, but it also provides the judicial commissioners with the power to cancel an authorisation if they determine that it should not have been granted. That would require the covert activity to cease immediately. Such authorisations would only need to be notified to the judicial commissioners within seven days of them being granted. That means that they might cancel an authorisation, and insist that the activities carried out under it cease immediately, in the middle of the very acts in question. As I understand it—I may be wrong—the amendment would therefore undermine the very ability of our security services to recruit covert human intelligence sources. I mention that point because am not sure that it has already been raised in this debate. Let us be reasonable and proportionate, and let us leave the Bill as it is.

Mr Alistair Carmichael (Orkney and Shetland) (LD) [V]: It is a pleasure to follow the right hon. Member for Gainsborough (Sir Edward Leigh), and I confess that I am slightly frustrated sitting here in my sitting room in Orkney. I suspect that if I were with you on the green Benches, Mr Deputy Speaker, I would have joined the right hon. Members for Haltemprice and Howden (Mr Davis) and for New Forest East (Dr Lewis) in engaging in the debate as it went along. Such is the nature of the times in which we find ourselves.

The thesis that the right hon. Member for Gainsborough offers the House tonight proceeds on the basis that it is necessary to empower those who engage in protecting us through the work of the security services, by offering them unlimited power and leaving everything up to their discretion. The thesis that I offer in rebuttal to that—this is very much in line with what the right hon. Member for Haltemprice and Howden said—is that we best serve the people who put themselves in the way of danger by laying down the limits with which we authorise their activity. It seems to me that to leave everything to their discretion means that we abdicate our duties as parliamentarians, and subcontract them to those who do not have the authority that we have, and who as a consequence are left exposed.

May I add my name to the long list of those who send good wishes to the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (James Brokenshire)? He is a Minister who brings an incredible amount of diligence, care and

thoughtfulness to his work in the House, and it was a matter of significant regret and sadness when I heard that he found himself again unwell. No Member of the House would not concur in sending him the very best of wishes.

I thank their lordships in the other place for the manner in which they have further scrutinised the Bill. They did so in a typically thoughtful and reasoned manner, and I invite the Solicitor General to consider the nature of those who have sent us these amendments. They include Lord Anderson of Ipswich, Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd, Lord Paddick and Baroness Hamwee, a former independent reviewer of terrorism legislation, a former Lord Chief Justice, a former senior police officer, and a distinguished legal practitioner of many decades and experience. This is not some cabal of over-zealous radicals and anarchists. These are people, men and women, who have significant experience in the realities—the practicalities—of those matters before the House. I suggest gently to the Solicitor General that their views require rather more substantial and considered rebuttal than we have heard from those on the Treasury Bench today.

I will canter through the different amendments that come to our House tonight from their lordships. On Lords amendment 1, inserting the word “reasonably” would effectively turn a subjective test into an objective test. This comes back to the point that I made at the start. It is for the benefit and protection of those who are required to engage covert human intelligence sources and send them out into the field that there should be some objective measures that they know their conduct and judgments can be measured against.

Lords amendment 2 introduces a number of limitations—Canadian-style, essentially. I thought that the objections that we heard from those on the Treasury Bench in relation to this were somewhat synthetic. In terms of our standing in the world community and as important protectors of the concept of the rule of law, I suggest again to the Minister that this is something that really requires a bit more care for our reputation on the world stage.

Lords amendment 3 is different from all the others, because all the others relate to the practice and conduct of people who are the sources, whereas this relates to those who are victims. It is entirely right that protections should be put in the Bill for those who are victims—innocent victims, in particular—of this sort of criminality. Again, I ask the Minister to reconsider the position on what is a very modest protection, but an important one none the less for those who will find themselves in that position.

The hon. Member for Walthamstow (Stella Creasy) made a powerful and impassioned case on Lords amendment 4. It is a well-accepted principle throughout the criminal and civil law of this country that we treat children differently. I again suggest that the Government need to be a bit more circumspect in relation to that.

I thought that the hon. Member for Bromley and Chislehurst (Sir Robert Neill) dealt very effectively and eloquently with Lords amendment 5. In the event that conduct is deemed to have been unlawful, even retrospectively, surely that is the point at which it should be stopped. The Government’s case that our intelligence services can serve the national interest by continuing

with conduct that has been considered by a judicial authority to be unlawful undermines the force of their arguments.

I want to remind the House of the genesis of this legislation. As the right hon. Member for Haltemprice and Howden and the right hon. Member for North Durham (Mr Jones) touched on, the third direction by the former Prime Minister was being tested in the investigatory powers tribunal. The Government had what I think would be best described as a narrow squeak there, and it was then, as a measure of some panic, that they decided to bring in this legislation in anticipation of the fact, or in fear, that their position would be overturned in the Appeal Court. I think that that was a not unreasonable view to be taken by the Government in all the circumstances. It is worth noting, in relation to the effectiveness of the Human Rights Act as a protection in this area of law, that not only is the Human Rights Act itself under review by the Government, but that the reliance on the Human Rights Act in Parliament stands in very stark contrast to the repudiation of it being applicable in their pleadings in the tribunal. I do not think the Government can have it both ways. The bringing of the Bill is in itself a good and worthy ideal, but these are matters that should be regulated by Parliament. We realise that this is not done for any sort of Damascene conversion, but that it is, in fact, a panic measure.

The thinking behind the Bill seems to be that the Government accept that there has to be change inasmuch as the regulation of this activity has to be put on to a statutory footing. At the same time, however, they want to do it in such a way that nothing actually changes. It is done on a fairly crude world view, if I may say that. Somehow or other, law enforcement is always about good guys doing good things, pursuing bad guys who have done bad things. Those of us who have worked in the criminal courts and elsewhere know that is often a bit more nuanced than that. The sort of world view that brings this legislation is one which very quickly brings us to the point where the end can be seen always to justify the means. The bottom line is that those who are involved in these difficult areas of judgment very often do get them wrong.

I offer not a directly applicable example here, but one that I think should give the House cause to pause: the operation under the Blair Governments of extraordinary rendition and the cases of Boudchar and Belhaj. Jack Straw, as Foreign Secretary, and Mark Allen were essentially responsible for the rendition of Belhaj and Boudchar to Libya—incredibly, to say it now—and they did so in contravention of every stated Government policy. Ultimately, those cases were required to be settled with non-disclosure agreements and substantial amounts of public money paid in compensation.

Those cases illustrate the fact that there is a need for us as Parliament to put limits on what can be done by those who we charge to operate in this field. It should not be prescriptive, but it should be something that is there to which they can have reference, so that we can have security of knowledge that the work they do on our behalf is done properly. That is what these amendments are about. That is why this Bill has gone so badly wrong. The amendments from the other place seek to improve the Bill and my party will this evening vote in support of maintaining them.

Geraint Davies (Swansea West) (Lab/Co-op) [V]: I do not want to breach the consensus that has emerged, but I have to say that in my view the Bill brings new powers that are unnecessary, disproportionate and open to abuse, and brings operatives beyond the rule of law, which is unnecessary. I have already opposed the Bill in the past and I very much support the amendments to provide some constraints on prospective abuses.

I should say at the outset that we all very much welcome and applaud the covert human intelligence sources, and the fantastic work they have done over the past few years in thwarting 28 terrorist attempts. However, that, of course, was all achieved under the current law, with safeguards. The problem with the Bill is that it actually removes the law and the safeguards, and I therefore cannot support it. In a nutshell, the Bill allows new powers—not existing powers—for Ministers and officials to confer immunity from prosecution for people to commit serious crimes.

Those crimes can be authorised in the name of national security, which we understand, of crime prevention and detection—yes, perhaps—and of the “economic well-being of the United Kingdom.”

In other words, crimes could be committed against anti-frackers and Extinction Rebellion and so on, so this is much too broadly defined.

6 pm

Furthermore, this provision is unnecessary, because we already have statutory powers to authorise criminal acts, where necessary, controlled by the third direction policy and enforceable in court, as was found in respect of the MI5 policy—the two-test policy about things being “necessary” and “proportionate” in terms of the public interest. It is also claimed that the Human Rights Act will somehow protect us, but the Government came in on a manifesto of abolishing or repealing that Act, and a review of it is going on at the moment. Furthermore, during the third direction test case the Government argued that the Human Rights Act did not constitute a basis against the Government for a CHIS offence. Therefore, I do not support the Bill; and I support the Lords amendments.

Lords amendment 2 seeks to exclude murder, grievous bodily harm, sexual violence, torture and depriving someone of their liberty from these authorisations. Even if the amendment is accepted, Ministers can still be empowered to harass political opponents and suppress dissent. I support Lords amendments 1, 5, 12 and 14, which seek to improve judicial scrutiny, so that we have a report to judicial commissioners and objective tests—not just subjective ones—on the basis of reasonable belief, which can be tested, so that judges can rule whether an action is lawful and exercise a power to remove the authority to commit a crime that is not reasonable. But of course the judicial commissioners will be appointed by the Prime Minister—they will not be independent judges—which again blurs the division between the Executive and the judiciary. That is not normal in modern democracies—or in any democracies for that matter.

Amendment (a) relates to the issue of having authorisations in respect of juveniles and vulnerable individuals in only “exceptional circumstances”. I would support that of course, but I fail to imagine where we should be using juvenile and vulnerable individuals—getting them to spy on their parents, be in drug gangs or whatever it is. I do not think that is something we

should be authorising. Clearly, if we are, there need to be constraints. For the reasons I have already outlined, I respect the position of Scotland: if it is not bust, don’t fix it.

Lords amendment 3 is on criminal injuries compensation for victims of crimes authorised. Clearly, there should be compensation if crimes are authorised that are disproportionate and unnecessary—and we may never know. On the overall situation, clearly, we have a duty to protect the public, and we must balance security, liberty and human rights. In a democracy, we should certainly support the Lords amendments, to put constraints on the Bill, which other democracies have not adopted and which we would not like to see applied in less liberal environments than our own.

Imran Ahmad Khan (Wakefield) (Con) [V]: I would like to take a moment to wish my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (James Brokenshire) a speedy recovery and thank him for all his hard work in his role as Minister for Security.

This Bill provides our operational agencies with the powers required to enhance our national security, protecting British citizens from those who seek to do them harm. When a story relating to covert intelligence breaks in the news, there follow lazy and ill-informed references to James Bond and a licence to kill. We in Parliament have a duty to keep the discourse on this topic sensible. James Bond is a magnificent manifestation of the United Kingdom’s creative arts. He does not, however, reflect the reality of the serious work that goes on in the intelligence services. Those brave men and women do not have a licence to kill or needlessly commit crimes, but have chosen to put themselves at risk for our common safety. The best way to express our gratitude to those who serve this country is for us to help stop sensationalising this issue. It pollutes the debate and does nothing to help pass effective legislation that simultaneously safeguards security and human rights. I am committed to both, and it is a mistaken belief to maintain that security and human rights are mutually exclusive, for in truth they are mutually reinforcing.

Covert human intelligence sources operations have proven their effectiveness. CHIS-led operations have allowed the National Crime Agency to disrupt over 30 threats to life, safeguard over 200 people and seize 60 firearms from those who may use them to do harm. Between 2017 and 2019, HMRC CHIS have prevented hundreds of millions of pounds in tax loss, including one case that was estimated to have prevented a loss of over £100 million.

I recognise that some of the amendments sent by the Lords wished to safeguard vulnerable and juvenile CHIS and ensure that operatives do not take part in the worst type of crimes, such as rape or murder. Certainly, I understand the thinking behind these amendments, but I do not support them. With regard to juvenile and vulnerable CHIS, Her Majesty’s Government have put forward substantial amendments to the Bill to ensure that robust safeguards are established for the very rare circumstances when juvenile CHIS may be tasked with participating in criminal activities.

The Government amendments leave no doubt that the authorising officer has a duty to safeguard and protect the best interests of the juvenile. This duty is a key factor in any decision for the authorisation of

a mission. The amendment proposed by the Lords certainly raises the importance of ensuring that CHIS are adequately protected from harm, but ultimately it would undermine our ability to tackle criminal activities. I have an extract from the report from the Investigatory Powers Commissioner that demonstrates the importance of juvenile CHIS:

“In one such case, a juvenile was carrying out activity on behalf of a ‘county line’ drug supply group. The juvenile owed money to the group and approached the police wishing to provide information. A referral under the Modern Slavery Act was made by the police and a care plan was drawn up with Children’s Services, including relocating the juvenile and finding them a training course. Once this had been done, as an authorised CHIS, the juvenile was able to provide intelligence to the police regarding the ‘county line’ crime group.”

With regard to concerns that the Bill allows operatives to get away with the worst types of crimes, let me say this: the Bill has already outlined that authorisation is only granted by highly trained authorising officers, who work within and maintain strict operating parameters. Crucially, there are clear and regulated limits to the types of criminal activities that may be conducted. As part of our obligations under the European convention on human rights, the prohibition of torture and subjection of individuals to degrading treatment is strictly enforced. Further, all activity is overseen by the independent Investigatory Powers Commissioner, who ensures that accountability is maintained throughout the process of any such operation. It is crucial that the ISC and the Investigatory Powers Commissioner have proper oversight and that such oversight is published.

In ensuring greater accountability, more effective oversight should be promoted. I am not alone in taking that view, but share it with those possessed of particular understanding and expertise in these matters. For example, that view is at the centre of the research by Professor Rory Cormac of the University of Nottingham, who is one of the country’s leading experts on covert intelligence. A number of points that I have made are mentioned in his research, including his book “Disrupt and Deny”, which I recommend to colleagues. One point stressed by Professor Cormac is that CHIS have to be able to commit certain crimes in order to be credible, gain information and/or engage in covert operations.

Regulation is certainly crucial to prevent problems such as the collusion in Northern Ireland from ever arising again. Any co-operation with violent non-state actors must be properly regulated to prevent officers and agents from getting ahead of themselves and interpreting their own parameters too broadly. The Bill would make such activity less likely, while allowing those who take risks with their lives to keep us safe the support that they need to be successful. I do not doubt the well-meaning intentions of the Lords amendments or the concerns surrounding the Bill; however, the Bill will ensure that regulations and processes are effectively enforced, preventing officers from acting autonomously or beyond their remit.

As I have said previously, protocols are already in existence that ensure that the interests and safety of juvenile and vulnerable CHIS are maintained; however, I am gladdened that additional measures are being considered to bolster the existing provision. Without such operatives working within strict parameters and with the necessary oversight, as outlined in the Bill, we, and all that we care about most, would be less secure.

Apsana Begum (Poplar and Limehouse) (Lab) [V]: I speak in support of Lords amendments 1 to 6, and particularly Lords amendment 3.

I have repeatedly spoken out and voted against the Bill because I believe it to be fundamentally unjust. The Government have claimed that the Bill is

“a continuation of existing practice”

that it puts on a “statutory footing”. For many, though, the existing legislation was not fit for purpose in the first place. The Government’s approach to the Lords amendments does not go far enough to recognise the extent to which the Bill still undermines human rights.

Public inquiries into the nature and impact of the criminal actions of covert human intelligence operatives are still under way. We in this House have not had the opportunity to consider any of the findings of those inquiries, nor any that they may produce in future, but it is clear that those inquiries have come about because there are lessons to be learned from serious cases involving our operatives engaging in sexual relationships. It would therefore be helpful if the Solicitor General outlined in his closing statement whether the Government will commit to reviewing the Bill in the light of any findings produced by inquiries in the future.

It is not clear how any provisions of the Bill, even with the Lords amendments that the Government are indicating they are willing to listen to, will ensure that innocent victims can seek redress. The Solicitor General said in his speech earlier that Lords amendment 3 is unnecessary. Government Front Benchers have also said that the Human Rights Act provides sufficient safeguards, but that Act, significant as it is as a piece of legislation, contains no provision for prosecutions to be brought against individuals. For example, if an innocent victim—a woman or a child—believes that they have been exploited for the collection of intelligence, they cannot bring a covert operative or a public body in front of the courts under the Human Rights Act. For that reason, Lords amendment 3 is absolutely necessary to ensure that the door of justice is open for such victims.

So far in this debate, many Members have rightly highlighted the threats posed by terrorism, but they have failed to mention the scope of the authorities to which the Bill provides powers—not just MI5 and MI6 but authorities such as the Food Standards Agency. The Government should consider the impact of the Bill, even with all the Lords amendments, and how it goes much further beyond the very serious threat of terrorism.

There has been little, if any, mention of the communities that are likely to be most impacted by the Bill—communities that are already experiencing marginalisation in society. Among them is a community that is extremely and excessively policed and unduly spied on. They have had their homes raided and their children targeted in schools. They have unduly borne the brunt of security and counter-terrorism legislation, particularly over the past two decades—I recognise that that has been under successive Governments. That community is the Muslim community. The Government’s Prevent programme has fostered discrimination against Muslims by perpetuating Islamophobic stereotypes. This Bill, even with the amendments that the Government have conceded, does not address the environment of hostility that the community will be further subject to or the threats to their human rights in particular.

[Apsana Begum]

I conclude by saying that for as long as I am a Member of this House, I will continue to speak out about these concerns on behalf of such communities in the east London constituency that I represent. For as long as they continue to experience the erosion of their human rights, I will continue to oppose this legislation as it continues its journey in this House and the other. I will do so as a Member of this House, in proud, socialist, Labour tradition.

6.15 pm

The Solicitor General: With your leave, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would now like to make some closing remarks. I thank colleagues from across the House for the thoughtful and considered contributions made this afternoon.

First, I shall address remarks about limits and the conduct that can be authorised under the Bill. I make the point again, because it is important: the limits on what could be authorised under this legislation are provided by the requirement for all authorisations to be necessary, proportionate and compliant with the Human Rights Act. There are limits, and they are defined in that way. Nothing in the Bill seeks to undermine the important protections in the Human Rights Act; the Government have been consistently clear on that. Public authorities will not and cannot act in a way that breaches their legal obligations under the Human Rights Act. I say this clearly on the record, from the Dispatch Box: any authorisation that was not compliant with the Human Rights Act would be unlawful.

Let me take this opportunity to thank my right hon. Friend the Member for New Forest East (Dr Lewis) for the important oversight role that his important Committee plays and in particular for his remarks about the difficulties concomitant on placing, or seeking to place, limits in a Bill such as this—he articulated those with typical clarity. Those points were also well made by the right hon. Member for North Durham (Mr Jones), as is usually the case. As we know, both right hon. Members contribute insight from their roles on the Intelligence and Security Committee.

The hon. Member for St Helens North (Conor McGinn) asked me to set out why we cannot have limits in this legislation similar to those in the legislation of some of our partners, such as our great ally Canada. I do not think it particularly useful or helpful to compare UK legislation with legislation in other countries because each country has its own unique laws, public authorities and current threat picture.

We know that covert human intelligence source testing takes place in the United Kingdom, particularly in relation to the unique challenges that we face in Northern Ireland. It is important that we legislate for the particular circumstances in which we need our operational partners to operate, to keep the public safe. Our advice on this issue is based solely on the advice of our operational partners. I hope that all Members place the weight that the Government have placed on their assessment of this issue.

I greatly respect the vast experience of my right hon. Friend the Member for Haltemprice and Howden (Mr Davis) in these areas. He is not in his place at the moment, but he raised information presented in argument to the Court of Appeal today. The House will understand

that my position as Solicitor General means that I cannot comment on ongoing legal proceedings, but I can confirm that MI5 did not say what my right hon. Friend articulated it had said.

Let me respond now to the points raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Bromley and Chislehurst (Sir Robert Neill) on this issue of putting reasonable belief into the Bill.

I will, if I may, confirm again that the Government do not dispute that the test for these authorisations should be one of reasonable belief. We do not support the amendment simply because we need to ensure that legislation is consistent across the board. We cannot have some Acts of Parliament using one form of words, and other Acts of Parliament using another form of words, because then others might interpret those Acts of Parliament to mean different things.

My hon. Friend also asked about civil redress. The Bill does not prevent those who have been impacted by a criminal conduct authorisation from seeking redress where that is appropriate. Any person or organisation can make a complaint, for example, to the Investigatory Powers Tribunal, which is a judicial body that operates totally independently of the Government and provides a right of redress for anyone who believes that they have been a victim of unlawful action by a public authority that has been using covert intelligence or investigative techniques. With regards to the criminal injuries compensation scheme, let me confirm that, in practice, access to that scheme is unaffected by this Bill.

Let me turn now to the important issue of juveniles, which many colleagues have raised, and respond to the points raised on the authorisation of juvenile CHIS. This Bill is not providing a new power for juveniles to be authorised as CHIS. What it does is seek to place on an explicit statutory basis the framework and safeguards for the very rare occasions where a juvenile may participate in criminal conduct in their role as a covert human intelligence source. There are also additional safeguards in place for the authorisation of juvenile CHIS and any authorisation of a juvenile as a source requires additional safeguards, as set out in the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Juveniles) Order 2000 and considered by Parliament in 2018. That authorisation is required before a criminal conduct authorisation can be granted. Equally, the Investigatory Powers Commissioner will consider every authorisation of a juvenile.

I note that the High Court of Justice considered the safeguards for juvenile CHIS in 2019, as noted by the hon. Member for Walthamstow (Stella Creasy) in her virtual contribution. I also note that the court expressly found them to be lawful. In fact, Mr Justice Supperstone explicitly rejected the contention that the scheme is inadequate in its safeguarding of the interests and welfare of juvenile CHIS.

The High Court also set out its view that it was clear that the principal focus of the framework for juvenile CHIS is to ensure that appropriate weight is given to a child's best interests and that the practical effect of the enhanced risk assessment is that juveniles are utilised only in extreme circumstances and when other potential sources of information have been exhausted. The IPC has concluded similarly.

Let me say specifically that police CHIS handlers are separate from their operational teams and they have a duty to safeguard and promote the best interests of the

child as a primary consideration, and the aim of an authorisation is to remove them from the harm that they are already in, not to put them in greater harm.

Conor McGinn: I appreciate the Solicitor General giving way and I am reassured by much of what he says, but having just said that the Government would not accept amendment 1 because of the need to be consistent across the law, will he comment on the fact that it is still an anomaly that 16 and 17-year-olds who commit a crime of their own volition are entitled to different protections from 16 and 17-year-olds who commit a crime as a result of a criminal conduct authorisation?

The Solicitor General: The reality, of course, is that the safeguards that I have adumbrated in regard to CHIS are very relevant here and, as I have mentioned, there are considerable safeguards that form the protections that we can say with confidence mean that those 16 and 17-year-olds will have very good protection.

I will now turn specifically to the point raised by the requirement for an appropriate adult to be placed for sources aged 16 or 17, which I would like to explore a little bit more. The Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Juveniles) Order sets out a requirement for an appropriate adult to be in attendance at all meetings between a public authority and a source below the age of 16. It must be considered on a case-by-case basis for sources aged 16 or 17, and this is the case for any general authorisation of the CHIS and any specific additional authorisation for participation in criminal conduct, which is what we are debating in this Bill.

Let me be clear, though, that when each case is being considered carefully, there is a presumption that there will be an appropriate adult in place—that is the default position, unless there is a justification for not having an appropriate adult in place. An example of such a justification might be that doing so would not be in the best interests of the child. The best interests of the child are always at the heart of the decision making. If the authorising officer believes that an appropriate adult should not be in place, that justification must be documented, and can be considered by the IPC.

I would caution the House against using examples, whether real or hypothetical—it does tend to be risky to do so, and puts young people at risk—but criminal gangs will seek to apply the scenario that has been set out to their own experience, which could result in them wrongly identifying and putting at risk of harm anyone suspected of being a CHIS. As such, the example suggested by the hon. Member for Walthamstow and by my right hon. Friend the Member for Haltemprice and Howden does not fit with the framework of safeguards that is in place for juvenile CHIS. This could not happen, and we do not recognise the example given.

However, as I said in my earlier remarks, the Government are listening. We will continue to listen, and will do so by means through which we can provide further reassurance about these authorisations. I hope these conversations can continue, and that we can find a means of providing additional reassurance while not risking the safety of a juvenile CHIS. While it is not appropriate to put all 74 pages of the code of practice into the Bill—I think I said “hundreds” earlier, but it is actually only 74 pages—I agree with the right hon. Member for North Durham that it may be appropriate to include some of those

safeguards, including confirmation that a juvenile could only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Not all of the code of practice applies to this Bill, but some parts may, so the right hon. Gentleman makes a perfectly good point.

Turning briefly to Lords amendment 5, I think there is consensus that the additional oversight provided by the requirement to notify a judicial commissioner is reassuring. The commissioner will see all authorisations of juvenile CHIS, and likewise will be able to confirm that all authorisations are compliant with the Human Rights Act.

In response to the question posed by my hon. Friend the Member for Bromley and Chislehurst, let me offer reassurance about what would happen if the IPC or a judicial commissioner did not agree with an authorisation when notified of its grant. A judicial commissioner would flag any concerns to the authorising officer, and they would work collaboratively to address such concerns. If an authorisation has been granted but the activity not yet started, the judicial commissioner and authorising officer will work together to address those concerns. If the activity has started, the authorising officer must take into account any concerns that have been raised, and will continue to discuss these with the judicial commissioner. It would not be the case that a public authority would simply ignore feedback from the IPCO: it is a collaborative process, and the views of the commissioners carry serious weight. However, ultimately, it would be a matter for the court to determine.

Finally, in response to the right hon. Member for North Durham, who asked whether any concerns raised by the IPC will feature in the annual report, I can confirm that the IPC must include statistics on the use of this power, including any errors and areas where improvement has been recommended.

I hope that I have been able to provide additional clarity and reassurance on these issues, and that the House will vote to reject these amendments.

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

The House divided: Ayes 367, Noes 265.

Division No. 219]

[6.30 pm

AYES

Adams, Nigel	Baker, Mr Steve
Afolami, Bim	Baldwin, Harriett
Afriyie, Adam	Barclay, rh Steve
Ahmad Khan, Imran	Baron, Mr John
Aiken, Nickie	Baynes, Simon
Aldous, Peter	Bell, Aaron
Allan, Lucy	Benton, Scott
Amess, Sir David	Beresford, Sir Paul
Anderson, Lee	Berry, rh Jake
Anderson, Stuart	Bhatti, Saqib
Andrew, Stuart	Blackman, Bob
Ansell, Caroline	Blunt, Crispin
Argar, Edward	Bone, Mr Peter
Atherton, Sarah	Bottomley, Sir Peter
Atkins, Victoria	Bowie, Andrew
Bacon, Gareth	Bradley, Ben
Bacon, Mr Richard	Bradley, rh Karen
Badenoch, Kemi	Brady, Sir Graham
Bailey, Shaun	Braverman, rh Suella
Baillie, Siobhan	Brereton, Jack
Baker, Duncan	Bridgen, Andrew

Brine, Steve	Fell, Simon	Jenrick, rh Robert	Nici, Lia
Bristow, Paul	Fletcher, Katherine	Johnson, rh Boris	Nokes, rh Caroline
Britcliffe, Sara	Fletcher, Mark	Johnson, Dr Caroline	Norman, rh Jesse
Brokenshire, rh James	Fletcher, Nick	Johnson, Gareth	O'Brien, Neil
Browne, Anthony	Ford, Vicky	Johnston, David	Offord, Dr Matthew
Bruce, Fiona	Foster, Kevin	Jones, Andrew	Opperman, Guy
Buchan, Felicity	Fox, rh Dr Liam	Jones, rh Mr David	Paisley, Ian
Buckland, rh Robert	Francois, rh Mr Mark	Jones, Fay	Parish, Neil
Burghart, Alex	Frazer, Lucy	Jones, Mr Marcus	Patel, rh Priti
Burns, rh Conor	Freeman, George	Jupp, Simon	Paterson, rh Mr Owen
Butler, Rob	Freer, Mike	Kawczynski, Daniel	Pawsey, Mark
Cairns, rh Alun	Fuller, Richard	Kearns, Alicia	Penning, rh Sir Mike
Campbell, Mr Gregory	Fysh, Mr Marcus	Keegan, Gillian	Penrose, John
Carter, Andy	Gale, rh Sir Roger	Knight, rh Sir Greg	Percy, Andrew
Cartlidge, James	Garnier, Mark	Knight, Julian	Philp, Chris
Cash, Sir William	Ghani, Ms Nusrat	Kruger, Danny	Pincher, rh Christopher
Cates, Miriam	Gibb, rh Nick	Kwarteng, rh Kwasi	Poulter, Dr Dan
Caulfield, Maria	Gibson, Peter	Lamont, John	Pow, Rebecca
Chalk, Alex	Gideon, Jo	Largan, Robert	Prentis, Victoria
Chishti, Rehman	Gillan, rh Dame Cheryl	Latham, Mrs Pauline	Pritchard, Mark
Churchill, Jo	Girvan, Paul	Leadsom, rh Andrea	Pursglove, Tom
Clark, rh Greg	Glen, John	Leigh, rh Sir Edward	Quin, Jeremy
Clarke, Mr Simon	Goodwill, rh Mr Robert	Levy, Ian	Quince, Will
Clarke, Theo	Gove, rh Michael	Lewer, Andrew	Raab, rh Dominic
Clarke-Smith, Brendan	Graham, Richard	Lewis, rh Brandon	Randall, Tom
Clarkson, Chris	Grant, Mrs Helen	Lewis, rh Dr Julian	Redwood, rh John
Cleverly, rh James	Gray, James	Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian	Rees-Mogg, rh Mr Jacob
Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey	Grayling, rh Chris	Lockhart, Carla	Richards, Nicola
Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse	Green, Chris	Loder, Chris	Richardson, Angela
Colburn, Elliot	Green, rh Damian	Logan, Mark	Roberts, Rob
Collins, Damian	Griffith, Andrew	Longhi, Marco	Robertson, Mr Laurence
Costa, Alberto	Griffiths, Kate	Lopez, Julia	Robinson, Gavin
Courts, Robert	Grundy, James	Lopresti, Jack	Robinson, Mary
Coutinho, Claire	Gullis, Jonathan	Lord, Mr Jonathan	Rosindell, Andrew
Cox, rh Sir Geoffrey	Halfon, rh Robert	Loughton, Tim	Ross, Douglas
Crabb, rh Stephen	Hall, Luke	Mackinlay, Craig	Rowley, Lee
Crosbie, Virginia	Hammond, Stephen	Mackrory, Cherilyn	Russell, Dean
Crouch, Tracey	Hancock, rh Matt	Maclean, Rachel	Rutley, David
Daly, James	Hands, rh Greg	Mak, Alan	Sambrook, Gary
Davies, David T. C.	Harper, rh Mr Mark	Malthouse, Kit	Saxby, Selaine
Davies, Gareth	Harris, Rebecca	Mangnall, Anthony	Scully, Paul
Davies, Dr James	Harrison, Trudy	Mann, Scott	Seely, Bob
Davies, Mims	Hart, Sally-Ann	Marson, Julie	Selous, Andrew
Davies, Philip	Hart, rh Simon	May, rh Mrs Theresa	Shannon, Jim
Davis, rh Mr David	Hayes, rh Sir John	Mayhew, Jerome	Shapps, rh Grant
Davison, Dehenna	Heald, rh Sir Oliver	Maynard, Paul	Sharma, rh Alok
Dinenage, Caroline	Heapey, James	McCartney, Jason	Shelbrooke, rh Alec
Dines, Miss Sarah	Heaton-Harris, Chris	McCartney, Karl	Simmonds, David
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan	Henderson, Gordon	McPartland, Stephen	Skidmore, rh Chris
Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.	Henry, Darren	McVey, rh Esther	Smith, Chloe
Donelan, Michelle	Higginbotham, Antony	Menzies, Mark	Smith, Greg
Dorries, Ms Nadine	Hinds, rh Damian	Mercer, Johnny	Smith, Henry
Double, Steve	Hoare, Simon	Merriman, Huw	Smith, rh Julian
Dowden, rh Oliver	Holden, Mr Richard	Metcalfe, Stephen	Smith, Royston
Doyle-Price, Jackie	Hollinrake, Kevin	Millar, Robin	Solloway, Amanda
Drax, Richard	Hollobone, Mr Philip	Miller, rh Mrs Maria	Spencer, Dr Ben
Drummond, Mrs Flick	Holloway, Adam	Milling, rh Amanda	Spencer, rh Mark
Duddridge, James	Holmes, Paul	Mills, Nigel	Stafford, Alexander
Duguid, David	Howell, John	Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew	Stephenson, Andrew
Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain	Howell, Paul	Mohindra, Mr Gagan	Stevenson, Jane
Dunne, rh Philip	Huddleston, Nigel	Moore, Damien	Stevenson, John
Eastwood, Mark	Hudson, Dr Neil	Moore, Robbie	Stewart, Bob
Edwards, Ruth	Hughes, Eddie	Mordaunt, rh Penny	Stewart, Iain
Ellis, rh Michael	Hunt, Jane	Morris, Anne Marie	Streeter, Sir Gary
Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias	Hunt, rh Jeremy	Morris, David	Stride, rh Mel
Elphicke, Mrs Natalie	Hunt, Tom	Morrissey, Joy	Stuart, Graham
Eustice, rh George	Jack, rh Mr Alister	Morton, Wendy	Sturdy, Julian
Evans, Dr Luke	Javid, rh Sajid	Mullan, Dr Kieran	Sunak, rh Rishi
Evennett, rh Sir David	Jayawardena, Mr Ranil	Mumby-Croft, Holly	Sunderland, James
Everitt, Ben	Jenkin, Sir Bernard	Mundell, rh David	Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
Fabricant, Michael	Jenkinson, Mark	Murray, Mrs Sheryll	Syms, Sir Robert
Farris, Laura	Jenkyns, Andrea	Murrison, rh Dr Andrew	Thomas, Derek

Throup, Maggie
Timpson, Edward
Tolhurst, Kelly
Tomlinson, Justin
Tomlinson, Michael
Tracey, Craig
Trevelyan, rh Anne-Marie
Trott, Laura
Truss, rh Elizabeth
Tugendhat, Tom
Vara, Mr Shailesh
Vickers, Martin
Vickers, Matt
Villiers, rh Theresa
Wakeford, Christian
Walker, Sir Charles
Walker, Mr Robin
Wallace, rh Mr Ben
Wallis, Dr Jamie
Warburton, David

Warman, Matt
Watling, Giles
Webb, Suzanne
Whately, Helen
Wheeler, Mrs Heather
Whittaker, Craig
Whittingdale, rh Mr John
Wiggin, Bill
Wild, James
Williams, Craig
Williamson, rh Gavin
Wilson, rh Sammy
Wood, Mike
Wragg, Mr William
Wright, rh Jeremy
Young, Jacob
Zahawi, Nadhim

Tellers for the Ayes:
James Morris and
Leo Docherty

NOES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane
Abrahams, Debbie
Ali, Rushanara
Ali, Tahir
Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
Amesbury, Mike
Anderson, Fleur
Antoniazzi, Tonia
Ashworth, Jonathan
Bardell, Hannah
Barker, Paula
Beckett, rh Margaret
Begum, Apsana
Benn, rh Hilary
Betts, Mr Clive
Black, Mhairi
Blackford, rh Ian
Blackman, Kirsty
Blake, Olivia
Blomfield, Paul
Bonnar, Steven
Brabin, Tracy
Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
Brennan, Kevin
Brock, Deidre
Brown, Alan
Brown, Ms Lyn
Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
Bryant, Chris
Buck, Ms Karen
Burgon, Richard
Butler, Dawn
Byrne, Ian
Byrne, rh Liam
Cadbury, Ruth
Callaghan, Amy
Cameron, Dr Lisa
Campbell, rh Sir Alan
Carden, Dan
Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
Chamberlain, Wendy
Champion, Sarah
Chapman, Douglas
Charalambous, Bambos
Cherry, Joanna
Clark, Feryal
Cooper, Daisy
Cooper, Rosie
Cooper, rh Yvette

Corbyn, rh Jeremy
Cowan, Ronnie
Coyle, Neil
Crawley, Angela
Creasy, Stella
Cruddas, Jon
Cryer, John
Cummins, Judith
Cunningham, Alex
Daby, Janet
Davey, rh Ed
David, Wayne
Davies, Geraint
Davies-Jones, Alex
Day, Martyn
De Cordova, Marsha
Debbonaire, Thangam
Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
Docherty-Hughes, Martin
Dodds, Anneliese
Doogan, Dave
Dorans, Allan
Doughty, Stephen
Dowd, Peter
Dromey, Jack
Duffield, Rosie
Eagle, Dame Angela
Eagle, Maria
Eastwood, Colum
Edwards, Jonathan
Efford, Clive
Elliott, Julie
Elmore, Chris
Eshalomi, Florence
Esterson, Bill
Evans, Chris
Farron, Tim
Farry, Stephen
Fellows, Marion
Ferrier, Margaret
Flynn, Stephen
Fovargue, Yvonne
Foxcroft, Vicky
Foy, Mary Kelly
Gardiner, Barry
Gibson, Patricia
Gill, Preet Kaur
Glindon, Mary
Grady, Patrick

Grant, Peter
Gray, Neil
Green, Kate
Greenwood, Lilian
Greenwood, Margaret
Griffith, Nia
Gwynne, Andrew
Haigh, Louise
Hamilton, Fabian
Hanna, Claire
Hanvey, Neale
Hardy, Emma
Harman, rh Ms Harriet
Harris, Carolyn
Hayes, Helen
Healey, rh John
Hendrick, Sir Mark
Hendry, Drew
Hill, Mike
Hillier, Meg
Hobhouse, Wera
Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
Hollern, Kate
Hopkins, Rachel
Hosie, Stewart
Howarth, rh Sir George
Huq, Dr Rupa
Hussain, Imran
Jardine, Christine
Jarvis, Dan
Johnson, Dame Diana
Johnson, Kim
Jones, Darren
Jones, Gerald
Jones, Ruth
Jones, Sarah
Kane, Mike
Keeley, Barbara
Kendall, Liz
Khan, Afzal
Kinnock, Stephen
Kyle, Peter
Lake, Ben
Lammy, rh Mr David
Lavery, Ian
Law, Chris
Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
Lewis, Clive
Linden, David
Lloyd, Tony
Long Bailey, Rebecca
Lucas, Caroline
Lynch, Holly
MacAskill, Kenny
MacNeil, Angus Brendan
Madders, Justin
Mahmood, Mr Khalid
Mahmood, Shabana
Malhotra, Seema
Maskell, Rachael
Matheson, Christian
Mc Nally, John
McCabe, Steve
McCarthy, Kerry
McDonagh, Siobhain
McDonald, Andy
McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
McDonald, Stuart C.
McDonnell, rh John
McFadden, rh Mr Pat
McGinn, Conor

McGovern, Alison
McKinnell, Catherine
McLaughlin, Anne
McMahon, Jim
McMorris, Anna
Mearns, Ian
Miliband, rh Edward
Mishra, Navendu
Monaghan, Carol
Moran, Layla
Morden, Jessica
Morgan, Stephen
Morris, Grahame
Murray, Ian
Murray, James
Nandy, Lisa
Newlands, Gavin
Nichols, Charlotte
Nicolson, John
Norris, Alex
O'Hara, Brendan
Olney, Sarah
Onwurah, Chi
Oppong-Asare, Abena
Osamor, Kate
Osborne, Kate
Oswald, Kirsten
Owatemi, Taiwo
Owen, Sarah
Peacock, Stephanie
Pennycook, Matthew
Perkins, Mr Toby
Phillips, Jess
Phillipson, Bridget
Pollard, Luke
Powell, Lucy
Qureshi, Yasmin
Rayner, Angela
Reed, Steve
Rees, Christina
Reeves, Ellie
Reeves, Rachel
Reynolds, Jonathan
Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
Rimmer, Ms Marie
Rodda, Matt
Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
Saville Roberts, rh Liz
Shah, Naz
Sharma, Mr Virendra
Sheerman, Mr Barry
Sheppard, Tommy
Siddiq, Tulip
Slaughter, Andy
Smith, Alyn
Smith, Cat
Smith, Jeff
Smith, Nick
Smyth, Karin
Sobel, Alex
Spellar, rh John
Starmar, rh Keir
Stephens, Chris
Stevens, Jo
Stone, Jamie
Streeting, Wes
Stringer, Graham
Sultana, Zarah
Tami, rh Mark
Tarry, Sam
Thewliss, Alison
Thomas, Gareth

Thomas-Symonds, Nick
Thompson, Owen
Thomson, Richard
Thornberry, rh Emily
Timms, rh Stephen
Trickett, Jon
Turner, Karl
Twigg, Derek
Twist, Liz
Vaz, rh Valerie
Webbe, Claudia
West, Catherine
Western, Matt

Whitehead, Dr Alan
Whitford, Dr Philippa
Whitley, Mick
Whittome, Nadia
Williams, Hywel
Wilson, Munira
Winter, Beth
Wishart, Pete
Yasin, Mohammad
Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:

**Gill Furniss and
Colleen Fletcher**

Donelan, Michelle
Dorries, Ms Nadine
Double, Steve
Dowden, rh Oliver
Doyle-Price, Jackie
Drax, Richard
Drummond, Mrs Flick
Duddridge, James
Duguid, David
Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
Dunne, rh Philip
Eastwood, Mark
Edwards, Ruth
Ellis, rh Michael
Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
Eustice, rh George
Evans, Dr Luke
Evennett, rh Sir David
Everitt, Ben
Fabricant, Michael
Farris, Laura
Fell, Simon
Fletcher, Katherine
Fletcher, Mark
Fletcher, Nick
Ford, Vicky
Foster, Kevin
Fox, rh Dr Liam
Francois, rh Mr Mark
Frazer, Lucy
Freeman, George
Freer, Mike
Fuller, Richard
Fysh, Mr Marcus
Gale, rh Sir Roger
Garnier, Mark
Ghani, Ms Nusrat
Gibb, rh Nick
Gibson, Peter
Gideon, Jo
Girvan, Paul
Glen, John
Goodwill, rh Mr Robert
Gove, rh Michael
Graham, Richard
Grant, Mrs Helen
Gray, James
Grayling, rh Chris
Green, Chris
Green, rh Damian
Griffith, Andrew
Griffiths, Kate
Grundy, James
Gullis, Jonathan
Halfon, rh Robert
Hall, Luke
Hammond, Stephen
Hancock, rh Matt
Hands, rh Greg
Harper, rh Mr Mark
Harris, Rebecca
Harrison, Trudy
Hart, Sally-Ann
Hart, rh Simon
Hayes, rh Sir John
Heald, rh Sir Oliver
Heappey, James
Heaton-Harris, Chris
Henderson, Gordon
Henry, Darren
Higginbotham, Antony

Hinds, rh Damian
Hoare, Simon
Holden, Mr Richard
Hollinrake, Kevin
Hollobone, Mr Philip
Holloway, Adam
Holmes, Paul
Howell, John
Howell, Paul
Huddleston, Nigel
Hudson, Dr Neil
Hughes, Eddie
Hunt, Jane
Hunt, rh Jeremy
Hunt, Tom
Jack, rh Mr Alister
Javid, rh Sajid
Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
Jenkin, Sir Bernard
Jenkinson, Mark
Jenkyins, Andrea
Jenrick, rh Robert
Johnson, rh Boris
Johnson, Dr Caroline
Johnson, Gareth
Johnston, David
Jones, Andrew
Jones, rh Mr David
Jones, Fay
Jones, Mr Marcus
Jupp, Simon
Kawczynski, Daniel
Kearns, Alicia
Keegan, Gillian
Knight, rh Sir Greg
Knight, Julian
Kruger, Danny
Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
Lamont, John
Largan, Robert
Latham, Mrs Pauline
Leadsom, rh Andrea
Leigh, rh Sir Edward
Levy, Ian
Lewer, Andrew
Lewis, rh Brandon
Lewis, rh Dr Julian
Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
Lockhart, Carla
Logan, Mark
Longhi, Marco
Lopez, Julia
Lopresti, Jack
Lord, Mr Jonathan
Mackinlay, Craig
Mackrory, Cherilyn
Maclean, Rachel
Mak, Alan
Malthouse, Kit
Mangnall, Anthony
Mann, Scott
Marson, Julie
May, rh Mrs Theresa
Mayhew, Jerome
Maynard, Paul
McCartney, Jason
McCartney, Karl
McPartland, Stephen
McVey, rh Esther
Menzies, Mark
Mercer, Johnny
Merriman, Huw

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 1 disagreed to.

The list of Members currently certified as eligible for a proxy vote, and of the Members nominated as their proxy, is published at the end of today's debates.

Motion made, and Question put, That this House disagrees with Lords amendment 2.—(The Solicitor General.)

The House divided: Ayes 363, Noes 267.

Division No. 220]**[6.41 pm****AYES**

Adams, Nigel
Afolami, Bim
Ahmad Khan, Imran
Aiken, Nickie
Aldous, Peter
Allan, Lucy
Amess, Sir David
Anderson, Lee
Anderson, Stuart
Andrew, Stuart
Ansell, Caroline
Argar, Edward
Atherton, Sarah
Atkins, Victoria
Bacon, Gareth
Bacon, Mr Richard
Badenoch, Kemi
Bailey, Shaun
Baillie, Siobhan
Baker, Duncan
Baker, Mr Steve
Baldwin, Harriett
Barclay, rh Steve
Baron, Mr John
Baynes, Simon
Bell, Aaron
Benton, Scott
Beresford, Sir Paul
Berry, rh Jake
Bhatti, Saqib
Blackman, Bob
Blunt, Crispin
Bone, Mr Peter
Bottomley, Sir Peter
Bowie, Andrew
Bradley, Ben
Bradley, rh Karen
Brady, Sir Graham
Braverman, rh Suella
Brereton, Jack
Bridgen, Andrew
Brine, Steve
Bristow, Paul
Britcliffe, Sara
Brokenshire, rh James

Browne, Anthony
Bruce, Fiona
Buchan, Felicity
Buckland, rh Robert
Burghart, Alex
Burns, rh Conor
Butler, Rob
Cairns, rh Alun
Campbell, Mr Gregory
Carter, Andy
Cartlidge, James
Cash, Sir William
Cates, Miriam
Caulfield, Maria
Chalk, Alex
Chishty, Rehman
Churchill, Jo
Clark, rh Greg
Clarke, Mr Simon
Clarke, Theo
Clarke-Smith, Brendan
Clarkson, Chris
Cleverly, rh James
Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey
Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse
Colburn, Elliot
Collins, Damian
Costa, Alberto
Courts, Robert
Coutinho, Claire
Cox, rh Sir Geoffrey
Crabb, rh Stephen
Crosbie, Virginia
Crouch, Tracey
Daly, James
Davies, David T. C.
Davies, Gareth
Davies, Dr James
Davies, Mims
Davies, Philip
Davison, Dehenna
Dinenage, Caroline
Dines, Miss Sarah
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.

Metcalfe, Stephen
 Millar, Robin
 Miller, rh Mrs Maria
 Milling, rh Amanda
 Mills, Nigel
 Mohindra, Mr Gagan
 Moore, Damien
 Moore, Robbie
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morrissey, Joy
 Morton, Wendy
 Mullan, Dr Kieran
 Mumby-Croft, Holly
 Mundell, rh David
 Murray, Mrs Sheryll
 Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
 Neill, Sir Robert
 Nici, Lia
 Nokes, rh Caroline
 Norman, rh Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Paisley, Ian
 Parish, Neil
 Patel, rh Priti
 Paterson, rh Mr Owen
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Philp, Chris
 Pincher, rh Christopher
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, Victoria
 Pritchard, Mark
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quin, Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Raab, rh Dominic
 Randall, Tom
 Redwood, rh John
 Rees-Mogg, rh Mr Jacob
 Richards, Nicola
 Richardson, Angela
 Roberts, Rob
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Robinson, Gavin
 Robinson, Mary
 Rosindell, Andrew
 Ross, Douglas
 Rowley, Lee
 Russell, Dean
 Rutley, David
 Sambrook, Gary
 Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Bob
 Selous, Andrew
 Shannon, Jim
 Shapps, rh Grant
 Sharma, rh Alok
 Shelbrooke, rh Alec

Simmonds, David
 Skidmore, rh Chris
 Smith, Chloe
 Smith, Greg
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, rh Julian
 Smith, Royston
 Solloway, Amanda
 Spencer, Dr Ben
 Spencer, rh Mark
 Stafford, Alexander
 Stephenson, Andrew
 Stevenson, Jane
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Streeter, Sir Gary
 Stride, rh Mel
 Stuart, Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunak, rh Rishi
 Sunderland, James
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Throup, Maggie
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Tracey, Craig
 Trevelyan, rh Anne-Marie
 Trott, Laura
 Truss, rh Elizabeth
 Tugendhat, Tom
 Vara, Mr Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Vickers, Matt
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Wakeford, Christian
 Walker, Sir Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Wallace, rh Mr Ben
 Wallis, Dr Jamie
 Warburton, David
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Webb, Suzanne
 Whately, Helen
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Mr John
 Wiggin, Bill
 Wild, James
 Williams, Craig
 Williamson, rh Gavin
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Wood, Mike
 Wragg, Mr William
 Wright, rh Jeremy
 Young, Jacob
 Zahawi, Nadhim

Tellers for the Ayes:
Leo Docherty and
James Morris

NOES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane
 Abrahams, Debbie
 Ali, Rushanara

Ali, Tahir
 Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
 Amesbury, Mike

Anderson, Fleur
 Antoniazzi, Tonia
 Ashworth, Jonathan
 Bardell, Hannah
 Barker, Paula
 Beckett, rh Margaret
 Begum, Apsana
 Benn, rh Hilary
 Betts, Mr Clive
 Black, Mhairi
 Blackford, rh Ian
 Blackman, Kirsty
 Blake, Olivia
 Blomfield, Paul
 Bonnar, Steven
 Brabin, Tracy
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
 Brennan, Kevin
 Brock, Deidre
 Brown, Alan
 Brown, Ms Lyn
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
 Bryant, Chris
 Buck, Ms Karen
 Burgon, Richard
 Butler, Dawn
 Byrne, Ian
 Byrne, rh Liam
 Cadbury, Ruth
 Callaghan, Amy
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Carden, Dan
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
 Chamberlain, Wendy
 Champion, Sarah
 Chapman, Douglas
 Charalambous, Bambos
 Cherry, Joanna
 Clark, Feryal
 Cooper, Daisy
 Cooper, Rosie
 Cooper, rh Yvette
 Corbyn, rh Jeremy
 Cowan, Ronnie
 Coyle, Neil
 Crawley, Angela
 Creasy, Stella
 Cruddas, Jon
 Cryer, John
 Cummins, Judith
 Cunningham, Alex
 Daby, Janet
 Davey, rh Ed
 David, Wayne
 Davies, Geraint
 Davies-Jones, Alex
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Day, Martyn
 De Cordova, Marsha
 Debonnaire, Thangam
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Docherty-Hughes, Martin
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Doogan, Dave
 Dorans, Allan
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Dromey, Jack
 Duffield, Rosie
 Eagle, Dame Angela
 Eagle, Maria

Eastwood, Colum
 Edwards, Jonathan
 Efford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Elmore, Chris
 Eshalomi, Florence
 Esterson, Bill
 Evans, Chris
 Farron, Tim
 Farry, Stephen
 Fellows, Marion
 Ferrier, Margaret
 Flynn, Stephen
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Foy, Mary Kelly
 Gardiner, Barry
 Gibson, Patricia
 Gill, Preet Kaur
 Gillan, rh Dame Cheryl
 Glindon, Mary
 Grady, Patrick
 Grant, Peter
 Gray, Neil
 Green, Kate
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Nia
 Gwynne, Andrew
 Haigh, Louise
 Hamilton, Fabian
 Hanna, Claire
 Hanvey, Neale
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet
 Harris, Carolyn
 Hayes, Helen
 Healey, rh John
 Hendrick, Sir Mark
 Hendry, Drew
 Hill, Mike
 Hillier, Meg
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Hollern, Kate
 Hopkins, Rachel
 Hosie, Stewart
 Howarth, rh Sir George
 Huq, Dr Rupa
 Hussain, Imran
 Jardine, Christine
 Jarvis, Dan
 Johnson, Dame Diana
 Johnson, Kim
 Jones, Darren
 Jones, Gerald
 Jones, Ruth
 Jones, Sarah
 Kane, Mike
 Keeley, Barbara
 Kendall, Liz
 Khan, Afzal
 Kinnock, Stephen
 Kyle, Peter
 Lake, Ben
 Lammy, rh Mr David
 Lavery, Ian
 Law, Chris
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
 Lewis, Clive
 Linden, David

Lloyd, Tony
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lynch, Holly
 MacAskill, Kenny
 MacNeil, Angus Brendan
 Madders, Justin
 Mahmood, Mr Khalid
 Mahmood, Shabana
 Malhotra, Seema
 Maskell, Rachael
 Matheson, Christian
 Mc Nally, John
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonagh, Siobhain
 McDonald, Andy
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
 McDonald, Stuart C.
 McDonnell, rh John
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat
 McGinn, Conor
 McGovern, Alison
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McLaughlin, Anne
 McMahan, Jim
 McMorrin, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Miliband, rh Edward
 Mishra, Navendu
 Monaghan, Carol
 Moran, Layla
 Morden, Jessica
 Morgan, Stephen
 Morris, Grahame
 Murray, Ian
 Murray, James
 Nandy, Lisa
 Newlands, Gavin
 Nichols, Charlotte
 Nicolson, John
 Norris, Alex
 O'Hara, Brendan
 Olney, Sarah
 Onwurah, Chi
 Oppong-Asare, Abena
 Osamor, Kate
 Osborne, Kate
 Oswald, Kirsten
 Owatemi, Taiwo
 Owen, Sarah
 Peacock, Stephanie
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Mr Toby
 Phillips, Jess
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Pollard, Luke
 Powell, Lucy
 Qureshi, Yasmin
 Rayner, Angela
 Reed, Steve

Rees, Christina
 Reeves, Ellie
 Reeves, Rachel
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
 Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Rodda, Matt
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Saville Roberts, rh Liz
 Shah, Naz
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr Barry
 Sheppard, Tommy
 Siddiq, Tulip
 Slaughter, Andy
 Smith, Alyn
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Jeff
 Smith, Nick
 Smyth, Karin
 Sobel, Alex
 Spellar, rh John
 Starmer, rh Keir
 Stephens, Chris
 Stevens, Jo
 Stone, Jamie
 Streeting, Wes
 Stringer, Graham
 Sultana, Zarah
 Tami, rh Mark
 Tarry, Sam
 Thewliss, Alison
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick
 Thompson, Owen
 Thomson, Richard
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Stephen
 Trickett, Jon
 Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Twist, Liz
 Vaz, rh Valerie
 Webbe, Claudia
 West, Catherine
 Western, Matt
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whitford, Dr Philippa
 Whitley, Mick
 Whittome, Nadia
 Williams, Hywel
 Wilson, Munira
 Winter, Beth
 Wishart, Pete
 Yasin, Mohammad
 Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:
 Colleen Fletcher and
 Gill Furniss

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 2 disagreed to.

The list of Members currently certified as eligible for a proxy vote, and of the Members nominated as their proxy, is published at the end of today's debates.

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

The House divided: Ayes 367, Noes 265.

Division No. 221]

[6.51 pm

AYES

Adams, Nigel
 Afolami, Bim
 Afriyie, Adam
 Ahmad Khan, Imran
 Aiken, Nickie
 Aldous, Peter
 Allan, Lucy
 Amess, Sir David
 Anderson, Lee
 Anderson, Stuart
 Andrew, Stuart
 Ansell, Caroline
 Argar, Edward
 Atherton, Sarah
 Atkins, Victoria
 Bacon, Gareth
 Bacon, Mr Richard
 Badenoch, Kemi
 Bailey, Shaun
 Baillie, Siobhan
 Baker, Duncan
 Baker, Mr Steve
 Baldwin, Harriett
 Barclay, rh Steve
 Baron, Mr John
 Baynes, Simon
 Bell, Aaron
 Benton, Scott
 Beresford, Sir Paul
 Berry, rh Jake
 Bhatti, Saqib
 Blackman, Bob
 Blunt, Crispin
 Bone, Mr Peter
 Bottomley, Sir Peter
 Bowie, Andrew
 Bradley, Ben
 Bradley, rh Karen
 Brady, Sir Graham
 Braverman, rh Suella
 Brereton, Jack
 Bridgen, Andrew
 Brine, Steve
 Bristow, Paul
 Britcliffe, Sara
 Brokenshire, rh James
 Browne, Anthony
 Bruce, Fiona
 Buchan, Felicity
 Buckland, rh Robert
 Burghart, Alex
 Burns, rh Conor
 Butler, Rob
 Cairns, rh Alun
 Campbell, Mr Gregory
 Carter, Andy
 Cartledge, James
 Cash, Sir William
 Cates, Miriam
 Caulfield, Maria
 Chalk, Alex
 Chishti, Rehman
 Churchill, Jo
 Clark, rh Greg
 Clarke, Mr Simon
 Clarke, Theo
 Clarke-Smith, Brendan
 Clarkson, Chris
 Cleverly, rh James
 Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey
 Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse
 Colburn, Elliot
 Collins, Damian
 Costa, Alberto
 Courts, Robert
 Coutinho, Claire
 Cox, rh Mr Geoffrey
 Crabb, rh Stephen
 Crosbie, Virginia
 Crouch, Tracey
 Daly, James
 Davies, David T. C.
 Davies, Gareth
 Davies, Dr James
 Davies, Mims
 Davies, Philip
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Davison, Dehenna
 Dinenage, Caroline
 Dines, Miss Sarah
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
 Donelan, Michelle
 Dorries, Ms Nadine
 Double, Steve
 Dowden, rh Oliver
 Doyle-Price, Jackie
 Drax, Richard
 Drummond, Mrs Flick
 Duddridge, James
 Duguid, David
 Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
 Dunne, rh Philip
 Eastwood, Mark
 Edwards, Ruth
 Ellis, rh Michael
 Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
 Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
 Eustice, rh George
 Evans, Dr Luke
 Evennett, rh Sir David
 Everitt, Ben
 Fabricant, Michael
 Farris, Laura
 Fell, Simon
 Fletcher, Katherine
 Fletcher, Mark
 Fletcher, Nick
 Ford, Vicky
 Foster, Kevin
 Fox, rh Dr Liam
 Francois, rh Mr Mark
 Frazer, Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 Fuller, Richard
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Gale, rh Sir Roger
 Garnier, Mark
 Ghani, Ms Nusrat
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gibson, Peter
 Gideon, Jo
 Gillan, rh Dame Cheryl
 Girvan, Paul
 Glen, John
 Goodwill, rh Mr Robert
 Gove, rh Michael

Graham, Richard
 Grant, Mrs Helen
 Gray, James
 Grayling, rh Chris
 Green, Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Griffith, Andrew
 Griffiths, Kate
 Grundy, James
 Gullis, Jonathan
 Halfon, rh Robert
 Hall, Luke
 Hammond, Stephen
 Hancock, rh Matt
 Hands, rh Greg
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harris, Rebecca
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Sally-Ann
 Hart, rh Simon
 Hayes, rh Sir John
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Heapey, James
 Heaton-Harris, Chris
 Henderson, Gordon
 Henry, Darren
 Higginbotham, Antony
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Holden, Mr Richard
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Holloway, Adam
 Holmes, Paul
 Howell, John
 Howell, Paul
 Huddleston, Nigel
 Hudson, Dr Neil
 Hughes, Eddie
 Hunt, Jane
 Hunt, rh Jeremy
 Hunt, Tom
 Jack, rh Mr Alister
 Javid, rh Sajid
 Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard
 Jenkinson, Mark
 Jenkyns, Andrea
 Jenrick, rh Robert
 Johnson, rh Boris
 Johnson, Dr Caroline
 Johnson, Gareth
 Johnston, David
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Fay
 Jones, Mr Marcus
 Jupp, Simon
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Kearns, Alicia
 Keegan, Gillian
 Knight, rh Sir Greg
 Knight, Julian
 Kruger, Danny
 Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
 Lamont, John
 Langan, Robert
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Leadsom, rh Andrea
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Levy, Ian
 Lewer, Andrew

Lewis, rh Brandon
 Lewis, rh Dr Julian
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Lockhart, Carla
 Loder, Chris
 Logan, Mark
 Longhi, Marco
 Lopez, Julia
 Lopresti, Jack
 Lord, Mr Jonathan
 Loughton, Tim
 Mackinlay, Craig
 Mackrory, Cherylyn
 Maclean, Rachel
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, Kit
 Mangnall, Anthony
 Mann, Scott
 Marson, Julie
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 Mayhew, Jerome
 Maynard, Paul
 McCartney, Jason
 McCartney, Karl
 McPartland, Stephen
 McVey, rh Esther
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, Johnny
 Merriman, Huw
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Millar, Robin
 Miller, rh Mrs Maria
 Milling, rh Amanda
 Mills, Nigel
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
 Mohindra, Mr Gagan
 Moore, Damien
 Moore, Robbie
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morrissey, Joy
 Morton, Wendy
 Mullan, Dr Kieran
 Mumby-Croft, Holly
 Mundell, rh David
 Murray, Mrs Sheryll
 Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
 Nici, Lia
 Nokes, rh Caroline
 Norman, rh Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Paisley, Ian
 Parish, Neil
 Patel, rh Priti
 Paterson, rh Mr Owen
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Philp, Chris
 Pincher, rh Christopher
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, Victoria
 Pritchard, Mark
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quin, Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Raab, rh Dominic

Randall, Tom
 Redwood, rh John
 Rees-Mogg, rh Mr Jacob
 Richards, Nicola
 Richardson, Angela
 Roberts, Rob
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Robinson, Gavin
 Robinson, Mary
 Rosindell, Andrew
 Ross, Douglas
 Rowley, Lee
 Russell, Dean
 Rutley, David
 Sambrook, Gary
 Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Bob
 Selous, Andrew
 Shannon, Jim
 Shapps, rh Grant
 Sharma, rh Alok
 Shelbrooke, rh Alec
 Simmonds, David
 Skidmore, rh Chris
 Smith, Chloe
 Smith, Greg
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, rh Julian
 Smith, Royston
 Solloway, Amanda
 Spencer, Dr Ben
 Spencer, rh Mark
 Stafford, Alexander
 Stephenson, Andrew
 Stevenson, Jane
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Streeter, Sir Gary
 Stride, rh Mel
 Stuart, Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunak, rh Rishi
 Sunderland, James

Abbott, rh Ms Diane
 Abrahams, Debbie
 Ali, Rushanara
 Ali, Tahir
 Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
 Amesbury, Mike
 Anderson, Fleur
 Antoniazzi, Tonia
 Ashworth, Jonathan
 Bardell, Hannah
 Barker, Paula
 Beckett, rh Margaret
 Begum, Apsana
 Benn, rh Hilary
 Betts, Mr Clive
 Black, Mhairi
 Blackford, rh Ian
 Blackman, Kirsty
 Blake, Olivia
 Blomfield, Paul
 Bonnar, Steven
 Brabin, Tracy
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
 Brennan, Kevin

Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Throup, Maggie
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Tracey, Craig
 Trevelyan, rh Anne-Marie
 Trott, Laura
 Truss, rh Elizabeth
 Tugendhat, Tom
 Vara, Mr Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Vickers, Matt
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Wakeford, Christian
 Walker, Sir Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Wallace, rh Mr Ben
 Wallis, Dr Jamie
 Warburton, David
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Webb, Suzanne
 Whately, Helen
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Mr John
 Wiggin, Bill
 Wild, James
 Williams, Craig
 Williamson, rh Gavin
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Wood, Mike
 Wragg, Mr William
 Wright, rh Jeremy
 Young, Jacob
 Zahawi, Nadhim

Tellers for the Ayes:
 James Morris and
 Leo Docherty

NOES

Brock, Deidre
 Brown, Alan
 Brown, Ms Lyn
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
 Bryant, Chris
 Buck, Ms Karen
 Burgon, Richard
 Butler, Dawn
 Byrne, Ian
 Byrne, rh Liam
 Cadbury, Ruth
 Callaghan, Amy
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Carden, Dan
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
 Chamberlain, Wendy
 Champion, Sarah
 Chapman, Douglas
 Charalambous, Bambos
 Cherry, Joanna
 Clark, Feryal
 Cooper, Daisy
 Cooper, Rosie

Cooper, rh Yvette
 Corbyn, rh Jeremy
 Cowan, Ronnie
 Coyle, Neil
 Crawley, Angela
 Creasy, Stella
 Cruddas, Jon
 Cryer, John
 Cummins, Judith
 Cunningham, Alex
 Daby, Janet
 Davey, rh Ed
 David, Wayne
 Davies, Geraint
 Davies-Jones, Alex
 Day, Martyn
 De Cordova, Marsha
 Debbonaire, Thangam
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Docherty-Hughes, Martin
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Doogan, Dave
 Dorans, Allan
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Dromey, Jack
 Duffield, Rosie
 Eagle, Ms Angela
 Eagle, Maria
 Eastwood, Colum
 Edwards, Jonathan
 Efford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Elmore, Chris
 Eshalomi, Florence
 Esterson, Bill
 Evans, Chris
 Farron, Tim
 Farry, Stephen
 Fellows, Marion
 Ferrier, Margaret
 Flynn, Stephen
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Foy, Mary Kelly
 Gardiner, Barry
 Gibson, Patricia
 Gill, Preet Kaur
 Glindon, Mary
 Grady, Patrick
 Grant, Peter
 Gray, Neil
 Green, Kate
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Nia
 Gwynne, Andrew
 Haigh, Louise
 Hamilton, Fabian
 Hanna, Claire
 Hanvey, Neale
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet
 Harris, Carolyn
 Hayes, Helen
 Healey, rh John
 Hendrick, Sir Mark
 Hendry, Drew
 Hill, Mike
 Hillier, Meg
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret

Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Hollern, Kate
 Hopkins, Rachel
 Hosie, Stewart
 Howarth, rh Sir George
 Huq, Dr Rupa
 Hussain, Imran
 Jardine, Christine
 Jarvis, Dan
 Johnson, Dame Diana
 Johnson, Kim
 Jones, Darren
 Jones, Gerald
 Jones, Ruth
 Jones, Sarah
 Kane, Mike
 Keeley, Barbara
 Kendall, Liz
 Khan, Afzal
 Kinnock, Stephen
 Kyle, Peter
 Lake, Ben
 Lammy, rh Mr David
 Lavery, Ian
 Law, Chris
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
 Lewis, Clive
 Linden, David
 Lloyd, Tony
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lynch, Holly
 MacAskill, Kenny
 MacNeil, Angus Brendan
 Madders, Justin
 Mahmood, Mr Khalid
 Mahmood, Shabana
 Malhotra, Seema
 Maskell, Rachael
 Matheson, Christian
 Mc Nally, John
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonagh, Siobhain
 McDonald, Andy
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
 McDonald, Stuart C.
 McDonnell, rh John
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat
 McGinn, Conor
 McGovern, Alison
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McLaughlin, Anne
 McMahan, Jim
 McMorris, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Miliband, rh Edward
 Mishra, Navendu
 Monaghan, Carol
 Moran, Layla
 Morden, Jessica
 Morgan, Stephen
 Morris, Grahame
 Murray, Ian
 Murray, James
 Nandy, Lisa
 Newlands, Gavin
 Nichols, Charlotte
 Nicolson, John
 Norris, Alex
 O'Hara, Brendan
 Olney, Sarah

Onwurah, Chi
 Oppong-Asare, Abena
 Osamor, Kate
 Osborne, Kate
 Oswald, Kirsten
 Owatemi, Taiwo
 Owen, Sarah
 Peacock, Stephanie
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Mr Toby
 Phillips, Jess
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Pollard, Luke
 Powell, Lucy
 Qureshi, Yasmin
 Rayner, Angela
 Reed, Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reeves, Ellie
 Reeves, Rachel
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
 Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Rodda, Matt
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Saville Roberts, rh Liz
 Shah, Naz
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr Barry
 Sheppard, Tommy
 Siddiq, Tulip
 Slaughter, Andy
 Smith, Alyn
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Jeff
 Smith, Nick
 Smyth, Karin
 Sobel, Alex

Starmer, rh Keir
 Stephens, Chris
 Stevens, Jo
 Stone, Jamie
 Streeting, Wes
 Stringer, Graham
 Sultana, Zarah
 Tami, rh Mark
 Tarry, Sam
 Thewliss, Alison
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thomas-Symonds, Nick
 Thompson, Owen
 Thomson, Richard
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Stephen
 Trickett, Jon
 Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Twist, Liz
 Vaz, rh Valerie
 Webbe, Claudia
 West, Catherine
 Western, Matt
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whitford, Dr Philippa
 Whitley, Mick
 Whittome, Nadia
 Williams, Hywel
 Wilson, Munira
 Winter, Beth
 Wishart, Pete
 Yasin, Mohammad
 Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:
 Gill Furniss and
 Colleen Fletcher

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 3 disagreed to.

The list of Members currently certified as eligible for a proxy vote, and of the Members nominated as their proxy, is published at the end of today's debates.

7.1 pm

More than three hours having elapsed since the commencement of proceedings on consideration of Lords amendments, the debate was interrupted (Programme Order, this day).

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

After Clause 2

NOTIFICATION TO A JUDICIAL COMMISSIONER
Amendment (b) proposed to Lords amendment 5.—
(Michael Ellis.)

Question put, That the amendment be made.

The House divided: Ayes 366, Noes 265.

Division No. 222]

[7.2 pm

AYES

Adams, Nigel	Amess, Sir David
Afolami, Bim	Anderson, Lee
Ahmad Khan, Imran	Anderson, Stuart
Aiken, Nickie	Andrew, Stuart
Aldous, Peter	Ansell, Caroline
Allan, Lucy	Argar, Edward

Atherton, Sarah	Davies, Philip	Hart, rh Simon	May, rh Mrs Theresa
Atkins, Victoria	Davis, rh Mr David	Hayes, rh Sir John	Mayhew, Jerome
Bacon, Gareth	Davison, Dehenna	Heald, rh Sir Oliver	Maynard, Paul
Bacon, Mr Richard	Dinenage, Caroline	Heapey, James	McCartney, Jason
Badenoch, Kemi	Dines, Miss Sarah	Heaton-Harris, Chris	McCartney, Karl
Bailey, Shaun	Djanogly, Mr Jonathan	Henderson, Gordon	McPartland, Stephen
Baillie, Siobhan	Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.	Henry, Darren	McVey, rh Esther
Baker, Duncan	Donelan, Michelle	Higginbotham, Antony	Menzies, Mark
Baker, Mr Steve	Dorries, Ms Nadine	Hinds, rh Damian	Mercer, Johnny
Baldwin, Harriett	Double, Steve	Hoare, Simon	Merriman, Huw
Barclay, rh Steve	Dowden, rh Oliver	Holden, Mr Richard	Metcalfe, Stephen
Baron, Mr John	Doyle-Price, Jackie	Hollinrake, Kevin	Millar, Robin
Baynes, Simon	Drax, Richard	Hollobone, Mr Philip	Miller, rh Mrs Maria
Bell, Aaron	Drummond, Mrs Flick	Holloway, Adam	Milling, rh Amanda
Benton, Scott	Duddridge, James	Holmes, Paul	Mills, Nigel
Beresford, Sir Paul	Duguid, David	Howell, John	Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
Berry, rh Jake	Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain	Howell, Paul	Mohindra, Mr Gagan
Bhatti, Saqib	Dunne, rh Philip	Huddleston, Nigel	Moore, Damien
Blackman, Bob	Eastwood, Mark	Hudson, Dr Neil	Moore, Robbie
Blunt, Crispin	Edwards, Ruth	Hughes, Eddie	Mordaunt, rh Penny
Bone, Mr Peter	Ellis, rh Michael	Hunt, Jane	Morris, Anne Marie
Bottomley, Sir Peter	Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias	Hunt, rh Jeremy	Morris, David
Bowie, Andrew	Elphicke, Mrs Natalie	Hunt, Tom	Morrissey, Joy
Bradley, Ben	Eustice, rh George	Jack, rh Mr Alister	Morton, Wendy
Bradley, rh Karen	Evans, Dr Luke	Javid, rh Sajid	Mullan, Dr Kieran
Brady, Sir Graham	Evennett, rh Sir David	Jayawardena, Mr Ranil	Mumby-Croft, Holly
Braverman, rh Suella	Everitt, Ben	Jenkin, Sir Bernard	Mundell, rh David
Brereton, Jack	Fabricant, Michael	Jenkinson, Mark	Murray, Mrs Sheryll
Bridgen, Andrew	Farris, Laura	Jenkyns, Andrea	Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
Brine, Steve	Fell, Simon	Jenrick, rh Robert	Nici, Lia
Bristow, Paul	Fletcher, Katherine	Johnson, rh Boris	Nokes, rh Caroline
Britcliffe, Sara	Fletcher, Mark	Johnson, Dr Caroline	Norman, rh Jesse
Brokenshire, rh James	Fletcher, Nick	Johnson, Gareth	O'Brien, Neil
Browne, Anthony	Ford, Vicky	Johnston, David	Offord, Dr Matthew
Bruce, Fiona	Foster, Kevin	Jones, Andrew	Opperman, Guy
Buchan, Felicity	Fox, rh Dr Liam	Jones, rh Mr David	Paisley, Ian
Buckland, rh Robert	Francois, rh Mr Mark	Jones, Fay	Parish, Neil
Burghart, Alex	Frazer, Lucy	Jones, Mr Marcus	Patel, rh Priti
Burns, rh Conor	Freeman, George	Jupp, Simon	Paterson, rh Mr Owen
Butler, Rob	Freer, Mike	Kawczynski, Daniel	Pawsey, Mark
Cairns, rh Alun	Fuller, Richard	Kearns, Alicia	Penning, rh Sir Mike
Campbell, Mr Gregory	Fysh, Mr Marcus	Keegan, Gillian	Penrose, John
Carter, Andy	Gale, rh Sir Roger	Knight, rh Sir Greg	Percy, Andrew
Cartlidge, James	Garnier, Mark	Knight, Julian	Philp, Chris
Cash, Sir William	Ghani, Ms Nusrat	Kruger, Danny	Pincher, rh Christopher
Cates, Miriam	Gibb, rh Nick	Kwarteng, rh Kwasi	Poulter, Dr Dan
Caulfield, Maria	Gibson, Peter	Lamont, John	Pow, Rebecca
Chalk, Alex	Gideon, Jo	Largan, Robert	Prentis, Victoria
Chishti, Rehman	Gillan, rh Dame Cheryl	Latham, Mrs Pauline	Pritchard, Mark
Churchill, Jo	Girvan, Paul	Leadsom, rh Andrea	Pursglove, Tom
Clark, rh Greg	Glen, John	Leigh, rh Sir Edward	Quin, Jeremy
Clarke, Mr Simon	Goodwill, rh Mr Robert	Levy, Ian	Quince, Will
Clarke, Theo	Gove, rh Michael	Lewer, Andrew	Raab, rh Dominic
Clarke-Smith, Brendan	Graham, Richard	Lewis, rh Brandon	Randall, Tom
Clarkson, Chris	Grant, Mrs Helen	Lewis, rh Dr Julian	Redwood, rh John
Cleverly, rh James	Gray, James	Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian	Rees-Mogg, rh Mr Jacob
Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey	Grayling, rh Chris	Lockhart, Carla	Richards, Nicola
Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse	Green, Chris	Loder, Chris	Richardson, Angela
Colburn, Elliot	Green, rh Damian	Logan, Mark	Roberts, Rob
Collins, Damian	Griffith, Andrew	Longhi, Marco	Robertson, Mr Laurence
Costa, Alberto	Griffiths, Kate	Lopez, Julia	Robinson, Gavin
Courts, Robert	Grundy, James	Lopresti, Jack	Robinson, Mary
Coutinho, Claire	Gullis, Jonathan	Lord, Mr Jonathan	Rosindell, Andrew
Cox, rh Sir Geoffrey	Halfon, rh Robert	Loughton, Tim	Ross, Douglas
Crabb, rh Stephen	Hall, Luke	Mackinlay, Craig	Rowley, Lee
Crosbie, Virginia	Hammond, Stephen	Mackrory, Cheryll	Russell, Dean
Crouch, Tracey	Hancock, rh Matt	Macleane, Rachel	Rutley, David
Daly, James	Hands, rh Greg	Mak, Alan	Sambrook, Gary
Davies, David T. C.	Harper, rh Mr Mark	Malthouse, Kit	Saxby, Selaine
Davies, Gareth	Harris, Rebecca	Mangnall, Anthony	Scully, Paul
Davies, Dr James	Harrison, Trudy	Mann, Scott	Seely, Bob
Davies, Mims	Hart, Sally-Ann	Marson, Julie	Selous, Andrew

Shannon, Jim
Shapps, rh Grant
Sharma, rh Alok
Shelbrooke, rh Alec
Simmonds, David
Skidmore, rh Chris
Smith, Chloe
Smith, Greg
Smith, Henry
Smith, rh Julian
Smith, Royston
Solloway, Amanda
Spencer, Dr Ben
Spencer, rh Mark
Stafford, Alexander
Stephenson, Andrew
Stevenson, Jane
Stevenson, John
Stewart, Bob
Stewart, Iain
Streeter, Sir Gary
Stride, rh Mel
Stuart, Graham
Sturdy, Julian
Sunak, rh Rishi
Sunderland, James
Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
Syms, Sir Robert
Thomas, Derek
Throup, Maggie
Timpson, Edward
Tolhurst, Kelly
Tomlinson, Justin
Tomlinson, Michael
Tracey, Craig

Trevelyan, rh Anne-Marie
Trott, Laura
Truss, rh Elizabeth
Tugendhat, Tom
Vara, Mr Shailesh
Vickers, Martin
Vickers, Matt
Villiers, rh Theresa
Wakeford, Christian
Walker, Sir Charles
Walker, Mr Robin
Wallace, rh Mr Ben
Wallis, Dr Jamie
Warburton, David
Warman, Matt
Watling, Giles
Webb, Suzanne
Whately, Helen
Wheeler, Mrs Heather
Whittaker, Craig
Whittingdale, rh Mr John
Wiggin, Bill
Wild, James
Williams, Craig
Williamson, rh Gavin
Wilson, rh Sammy
Wood, Mike
Wragg, Mr William
Wright, rh Jeremy
Young, Jacob
Zahawi, Nadhim

Tellers for the Ayes:

**James Morris and
Leo Docherty**

NOES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane
Abrahams, Debbie
Ali, Rushanara
Ali, Tahir
Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
Amesbury, Mike
Anderson, Fleur
Antoniazzi, Tonia
Ashworth, Jonathan
Bardell, Hannah
Barker, Paula
Beckett, rh Margaret
Begum, Apsana
Benn, rh Hilary
Betts, Mr Clive
Black, Mhairi
Blackford, rh Ian
Blackman, Kirsty
Blake, Olivia
Blomfield, Paul
Bonnar, Steven
Brabin, Tracy
Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
Brennan, Kevin
Brock, Deidre
Brown, Alan
Brown, Ms Lyn
Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
Bryant, Chris
Buck, Ms Karen
Burgon, Richard
Butler, Dawn
Byrne, Ian
Byrne, rh Liam

Cadbury, Ruth
Callaghan, Amy
Cameron, Dr Lisa
Campbell, rh Sir Alan
Carden, Dan
Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
Chamberlain, Wendy
Champion, Sarah
Chapman, Douglas
Charalambous, Bambos
Cherry, Joanna
Clark, Feryal
Cooper, Daisy
Cooper, Rosie
Cooper, rh Yvette
Corbyn, rh Jeremy
Cowan, Ronnie
Coyle, Neil
Crawley, Angela
Creasy, Stella
Cruddas, Jon
Cryer, John
Cummins, Judith
Cunningham, Alex
Daby, Janet
Davey, rh Ed
David, Wayne
Davies, Geraint
Davies-Jones, Alex
Day, Martyn
De Cordova, Marsha
Debbonaire, Thangam
Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
Docherty-Hughes, Martin

Dodds, Anneliese
Doogan, Dave
Dorans, Allan
Doughty, Stephen
Dowd, Peter
Dromey, Jack
Duffield, Rosie
Eagle, Dame Angela
Eagle, Maria
Eastwood, Colum
Edwards, Jonathan
Efford, Clive
Elliott, Julie
Elmore, Chris
Eshalomi, Florence
Esterson, Bill
Evans, Chris
Farron, Tim
Farry, Stephen
Fellows, Marion
Ferrier, Margaret
Flynn, Stephen
Fovargue, Yvonne
Foxcroft, Vicky
Foy, Mary Kelly
Gardiner, Barry
Gibson, Patricia
Gill, Preet Kaur
Glindon, Mary
Grady, Patrick
Grant, Peter
Gray, Neil
Green, Kate
Greenwood, Lilian
Greenwood, Margaret
Griffith, Nia
Gwynne, Andrew
Haigh, Louise
Hamilton, Fabian
Hanna, Claire
Hanvey, Neale
Hardy, Emma
Harman, rh Ms Harriet
Harris, Carolyn
Hayes, Helen
Healey, rh John
Hendrick, Sir Mark
Hendry, Drew
Hill, Mike
Hillier, Meg
Hobhouse, Wera
Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
Hollern, Kate
Hopkins, Rachel
Hosie, Stewart
Howarth, rh Sir George
Huq, Dr Rupa
Hussain, Imran
Jardine, Christine
Jarvis, Dan
Johnson, Dame Diana
Johnson, Kim
Jones, Darren
Jones, Gerald
Jones, Ruth
Jones, Sarah
Kane, Mike
Keeley, Barbara
Kendall, Liz
Khan, Afzal
Kinnock, Stephen

Kyle, Peter
Lake, Ben
Lammey, rh Mr David
Lavery, Ian
Law, Chris
Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
Lewis, Clive
Linden, David
Lloyd, Tony
Long Bailey, Rebecca
Lucas, Caroline
Lynch, Holly
MacAskill, Kenny
MacNeil, Angus Brendan
Madders, Justin
Mahmood, Mr Khalid
Mahmood, Shabana
Malhotra, Seema
Maskell, Rachael
Matheson, Christian
Mc Nally, John
McCabe, Steve
McCarthy, Kerry
McDonagh, Siobhain
McDonald, Andy
McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
McDonald, Stuart C.
McDonnell, rh John
McFadden, rh Mr Pat
McGinn, Conor
McGovern, Alison
McKinnell, Catherine
McLaughlin, Anne
McMahon, Jim
McMorrin, Anna
Mearns, Ian
Miliband, rh Edward
Mishra, Navendu
Monaghan, Carol
Moran, Layla
Morden, Jessica
Morgan, Stephen
Morris, Grahame
Murray, Ian
Murray, James
Nandy, Lisa
Newlands, Gavin
Nichols, Charlotte
Nicolson, John
Norris, Alex
O'Hara, Brendan
Olney, Sarah
Onwurah, Chi
Oppong-Asare, Abena
Osamor, Kate
Osborne, Kate
Oswald, Kirsten
Owatemi, Taiwo
Owen, Sarah
Peacock, Stephanie
Pennycook, Matthew
Perkins, Mr Toby
Phillips, Jess
Phillipson, Bridget
Pollard, Luke
Powell, Lucy
Qureshi, Yasmin
Rayner, Angela
Reed, Steve
Rees, Christina
Reeves, Ellie
Reeves, Rachel

Reynolds, Jonathan
Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
Rimmer, Ms Marie
Rodda, Matt
Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
Saville Roberts, rh Liz
Shah, Naz
Sharma, Mr Virendra
Sheerman, Mr Barry
Sheppard, Tommy
Siddiq, Tulip
Slaughter, Andy
Smith, Alyn
Smith, Cat
Smith, Jeff
Smith, Nick
Smyth, Karin
Sobel, Alex
Spellar, rh John
Starmer, rh Keir
Stephens, Chris
Stevens, Jo
Stone, Jamie
Streeting, Wes
Stringer, Graham
Sultana, Zarah
Tami, rh Mark
Tarry, Sam

Thewliss, Alison
Thomas, Gareth
Thomas-Symonds, Nick
Thompson, Owen
Thomson, Richard
Thornberry, rh Emily
Timms, rh Stephen
Trickett, Jon
Turner, Karl
Twigg, Derek
Twist, Liz
Vaz, rh Valerie
Webbe, Claudia
West, Catherine
Western, Matt
Whitehead, Dr Alan
Whitford, Dr Philippa
Whitley, Mick
Whittome, Nadia
Williams, Hywel
Wilson, Munira
Winter, Beth
Wishart, Pete
Yasin, Mohammad
Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:
Colleen Fletcher and
Gill Furniss

Bruce, Fiona
Buchan, Felicity
Buckland, rh Robert
Burghart, Alex
Burns, rh Conor
Butler, Rob
Cairns, rh Alun
Campbell, Mr Gregory
Carter, Andy
Cartlidge, James
Cash, Sir William
Cates, Miriam
Caulfield, Maria
Chalk, Alex
Chishti, Rehman
Churchill, Jo
Clark, rh Greg
Clarke, Mr Simon
Clarke, Theo
Clarke-Smith, Brendan
Clarkson, Chris
Cleverly, rh James
Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey
Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse
Colburn, Elliot
Collins, Damian
Costa, Alberto
Courts, Robert
Coutinho, Claire
Cox, rh Sir Geoffrey
Crabb, rh Stephen
Crosbie, Virginia
Crouch, Tracey
Daly, James
Davies, David T. C.
Davies, Gareth
Davies, Dr James
Davies, Mims
Davies, Philip
Davison, Dehenna
Dinenage, Caroline
Dines, Miss Sarah
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
Donelan, Michelle
Dorries, Ms Nadine
Double, Steve
Dowden, rh Oliver
Doyle-Price, Jackie
Drax, Richard
Drummond, Mrs Flick
Duddridge, James
Duguid, David
Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
Dunne, rh Philip
Eastwood, Mark
Edwards, Ruth
Ellis, rh Michael
Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
Eustice, rh George
Evans, Dr Luke
Evennett, rh Sir David
Everitt, Ben
Fabricant, Michael
Farris, Laura
Fell, Simon
Fletcher, Katherine
Fletcher, Mark
Fletcher, Nick
Ford, Vicky
Foster, Kevin

Fox, rh Dr Liam
Francois, rh Mr Mark
Frazer, Lucy
Freeman, George
Freer, Mike
Fuller, Richard
Fysh, Mr Marcus
Gale, rh Sir Roger
Garnier, Mark
Ghani, Ms Nusrat
Gibb, rh Nick
Gibson, Peter
Gideon, Jo
Girvan, Paul
Glen, John
Goodwill, rh Mr Robert
Gove, rh Michael
Graham, Richard
Grant, Mrs Helen
Gray, James
Grayling, rh Chris
Green, Chris
Green, rh Damian
Griffith, Andrew
Griffiths, Kate
Grundy, James
Gullis, Jonathan
Halfon, rh Robert
Hall, Luke
Hammond, Stephen
Hancock, rh Matt
Hands, rh Greg
Harper, rh Mr Mark
Harris, Rebecca
Harrison, Trudy
Hart, Sally-Ann
Hart, rh Simon
Hayes, rh Sir John
Heald, rh Sir Oliver
Heapey, James
Heaton-Harris, Chris
Henderson, Gordon
Henry, Darren
Higginbotham, Antony
Hinds, rh Damian
Hoare, Simon
Holden, Mr Richard
Hollinrake, Kevin
Hollobone, Mr Philip
Holloway, Adam
Holmes, Paul
Howell, John
Howell, Paul
Huddleston, Nigel
Hudson, Dr Neil
Hughes, Eddie
Hunt, Jane
Hunt, rh Jeremy
Hunt, Tom
Jack, rh Mr Alister
Javid, rh Sajid
Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
Jenkin, Sir Bernard
Jenkinson, Mark
Jenkyns, Andrea
Jenrick, rh Robert
Johnson, rh Boris
Johnson, Dr Caroline
Johnson, Gareth
Johnston, David
Jones, Andrew
Jones, rh Mr David

Question accordingly agreed to.

Amendment (b) made to Lords amendment 5.

The list of Members currently certified as eligible for a proxy vote, and of the Members nominated as their proxy, is published at the end of today's debates.

Lords amendment 5, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 1

AUTHORISATION OF CRIMINAL CONDUCT

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

The House divided: Ayes 361, Noes 267.

Division No. 223]

[7.12 pm

AYES

Adams, Nigel
Afolami, Bim
Ahmad Khan, Imran
Aiken, Nickie
Aldous, Peter
Allan, Lucy
Amess, Sir David
Anderson, Lee
Anderson, Stuart
Andrew, Stuart
Ansell, Caroline
Argar, Edward
Atherton, Sarah
Atkins, Victoria
Bacon, Gareth
Bacon, Mr Richard
Badenoch, Kemi
Bailey, Shaun
Baillie, Siobhan
Baker, Duncan
Baker, Mr Steve
Baldwin, Harriett
Barclay, rh Steve
Baron, Mr John
Baynes, Simon
Bell, Aaron
Benton, Scott
Beresford, Sir Paul
Berry, rh Jake
Bhatti, Saqib
Blackman, Bob
Blunt, Crispin
Bone, Mr Peter
Bottomley, Sir Peter
Bowie, Andrew
Bradley, Ben
Braverman, rh Suella
Brereton, Jack
Bridgen, Andrew
Brine, Steve
Bristow, Paul
Britcliffe, Sara
Brokenshire, rh James
Browne, Anthony

Jones, Fay
 Jones, Mr Marcus
 Jupp, Simon
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Kearns, Alicia
 Keegan, Gillian
 Knight, rh Sir Greg
 Knight, Julian
 Kruger, Danny
 Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
 Lamont, John
 Langan, Robert
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Leadsom, rh Andrea
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Levy, Ian
 Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Brandon
 Lewis, rh Dr Julian
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Lockhart, Carla
 Loder, Chris
 Logan, Mark
 Longhi, Marco
 Lopez, Julia
 Lopresti, Jack
 Lord, Mr Jonathan
 Mackinlay, Craig
 Mackrory, Cherylyn
 Maclean, Rachel
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, Kit
 Mangnall, Anthony
 Mann, Scott
 Marson, Julie
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 Mayhew, Jerome
 Maynard, Paul
 McCartney, Jason
 McCartney, Karl
 McPartland, Stephen
 McVey, rh Esther
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, Johnny
 Merriman, Huw
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Millar, Robin
 Miller, rh Mrs Maria
 Milling, rh Amanda
 Mills, Nigel
 Mohindra, Mr Gagan
 Moore, Damien
 Moore, Robbie
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morrissey, Joy
 Morton, Wendy
 Mullan, Dr Kieran
 Mumby-Croft, Holly
 Mundell, rh David
 Murray, Mrs Sheryll
 Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
 Neill, Sir Robert
 Nici, Lia
 Nokes, rh Caroline
 Norman, rh Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Paisley, Ian
 Parish, Neil

Patel, rh Priti
 Paterson, rh Mr Owen
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Philp, Chris
 Pincher, rh Christopher
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, Victoria
 Pritchard, Mark
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quin, Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Raab, rh Dominic
 Randall, Tom
 Redwood, rh John
 Rees-Mogg, rh Mr Jacob
 Richards, Nicola
 Richardson, Angela
 Roberts, Rob
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Robinson, Gavin
 Robinson, Mary
 Rosindell, Andrew
 Ross, Douglas
 Rowley, Lee
 Russell, Dean
 Rutley, David
 Sambrook, Gary
 Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Bob
 Selous, Andrew
 Shannon, Jim
 Shapps, rh Grant
 Sharma, rh Alok
 Shelbrooke, rh Alec
 Simmonds, David
 Skidmore, rh Chris
 Smith, Chloe
 Smith, Greg
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, rh Julian
 Smith, Royston
 Solloway, Amanda
 Spencer, Dr Ben
 Spencer, rh Mark
 Stafford, Alexander
 Stephenson, Andrew
 Stevenson, Jane
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Streeter, Sir Gary
 Stride, rh Mel
 Stuart, Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunak, rh Rishi
 Sunderland, James
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Throup, Maggie
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Tracey, Craig
 Trevelyan, rh Anne-Marie
 Trott, Laura

Truss, rh Elizabeth
 Tugendhat, Tom
 Vara, Mr Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Vickers, Matt
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Wakeford, Christian
 Walker, Sir Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Wallace, rh Mr Ben
 Wallis, Dr Jamie
 Warburton, David
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Webb, Suzanne
 Whately, Helen
 Abbott, rh Ms Diane
 Abrahams, Debbie
 Ali, Rushanara
 Ali, Tahir
 Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
 Amesbury, Mike
 Anderson, Fleur
 Antoniazzi, Tonia
 Ashworth, Jonathan
 Bardell, Hannah
 Barker, Paula
 Beckett, rh Margaret
 Begum, Apsana
 Benn, rh Hilary
 Betts, Mr Clive
 Black, Mhairi
 Blackford, rh Ian
 Blackman, Kirsty
 Blake, Olivia
 Blomfield, Paul
 Bonnar, Steven
 Brabin, Tracy
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
 Brennan, Kevin
 Brock, Deidre
 Brown, Alan
 Brown, Ms Lyn
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
 Bryant, Chris
 Buck, Ms Karen
 Burgon, Richard
 Butler, Dawn
 Byrne, Ian
 Byrne, rh Liam
 Cadbury, Ruth
 Callaghan, Amy
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Carden, Dan
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
 Chamberlain, Wendy
 Champion, Sarah
 Chapman, Douglas
 Charalambous, Bambos
 Cherry, Joanna
 Clark, Feryal
 Cooper, Daisy
 Cooper, Rosie
 Cooper, rh Yvette
 Corbyn, rh Jeremy
 Cowan, Ronnie
 Coyle, Neil
 Crawley, Angela

Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Mr John
 Wiggin, Bill
 Wild, James
 Williams, Craig
 Williamson, rh Gavin
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Wood, Mike
 Wragg, Mr William
 Wright, rh Jeremy
 Young, Jacob
 Zahawi, Nadhim

Tellers for the Ayes:
 Leo Docherty and
 James Morris

NOES

Creasy, Stella
 Cruddas, Jon
 Cryer, John
 Cummins, Judith
 Cunningham, Alex
 Daby, Janet
 Davey, rh Ed
 David, Wayne
 Davies, Geraint
 Davies-Jones, Alex
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Day, Martyn
 De Cordova, Marsha
 Debbonaire, Thangam
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Docherty-Hughes, Martin
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Doogan, Dave
 Dorans, Allan
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Dromey, Jack
 Duffield, Rosie
 Eagle, Dame Angela
 Eagle, Maria
 Eastwood, Colum
 Edwards, Jonathan
 Eford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Elmore, Chris
 Eshalomi, Florence
 Esterson, Bill
 Evans, Chris
 Farron, Tim
 Farry, Stephen
 Fellows, Marion
 Ferrier, Margaret
 Flynn, Stephen
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Foy, Mary Kelly
 Gardiner, Barry
 Gibson, Patricia
 Gill, Preet Kaur
 Gillan, rh Dame Cheryl
 Glindon, Mary
 Grady, Patrick
 Grant, Peter
 Gray, Neil
 Green, Kate
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Nia

Gwynne, Andrew
Haigh, Louise
Hamilton, Fabian
Hanna, Claire
Harvey, Neale
Hardy, Emma
Harman, rh Ms Harriet
Harris, Carolyn
Hayes, Helen
Healey, rh John
Hendrick, Sir Mark
Hendry, Drew
Hill, Mike
Hillier, Meg
Hobhouse, Wera
Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
Hollern, Kate
Hopkins, Rachel
Hosie, Stewart
Howarth, rh Sir George
Huq, Dr Rupa
Hussain, Imran
Jardine, Christine
Jarvis, Dan
Johnson, Dame Diana
Johnson, Kim
Jones, Darren
Jones, Gerald
Jones, Ruth
Jones, Sarah
Kane, Mike
Keeley, Barbara
Kendall, Liz
Khan, Afzal
Kinnock, Stephen
Kyle, Peter
Lake, Ben
Lammy, rh Mr David
Lavery, Ian
Law, Chris
Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
Lewis, Clive
Linden, David
Lloyd, Tony
Long Bailey, Rebecca
Lucas, Caroline
Lynch, Holly
MacAskill, Kenny
MacNeil, Angus Brendan
Madders, Justin
Mahmood, Mr Khalid
Mahmood, Shabana
Malhotra, Seema
Maskell, Rachael
Matheson, Christian
Mc Nally, John
McCabe, Steve
McCarthy, Kerry
McDonagh, Siobhain
McDonald, Andy
McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
McDonald, Stuart C.
McDonnell, rh John
McFadden, rh Mr Pat
McGinn, Conor
McGovern, Alison
McKinnell, Catherine

McLaughlin, Anne
McMahon, Jim
McMorrin, Anna
Mearns, Ian
Miliband, rh Edward
Mishra, Navendu
Monaghan, Carol
Moran, Layla
Morden, Jessica
Morgan, Stephen
Morris, Grahame
Murray, Ian
Murray, James
Nandy, Lisa
Newlands, Gavin
Nichols, Charlotte
Nicolson, John
Norris, Alex
O'Hara, Brendan
Olney, Sarah
Onwurah, Chi
Oppong-Asare, Abena
Osamor, Kate
Osborne, Kate
Oswald, Kirsten
Owatemi, Taiwo
Owen, Sarah
Peacock, Stephanie
Pennycook, Matthew
Perkins, Mr Toby
Phillips, Jess
Phillipson, Bridget
Pollard, Luke
Powell, Lucy
Qureshi, Yasmin
Rayner, Angela
Reed, Steve
Rees, Christina
Reeves, Ellie
Reeves, Rachel
Reynolds, Jonathan
Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
Rimmer, Ms Marie
Rodda, Matt
Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
Saville Roberts, rh Liz
Shah, Naz
Sharma, Mr Virendra
Sheerman, Mr Barry
Sheppard, Tommy
Siddiq, Tulip
Slaughter, Andy
Smith, Alyn
Smith, Cat
Smith, Jeff
Smith, Nick
Smyth, Karin
Sobel, Alex
Spellar, rh John
Starmer, rh Keir
Stephens, Chris
Stevens, Jo
Stone, Jamie
Streeting, Wes
Stringer, Graham
Sultana, Zarah
Tami, rh Mark
Tarry, Sam

Thewliss, Alison
Thomas, Gareth
Thomas-Symonds, Nick
Thompson, Owen
Thomson, Richard
Thornberry, rh Emily
Timms, rh Stephen
Trickett, Jon
Turner, Karl
Twigg, Derek
Twist, Liz
Vaz, rh Valerie
Webbe, Claudia
West, Catherine

Western, Matt
Whitehead, Dr Alan
Whitford, Dr Philippa
Whitley, Mick
Whittome, Nadia
Williams, Hywel
Wilson, Munira
Winter, Beth
Wishart, Pete
Yasin, Mohammad
Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:
Gill Furniss and
Colleen Fletcher

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 4 disagreed to.

The list of Members currently certified as eligible for a proxy vote, and of the Members nominated as their proxy, is published at the end of today's debates.

Lords amendments 6 to 14 agreed to.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No 83H), That a Committee be appointed to draw up Reasons to be assigned to the Lords for disagreeing to their amendments 1 to 4;

That Michael Ellis, Tom Pursglove, Paul Holmes, Mark Tami and David Linden be members of the Committee;

That Michael Ellis be the Chair of the Committee;

That three be the quorum of the Committee.

That the Committee do withdraw immediately.—
(*Rebecca Harris.*)

Question agreed to.

Committee to withdraw immediately; reasons to be reported and communicated to the Lords.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton): In order to observe social distancing, the Reasons Committee will meet in Committee Room 12.

MEDICINES AND MEDICAL DEVICES BILL (PROGRAMME) (NO.3)

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

That the following provisions shall apply to the Medicines and Medical Devices Bill for the purpose of supplementing the Order of 2 March 2020 (Medicines and Medical Devices Bill (Programme)), as amended by the Order of 22 April 2020 (Medicines and Medical Devices Bill (Programme) (No. 2)):

Consideration of Lords Amendments

(1) Proceedings on consideration of Lords amendments shall (so far as not previously concluded) be brought to a conclusion two hours after their commencement.

Subsequent stages

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

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

Question agreed to.

Medicines and Medical Devices Bill

Consideration of Lords amendments

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton): I must draw the House's attention to the fact that financial privilege is engaged by Lords amendments 1 and 54. If any amendment engaging financial privilege is agreed to, I will cause the customary entry waiving Commons financial privilege to be entered into the *Journal*.

Before Clause 1

ESTABLISHMENT AND CORE DUTIES ETC

7.24 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Jo Churchill): I beg to move, That this House agrees with Lords amendment 1.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton): With this it will be convenient to discuss the following:

Government motion to disagree with Lords amendment 2.

Government motion to disagree with Lords amendment 3.

Lords amendments 4 to 10.

Lords amendment 11, and Government amendments (a) to (d) thereto.

Government motion to disagree with Lords amendment 12.

Government motion to disagree with Lords amendment 13.

Government motion to disagree with Lords amendment 14.

Lords amendments 15 to 21.

Lords amendment 22, and Government amendments (a) to (c) thereto.

Government motion to disagree with Lords amendment 23.

Government motion to disagree with Lords amendment 24.

Government motion to disagree with Lords amendment 25.

Lords amendments 26 to 29.

Government motion to disagree with Lords amendments 30 and 31.

Lords amendment 32, and Government amendments (a) to (c) thereto.

Lords amendments 33 to 39.

Government motion to disagree with Lords amendment 40.

Lords amendments 41 to 47.

Government motion to disagree with Lords amendment 48.

Government motion to disagree with Lords amendment 49.

Government motion to disagree with Lords amendment 50.

Government amendments (a) to (c) in lieu of Lords amendments 2, 3, 12 to 14, 23 to 25, 30, 40 and 48 to 50.

Lords amendments 51 to 56.

Jo Churchill: I am extremely pleased to be back at the Dispatch Box to speak to this Bill. It is a changed Bill since we last looked at it but one that still has the patient at its heart. I am pleased that it comes back to us with the same spirit of consensus and collaboration that it left us with.

Since we had the Bill's Third Reading, the pandemic's evolution and the importance of the regulation of clinical trials, the roll-out and regulatory approval of a vaccine,

and the ability of healthcare professionals to get medicines into patients has brought into sharp focus precisely how essential this Bill is. The Government made a number of amendments to the Bill through the other place in response to Committees of the House, the report of the independent medicines and medical devices review, led by Baroness Cumberlege, and, importantly, as a result of genuine, cross-party discussions on how to make this Bill better.

I am glad to say that the Bill still—and for those who know me, this is my passion—puts patients first: patients who will have the opportunity to trial new treatments; patients whose safety is paramount; patients who need to see quick and effective action from regulators in the event of an emergency. The Bill that left us on Report had a new change to it, anticipating Baroness Cumberlege's report. The medical device information system, which will transform post-market surveillance of medical devices and improve the ability to track down patients and prevent harm, followed talks across this House and in the other place. I reiterate my thanks in particular to the hon. Members for Washington and Sunderland West (Mrs Hodgson) and for Central Ayrshire (Dr Whitford) for their contributions to that effort.

We said on Report that we awaited the conclusions of the Cumberlege review and that we would take steps when the review was published. I can tell the House now that we have, and Lords amendment 1 establishes a Patient Safety Commissioner—a champion for patients in relation to medicines and medical devices. I pay tribute to all those who have spoken here and in the other place of the impact of harm on patients and on women—those who have not been listened to whose stories are difficult and heart-wrenching. Much was said during the Bill's passage in the other place about the whole system change to enshrine the voice of patients at the heart of the process and our commitment to it. The Patient Safety Commissioner will act within and outside the system. They will be an advocate for patients and ensure that the patient voice is primary. The commissioner will be able to seek information, make reports without fear or favour and expect responses, and, more importantly, get change.

Lords amendments 1, 41, 47, 54 and 56 together provide for both the appointment of a Patient Safety Commissioner and regulations to support this appointment. I congratulate Baroness Cumberlege and her team, and thank her and others who contributed to getting this into the Bill so quickly after her report.

Lords amendment 31 provides for a small but important change that was also recommended in that review: a power to put the devices expert advisory committee on to a legislative footing.

I am very conscious of the passion and commitment shown by the hon. Member for St Helens South and Whiston (Ms Rimmer) when we were last discussing the Bill. She has shown admirable determination. I am pleased to draw her attention to Lords amendment 8, which the Government were happy to support in the other place. That important amendment provides for provisions about the origin and treatment to be made in relation to the regulation of human medicines.

We have had two reports, one from the Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee and one from the House of Lords Constitution Committee.

7.30 pm

When we last stood opposite each other, the hon. Member for Nottingham North (Alex Norris) challenged me on how to make it clear that patient safety was the absolute priority. I thank him and his team, and those who work in the other place, for their constructive dialogue on these issues. We all want to see patients receiving effective, safe medicines and medical devices, and we all want to ensure that the UK remains at the forefront of pharmaceutical innovation. Amendments 4, 5, 6, 7, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 26, 27, 28 and 29 all change the nature of the regulatory powers in clauses 1, 8 and 12. They introduce an objective to safeguard public health, putting it at the heart of regulations. They remove the word “attractiveness” from the Bill and set out what I hope is as agreeable here as it was in the other place—a list of the types of activity we would hope the UK would be a favourable place to conduct. Importantly, they apply a safety lock. Regulations that affect the safety of a medicine or a medical device can be made only if the benefits outweigh the risks.

Hon. Members here were very clear that we should go further to demonstrate that patient safety was absolutely paramount. These changes do that, but they also assist in turning a Bill that was called a skeleton Bill into a true framework Bill that makes it clear how delegated powers will be used and how, in making regulatory changes, safeguarding public health remains key. These changes better reflect the discussions in this House and the other place, and answer the criticisms of the DPRR and the Constitution Committee.

We have also made changes to criminal offences—another area of earlier concern. Amendments 9, 10, 20, 21 and 55 clarify the maximum penalty that may be created by regulations. Both the DPRR and the Constitution Committee recommended increased parliamentary scrutiny, and the shadow Minister’s colleagues also pressed for public involvement.

Amendments 44, 45 and 46 all provide for Parliament to have multiple opportunities to inform, and be informed by, the Government’s plans for regulatory changes. First, consultations have become public consultations under clause 44. Secondly, the appropriate authority is obliged to produce an assessment of how the regulatory proposal meets the overarching framework considerations at the time of going out for consultation. As Members are aware, the Government prepare a response to the consultation, and how the consultation responses are considered will be made public in that way. The amendments introduce a reporting requirement that means a separate report back to Parliament every two years summarising how regulations made under clauses 1, 8, 12 and 18 have been operating during that time. It must include any concerns raised, what has been done as a consequence, and any plans for further changes to regulations. This gives the flexibility for Parliament to be interested in—and if individual Members or Committees wish it, to submit responses to—any individual consultation, without requiring it to.

Last time we discussed this Bill, the hon. Member for Nottingham North asked whether we could accept a sunset clause as a way of settling his colleagues’ concerns as to how we might use the powers contained in the Bill. I hope that he can agree that how these powers can be used has materially changed as a result of the Bill’s going through the other place. Another option that was

put forward in the other place, as well as a sunset clause, was a requirement to bring forward and publish draft legislation. Unfortunately, we cannot accept these changes. Three years is simply not long enough to have a fully settled regime in a steady state to make reassessment practical, and amendments 2, 12, 13, 23, 24 and 40 would definitely introduce a cliff edge for new legislation. That is not the best way to go about legislation in general, but in this Bill, where essential changes could be needed to protect patients, there are better and more effective alternatives. Lords amendments 3, 14, 25, 30 and 48 to 50 also introduce the use of the super-affirmative procedure for regulatory changes that introduce significant new policy or changes to policy. Quite aside from how difficult it would be to assess what “significant” means, it is very much using a sledgehammer to crack a nut—as we are often guilty of doing in this place. In both cases, I have heard the arguments for these amendments. People are concerned about the lack of detail in the new likely changes to the existing regulatory regimes, in particular for medical devices, and therefore Parliament wants greater visibility of what happens next. We have stressed the critical importance of consultation and have made changes there, and we have provided the reporting, as I have outlined.

Amendment (b) in lieu, in the name of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, proposes an alternative that goes further. This would require a report to be prepared within five years of Royal Assent that looked at the operation of the legislation. It would oblige the Secretary of State to take into account a report of any parliamentary Committee. That could mean, for example, a Select Committee choosing a report on the basis of a post-legislative scrutiny memorandum, and that report would need to address a series of considerations, such as whether the legislation needs restructuring or consolidating, whether certain parts of the legislation should be an Act of Parliament, and whether any of the powers in the Bill need amending or repealing. That provides the time needed to get the regulatory system into a steady state. It allows for consideration of how the system works on the ground and of all the factors that the hon. Member for Nottingham North and others have fairly raised in arguing in support of their amendments. I hope that he will support this solution.

I do not intend to spend very long on Lords amendments 11, 22 and 32 to 39, not because they are not important, but because they have been arrived at with significant consensus. We introduced these important powers to allow for information to be shared with relevant persons, such as regulators and regulatory networks outside of the UK, in order to give effect to international arrangements. These amendments provide safeguards on data shared by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency and the Veterinary Medicines Directorate. They define patient information. They provide a definition of relevant persons with whom information can be shared. Government amendment (a) to Lords amendment 11 would remove the reference to pharmacovigilance from the requirement to share information in the public interest, as, of course, pharmacovigilance is in the public interest and therefore covered.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not intend to spend any time at all—you may be glad to hear—on Lords amendments 51 to 53, which make consequential commencement changes.

To finish, the Bill has gone through with a great deal of well-informed, well-intentioned debate and changes. I am pleased that the constructive discussions that we had before it left us have continued. The other place has brought something back to us that I hope we can agree delivers for UK patients and the UK life sciences industry, which is vital and enables us to build a stand-alone regulatory system for the UK for the future and one that has patients absolutely at its heart.

Alex Norris (Nottingham North) (Lab/Co-op): It is a pleasure to resume proceedings on this Bill, and we are now very close indeed to the finish line. For us and, I think, for all Members, this has always been about patient safety and about making sure that people of the United Kingdom have the best access to medicines and medical devices. The exchanges so far have been of a high quality in both content and tone. As the Minister has characterised, the Bill started as a skeleton, but it is certainly thin no more. There is much in there that will make a significant difference to our country.

I have been proud to take the lead for the Opposition since the Committee stage, and I thank my predecessor in the earlier rounds, my hon. Friend the Member for Washington and Sunderland West (Mrs Hodgson), for setting the tone for us. I am also grateful to the Minister for her level of engagement and for giving us generous access to her officials and the Government in general throughout this process. The stages of the Bill through the Commons were of a high quality, and clearly considerable progress has been made in the other place, which we consider today.

I welcome the Government's concessions on the Bill, and I congratulate my colleagues in the other place, particularly Baronesses Thornton and Wheeler and Lord Hunt, on their hard work on and dedication to securing these vital amendments. That hard work will ensure that the Bill will promote patient safety and privacy, as well as proper consultation and scrutiny. I might even be mischievous enough to say that I tabled a number of these amendments in Committee, but I was unable to get them accepted at that point. I am therefore delighted to see them accepted at this stage.

We will support the Lords amendments where the Government have indicated their support, and where they have tabled amendments in lieu we will accept those as a reasonable compromise. I therefore do not intend to divide the House this evening. Similarly, I do not intend to speak to all 56 amendments, but I might cover a few of the pertinent major themes.

The Minister was right to say that in previous exchanges I challenged her to demonstrate that safeguarding public health and, critically, patient safety was uppermost, and that is reflected in Lords amendments 4 and 5. I knew from the outset that that was the Minister's intention, and I think the amendments improve and make the Bill clearer, as well as future-proofing it for future Ministers and—dare I say it?—future Governments. It is important that that was done, and we appreciate that.

On Lords amendment 1, it is welcome that the Government have heeded the second recommendation in the Cumberlege review, and legislated for an independent Patient Safety Commissioner. We were lucky to have a review as seismic as that one, which crystallised many decades of suffering and pain for lots of people who had been crying in the darkness and ignored for a long

time. That report was a cathartic moment, but it cannot remain just a report, and the fact that we had primary legislation that was the perfect vehicle for the independent Patient Safety Commissioner was a real blessing. I am pleased we were able to find a way to include that.

Mark Tami (Alyn and Deeside) (Lab): Does my hon. Friend agree that many of the people he said were in the dark often felt that they were on their own, and it was only when groups were set up that they realised otherwise? Many doctors were telling them there was not a problem.

Alex Norris: Yes, and I met as many of those groups as I possibly could. That commonality in the story of people often being ignored and left alone, or told that they were wrong, lying or making it up, added insult to the significant injuries that they had suffered. That collective action was a big part of people getting their salvation and securing that review which then vindicated them so strongly. That is so important. The presence of the independent commissioner will ensure that patient wellbeing is prioritised and there will be a voice for those citizens. That is an essential step forward to ensure that our wonderful national health care system is responsive and hears challenging messages, even if perhaps it does not always want to. That will give people a voice, which is important.

We welcome the amendments on transparency and accountability, and I pay tribute to the hon. Member for Central Ayrshire (Dr Whitford) for her leadership at other stages of the Bill. Frequent reporting will ensure that the system is monitored and accountable, which is good. With Lords amendment 31 the Bill will provide for the establishment of the independent statutory device expert advisory committee, to ensure that the regulation of devices is transparent, and that decision making is better structured and more accountable. That can only be a good thing. Making urgent regulation subject to positive affirmation, as in amendment (a) in lieu, will allow the regulatory system to respond to changing situations, while ensuring proper accountability and scrutiny.

As the Minister says, amendment (b) in lieu sweeps up and replaces the Lords amendments that relate to sunset clauses and clauses on the super-affirmation procedure. It was not quite what I was after, but I think it is a pretty fair deal. It is certainly more than I thought I would get—perhaps I should not say that before the amendments have been made. As a former trade union negotiator, I always thought that going in and getting 60%, 70% or 80% for our members was a pretty good outcome, so we will certainly take that. The five-year review is a good thing as it gives the Government more time—those arguments were well made by the Minister, and on reflection I think they are right.

At the root of this, the Secretary of State is acquiring significant powers, and it is right to review that as well as to have scrutiny down the line, and an opportunity for right hon. and hon. Members to determine whether the system might need consolidating or restructuring. That is vital to improve the quality of the regulatory system. I am really pleased that we got there, and with where we have arrived. I welcome the opportunity in Lords amendment 8 for the use of human tissue in medicine to be further regulated, thus preventing the NHS from being compromised by the trade in harvested

organs, including those from ethnic minorities and political prisoners in authoritarian states. My hon. Friend the Member for St Helens South and Whiston (Ms Rimmer) will be pleased with that inclusion. It is her hard work that made that happen, and I commend her for it, as she battled away. She feels strongly about this, and what has come out is very positive indeed. As I say, I commend her greatly for that.

7.45 pm

Briefly, I shall pick up a couple of outstanding things from the medicines and medical devices safety review, which the Minister may deal with in her response. Again, significant progress has been made in the Bill and in associated regulations to make those recommendations a reality, but there are still a number of things outstanding that are accompanied by the words “in due course”, so I would be keen to get a sense from the Minister of when that is. She will be asked about that by others, as will her colleague, the Minister for Patient Safety, Suicide Prevention and Mental Health, and many right hon and hon. Members. It is an important part of finishing the process that those recommendations are adopted. The decision has clearly been made that they were not within the scope of the Bill or that the Bill was not the best place for them. I hope that when she closes the debate the Minister will detail the Government’s plans or at least a timetable for plans to address that.

Finally, the Bill—certainly the guidance relating to it—has advanced the idea of making fundamental change to community pharmacy by moving towards a hub and spoke model. I will say what I said in Committee and on Report. The Government have chosen not to include that in the Bill—that is their decision—but I believe that they intend to do it, and it will be a seismic change for community pharmacy. I hope to hear from the Minister a clear commitment to something so significant that it requires wide-ranging consultation with all manner of stakeholders to make sure that we do it right. I think that that is the case, but I am keen to have on-the-record clarity.

In conclusion, the Bill deals with patient safety and making sure that the British people have access to the best medicines and medical devices. We have fought hard to make it the best Bill that we can, and I am really proud and pleased with the progress that we have made.

Anthony Mangnall (Totnes) (Con): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Nottingham North (Alex Norris), and to have followed the Bill from afar. It is a shining example of cross-party support, and to see it emerge from a skeleton Bill into a framework Bill is a credit to everyone who participated in Committee and in the House of Lords, and to Members across the House.

It is, in short, a pleasure to be able to speak in this debate, and I support Lords amendments 1 and 54. The creation of a commissioner for patient safety has long been sought, and it will not only enhance the fact that the NHS is viewed as one of the safest healthcare systems in the world but will reinforce the view that it is an organisation that can learn from its mistakes. One such mistake is the unconsented and experimental use of TVT mesh. The intent was for the best of purposes, but in fact it caused utter devastation, both physically and emotionally, to those who suffered adverse side

effects. Those effects went unreported and were misdiagnosed for a great length of time, and change was down to people such as Janet Peck and Susan Morgan—two of my constituents and victims themselves—who fought hard for action to be taken. Their determination and hard work have resulted in the excellent report by Baroness Cumberlege, which calls for the appointment of a Patient Safety Commissioner, which the Bill seeks to put in place, to ensure that scenarios such as those surrounding TVT mesh become never events.

The Minister for Patient Safety, Suicide Prevention and Mental Health gave a heart-felt and meaningful apology to those who have been failed by medical treatments as outlined by the Cumberlege report last year. The new position will be welcomed by patients and practitioners alike, and I hope that the Minister responding to the debate will go further and explain the commissioner’s remit and the parameters of their work, and how recruitment will find a suitable person to report back. I welcome the fact that the Government will respond further to the independent medicines and medical devices safety review. Finally—much of what I wanted to say has already been said—I pay tribute to Susan and Janet. Their fortitude and determination have helped to shape the Cumberlege report and shape this Bill and, as we have already heard, their repeated efforts to ensure that patient safety is put first have allowed the Bill to be created in such a way that it will have a long and meaningful impact on those who seek the best service possible from the NHS. As has already been said, the cross-party support is a credit to this House. I congratulate all Members who have taken a significant step in helping to shape the Bill.

Ms Marie Rimmer (St Helens South and Whiston) (Lab) [V]: In 2018, the imported bodies of political prisoners and human rights abuse victims in China were on display in Birmingham. It was supposed to be a Real Bodies exhibition, to inform the public about biology, yet in reality it was a barbaric travelling circus. The British public unknowingly paid £15 each to view the remains of these poor souls.

Since I learned of that horrific display, I have become determined to work on behalf of these human rights abuse victims to end forced tissue and organ harvesting. Our nation and the people who live here must not be complicit in the brutal acts of the Chinese communist regime. The first step is to put a stop to the importing of tissue and organs of human rights abuse victims. Currently, neither the human tissue regulations nor the Human Tissue Act 2004 requires appropriate consent for imported human tissues to be used in medicines. After several attempts to bring forward an amendment to achieve this, both here and in the other place, the Government have finally included a negotiated amendment in this Bill, which I welcome.

That amendment provides the opportunity to prevent complicity in this crime within the UK medicine industry, and gives Ministers the powers to do the right thing. It is important to stress that the amendment has not dealt with the issue of organ transplant tourism, or the issue of plastinated unclaimed bodies being imported and commercially displayed, as we saw in Birmingham. The amendment is a welcome start, but it is only the beginning; there is much more to do.

[Ms Marie Rimmer]

I hope the House will forgive me if I place my thanks on record, as securing that amendment has been a long, drawn-out battle across both Chambers. First, I congratulate Lord Hunt of King's Heath for persevering so tenaciously, along with his co-signatories Lady Finlay, Lady Northover and Lord Ribeiro. I also thank Lord Alton and Lord Collins for their tireless efforts on this issue. Finally, I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham North (Alex Norris) for his support and advice.

One of my predecessors as MP for my home town, St Helens, was Sir Hartley Shawcross, the chief British prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials. Just like the Nazis he prosecuted for, among many reasons, using human beings for medical experiments, I hope and pray that one day, those responsible for these despicable, heinous acts will be prosecuted for their crimes against humanity, for that is what forced organ harvesting is. Last year, the China tribunal, led by Sir Geoffrey Nice QC, a former lead prosecutor at The Hague, concluded that

"Forced organ harvesting has been committed for years throughout China on a significant scale and that Falun Gong practitioners have been one—and probably the main—source of organ supply", and that

"In regard to the Uyghurs the Tribunal had evidence of medical testing on a scale that could allow them, amongst other uses, to become an 'organ bank'."

The amendment sends a very clear message that we will not tolerate such appalling acts against humanity and that we will deliver for the people of China, not for the Communist party of China. Let the amendment truly mark the beginning of a new relationship with China—a relationship that is not naive. Today, Holocaust Memorial Day, is the day when the world says "Never again" to genocide. Let this be the start of the Government putting those words into practice.

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP) [V]: I thank the Minister for all the work that she has done on the Bill, and I commend the hon. Member for Nottingham North (Alex Norris) for his dedication.

The Bill seeks to address the regulatory gap by introducing dedicated regulation-making powers covering the fields of human medicines, including clinical trials of human medicines, veterinary medicines and medical devices. That is clearly absolutely necessary, and the most pertinent reason is one about which I wrote to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care just last week: the ability of my young constituent Sophia Gibson to have continued access to her medication post Brexit. Her family were informed that there would be issues sourcing the medication—medicinal cannabis—that has made such a difference to her life. Her parents began their battle, still traumatised from their last battle to source this life-saving medication, and we began to work on it. The Secretary of State and the Northern Ireland Department of Health have worked hard, and initial reports are that we will produce the medication here, in co-ordination with the lab that creates it in the Hague. That is good news, although I await confirmation. It would appear that this is just one story that is working out, but it flags the necessity of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland creating and prescribing our own medications. That is why this legislation is vital.

I echo and support wholeheartedly the comments of the hon. Member for St Helens South and Whiston (Ms Rimmer) in relation to the commercial forced organ harvesting that is happening in China against Falun Gong members, Christians and Uyghur Muslims. We need to address that, and I know that the Minister and other Ministers have that responsibility. It is very worrying, and I echo the hon. Lady's comments about that.

I know that the thousands of people who believe that their quality of life has been affected by mesh, for example, will wonder why this legislation has not been in place before. I ask for clarity that the aim of the Bill will be achieved and that it will allow for much greater scrutiny and accountability in the world of medical devices.

The Lords amendments make a few suggested additions to the Bill. There is an understanding that we must allow our medical field the ability to produce medication and medical devices, but also that it must be better regulated and offer better protection to those who rely on these devices. The Bill extends to England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Parts 1 and 2, relating to human medicines and veterinary medicines respectively, are within the legislative competence of the Northern Ireland Assembly. A legislative consent motion has been sought for those parts, and I welcome that following close on the heels of this debate.

Our goal is not simply to pass continuity legislation post Brexit but to improve and upgrade our legislation, and that is what the Bill achieves. The Government indicated in the background briefing to the Queen's Speech and in a press release that they intend to use these powers to support the development of medicines and medical devices in the NHS and amend prescribing power. That needs to happen, and it needs to happen now; will the Minister confirm that that is the case? The Government stated in the explanatory notes to the Bill that they intend to use these powers to keep the existing regulatory frameworks updated, while consolidating the enforcement regime for medical devices. In addition, the Bill will provide the Secretary of State with the ability to impose civil sanctions as an alternative to criminal prosecution for breaches of the medical device regime.

I have long worked with those who believe that the use of mesh in their bodies has caused substantial harm—not just females and ladies, but males. I have had a number of meetings with them about that. We are all aware that, when something is termed a medical device and not a medication, the testing is less stringent. The civil sanctions will provide the emphasis that we all want to see, to ensure that any device placed in a person's body has been tested to a high standard before widespread use. I commend the Government, and I commend all Members for their contributions.

8 pm

Jo Churchill: When taking a Bill through the House, we always hope that it will be one that hon. Members from both sides can understand, support and improve. Our intention to have a gold standard of medicines and medical device regulation in this country, and to put the patient at the heart of it, has been long understood and has very much formed the foundation stone of the Bill.

I am very grateful for the support of hon. Members here; the spirit of collaboration is how we get this Bill done now—today. I would like to address one or two of the questions that hon. Members brought up. I reiterate my thanks to the hon. Member for Nottingham North (Alex Norris). He was right when he said that the timing of the Cumberlege report was fortuitous. In this House, we have been able to make sure that patient safety has been addressed. He was also right to say that it was a collective effort, and he and other Members were right in saying that the Bill very much reflects the voice of campaigners who often feel that their voices go unheard. Today, they have not gone unheard.

Mark Tami: May I also mention the former Member for Pontypridd, Owen Smith, who is no longer in the House? He set up the all-party parliamentary group on surgical mesh implants, which did so much work to highlight this issue.

Jo Churchill: Indeed.

This has been a long time coming, and Members from both this House and the other place have been involved. I pay particular tribute to Janet Peck and Susan Morgan, the constituents of my hon. Friend the Member for Totnes (Anthony Mangnall), and their quiet determination to make sure that their challenges were seen and noticed. The Government then took the right decisions in helping them make sure that this does not happen to others. That was the right thing to do.

The hon. Member for Nottingham North asked me to address two or three points. We plan to respond in full to the report later in 2021. It has been incredibly impactful and has already served to put patient safety at the top of the agenda for the whole health and care system. If it had not been for the covid-19 pandemic, I think we would be discussing little else than patient safety because of the Bill before us. Just as covid-19 impacted on the publication of the report, it has impacted our response time. But I assure the hon. Gentleman that that response will come later in the year.

The hon. Gentleman also asked about the speed of the appointment of a patient safety commissioner. I very much want the right person. I cannot give a precise time, but I want to underscore the importance of patient safety and our belief that the patient safety commissioner will and must be effective in amplifying the voice of patients and improving patient safety in the use of medicines and medical devices. I hope that the process will not take too long, but we must appoint the right person, who will truly give the right voice.

On hub and spoke, which the hon. Gentleman and I both agree is so important, there will be a full public consultation. The Government will then report to Parliament, and include a summary of the concerns raised in the public consultation. To ensure that we get the right model to assist pharmacy going forward, we intend to be totally transparent.

To the hon. Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon), I can give an unequivocal yes. We have a thriving life science sector in the UK, contributing over £80 billion a

year to the economy and over a quarter of a million jobs. We want to ensure that the UK remains an important market for medicines and medical devices, and to bring products to market here.

As I close, it is perhaps unusual to be pleased that there have been quite so many changes or challenges on a Bill, but I think they have been the right changes and the right challenges. To that end, I thank all hon. Members who have challenged and who have assisted in those changes. I also thank all those who have assisted behind the scenes—the Bill team, my officials and so on. We have arrived at a Bill that I think carries the support of all sides and of both ends of the Parliament, and one where patients, the sector and the public can understand how we do good work and how this Bill will work for them.

Lords amendment 1 agreed to, with Commons financial privileges waived.

Lords amendments 2 and 3 disagreed to.

Lords amendments 4 to 10 agreed to.

Government amendments (a) to (d) made to Lords amendment 11.

Lords amendment 11, as amended, agreed to.

Lords amendments 12 to 14 disagreed to.

Lords amendments 15 to 21 agreed to.

Government amendments (a) to (c) made to Lords amendment 22.

Lords amendment 22, as amended, agreed to.

Lords amendments 23 to 25 disagreed to.

Lords amendments 26 to 29 agreed to.

Lords amendment 30 disagreed to.

Lords amendment 31 agreed to.

Government amendments (a) to (c) made to Lords amendment 32.

Lords amendment 32, as amended, agreed to.

Lords amendments 33 to 39 agreed to.

Lords amendment 40 disagreed to.

Lords amendments 41 to 47 agreed to.

Lords amendments 48 to 50 disagreed to.

Government amendments (a) to (c) made in lieu of Lords amendments 2, 3, 12 to 14, 23 to 25, 30, 40 and 48 to 50.

Lords amendments 51 to 56 agreed to, with Commons financial privileges waived in respect of Lords amendment 54.

Business without Debate

DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),

PUBLIC HEALTH

That the Public Health (Coronavirus) (Protection from Eviction) (England) Regulations 2021 (S.I., 2021, No. 15), dated 7 January 2021, a copy of which was laid before this House on 8 January, be approved.—(*Rebecca Harris.*)

Question agreed to.

Golf Tourism

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—(*Rebecca Harris.*)

8.16 pm

Wendy Chamberlain (North East Fife) (LD): I am very proud to represent North East Fife and the town of St Andrews, which is known worldwide as the home of golf. As the local Member of Parliament, I have to declare a rather unusual interest: the St Andrews Links Order Confirmation Act 1974, passed in this place, designates the local MP as one of the eight trustees of the St Andrews Links Trust, which manages the seven courses in the town, including the Old Course.

This is a special year for the home of golf, because we are celebrating the bicentenary of the birth of Old Tom Morris, the founding father of golf. Old Tom won The Open four times, and his victory in 1867 at the age of 46 means that he is the oldest person to have ever won the claret jug. He finished runner up in 1868, behind the youngest ever winner, his 17-year-old son, Young Tom Morris. Old Tom was also a prolific course designer, contributing to more than 50 courses across the UK and Ireland, including the famous 18th hole on the Old Course, which bears his name.

It is the story of legends such as Old Tom that make golf in Fife world famous. When people come and play they become part of a history that stretches all the way back to the 15th century, encompassing on its way Old Tom, Young Tom and the modern greats of the game, who are set to return to Fife when the 150th Open is held in St Andrews in 2022. It is a living history, too. Anyone who knows me knows that I am much more likely to be picking up a shinty stick than a golf club, but any member of the public can get a tee time for the links course in St Andrews. There is now far more recognition of women's golf than ever before, although work on that front is still ongoing, and an increasingly strong emphasis on accessibility, as I saw last year when I attended part of the Phoenix cup, disability golf's equivalent of the Ryder cup. I was pleased that the organisers, including Scottish Disability Golf & Curling, were able to go ahead with the tournament, in the face of huge logistical challenges.

When we put all these things together, we see that it is no wonder that Fife and St Andrews are the No. 1 destinations on many a golfer's bucket list. From April to October, tourists, predominantly from overseas and particularly from North America, travel to Fife and contribute to our local economy. A whole ecosystem is built up around golf tourism. Of course that means the golf clubs, but it also means the inbound tour operators, who arrange tee times, hotels and travel for many international tourists; the minibus drivers; the caddies; the B&Bs; the guest houses and hotels; the brilliant local restaurants; our fantastic Fife distilleries; and all their employees and suppliers. Every pound spent by a golf tourist has a huge multiplier effect. Up to 100 golf facilities attract almost all overseas golf tourists to Scotland and generate at least £300 million in revenues. As the House can imagine, when the coronavirus pandemic hit, the impact on clubs, small business owners, the people of my constituency and other areas around Scotland and the UK where golf plays an important part was huge.

Ian Paisley (North Antrim) (DUP): I thank the hon. Member for giving way in what is a brilliant speech so far; I look forward to the rest of it. I stress that although I may be the proxy of my hon. Friend the Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon) tonight, I speak in my own capacity as the Member for North Antrim.

Golf tourism in Northern Ireland is, as the hon. Member has indicated in respect of other parts of the UK, absolutely stunning. It has changed the economy, especially in North Antrim and other parts of the country. In fact, we look forward to the return of the ISPS Handa cup, the Northern Ireland Open, the Irish Open and, indeed, the Open in the foreseeable future. Does the hon. Member agree that the Government must get behind promoting and developing golf tourism, because it is one of the key ways in which we will lift our economy post covid?

Wendy Chamberlain: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his intervention. I have already made my apologies, via the hon. Gentleman, to the hon. Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon) for the fact that my physical participation this evening has prevented him from contributing virtually. Yes, I absolutely agree: obviously, I believe that Fife and St Andrews are top of any golfer's bucket list, but clearly all parts of the UK are. We are a worldwide leader in the sport.

Golf tourism's particular reliance on international tourism—and particularly on American tourists, who were subject to quarantine restrictions—meant that in effect the 2020 season was sadly over before it began. That has had a particular impact on inbound tour operators, many of which operate in my constituency. Last year, I organised a roundtable with the Scottish Incoming Golf Tour Operators Association—SIGTOA—and a number of local operators, and they told me of the difficulties they had faced over the previous months.

One tour operator said to me,

“as of yesterday and today, I have received two separate cancellations from Australian groups who had rescheduled from this year to 2021... Yet again this is a prime example that Golf Tourism and our businesses are being crippled, and will continue to be crippled, not just for 6 months but what is likely to be 18-24 months.”

Another Fife-based company told me:

“With nearly 40 years in package tourism, we have experienced a number of challenges as the business was affected by various national and international events. We simply batted down the hatches and worked through it all, using our own resources and never a penny piece of public money.

Our company (as with those of our fellow operators) has proved very resilient—but Covid is stress-testing that resilience to breaking point.”

The picture for them is pretty bleak.

It is worth mentioning that, under the current restrictions in Scotland, people can play golf, with very strict limitations. When the all-party parliamentary group on golf, of which I am a vice-chair, shared information on this debate on social media, many people got in touch regarding the current restrictions in Wales, England and Northern Ireland, which exclude golf from the sports currently permitted. I hope the Minister will be able to indicate what plans the Government have for golf's reopening.

Part of the difficulty is that financial support is not getting to where it needs to—and this applies not just to tour operators but across the sector. For instance, the

furlough has been less useful in an industry in which there is much seasonal employment and self-employment, as I have said previously in Parliament. In some respects, clubs themselves have had the best of it, particularly those whose business models are weighted towards membership, as subscriptions can be utilised to retain staff and maintain the facilities. Clearly, though, there will be pressures on subscriptions going forward, and many clubs have a mixed business model in which visitor income plays a significant part. Crail Golfing Society was founded in 1786 and is the seventh oldest club in the world; it lost £600,000 in visitor revenue in 2020.

Scottish Government support has not always hit the mark either. Back in May, I met golf clubs from across Fife, and they explained that many of them were ineligible for business grants because their rateable values were too high as a result of the land taken up by the courses. They needed support but were sadly excluded.

I was contacted by one constituent who runs a golf tourism business in St Andrews. Some 95% of his customers are from America. He provides travel services, but because his business is vehicles, he does not have premises or pay rates, which means he is not classed as part of the tourism and hospitality sector. He has found himself excluded from support. He told me:

“My business is highly reliant on”—

tourism—

“being open and available as I am part of the tourist supply chain for some major hotels and premises in St Andrews...my business has had no clients at all in 2020.”

It is clear that there are huge challenges.

I welcomed the Scottish Government’s December announcement of further support for tourism and hospitality, including a specific fund for inbound tour operators, but that money was initially promised on 9 December and the fund opened for offers of interest only last week. January is a challenging month at the best of times, and I doubt that any operator will receive money until February—that is two months after the first announcement.

At least support for Scottish operators is on its way. The UK Government are yet to provide specific funding for inbound tour operators, so I encourage the Minister to engage with UKinbound’s proposals for a £45 million resilience fund. That surely is an investment worth making, given that normally, international visitors contribute £28 billion to the UK economy every year and support half a million jobs directly. That would have an impact on my constituency too, because lots of UK-wide operators run tours that incorporate England, Wales and Northern Ireland as well as Scotland.

The need for support has only increased following today’s announcement about tightening border restrictions. Back in the autumn, the whole focus for clubs, operators and businesses was, “Let’s make it through to the 2021 season.” March and April 2021 promised a potential return to viability. That expectation only increased following the incredibly positive news in November about the development and approval of covid-19 vaccines. Now, as we administer hundreds of thousands of vaccine doses a day, the prospect of relaxing restrictions when the warmer weather is here looks more possible.

The sector had been positive. Operators’ assessment of the situation has been that the demand for international customers is very much there if people can find a safe

and direct way to travel. Operators previously hoped that that would be secured by a combination of the vaccine roll-out and increased testing. Clearly, it is much more challenging now. Quite simply, if the 2021 season is also cancelled due to travel restrictions, as seems increasingly likely, then unless further support is given, many of the businesses I have mentioned will have to close.

That is true not just for tour operators but for many of those businesses that rely on the income generated by those tourists. Let me give another example. I was contacted by a very small tourism business operating in St Andrews and all over Scotland. My constituent and her husband drive golfers and tourists about, and they work for three different tour operators. They are currently on universal credit and previously received a self-employment support grant. She told me:

“I see that foreign travel may not happen til 2022. Being as our business depends on foreign travel there is no way without adequate funding we can make it til 2022. So it’s about time we heard some facts so people can decide about their business as we are just getting into untold debt and don’t know what to do.”

Yesterday, in the urgent question on border restrictions, I told the Home Secretary that what business operators and the public needed was clarity, certainty and notice. Given the expectation that the Scottish Government are considering more stringent travel restrictions, coupled with the Home Secretary’s subsequent statement today, I am concerned that we have none of those things.

Uncertainty is corrosive to these businesses, and it is a huge source of stress and anxiety to small business owners across the country. As we marked the tragic threshold of 100,000 deaths in the UK yesterday, I appreciate how fine the margins of such decisions are and the ongoing need to ensure public health, but I hope that the Minister can set out the likely considerations for a return to international tourism.

With the new travel restrictions, clubs and businesses that rely on international tourism face an increasingly bleak picture for summer 2021. With the prospect of domestic restrictions being lifted as the population is vaccinated, the Government must commit to supporting the golf industry, which relies so much on inbound international tourism. We cannot on the one hand start opening up the economy domestically this summer, while on the other failing to provide support to those businesses that rely on inbound tourism. It would be a disaster for so many of them and would potentially devastate the domestic market too.

That means listening to the businesses. One problem that I am aware of is with deposits. Many customers were initially happy to roll over their 2020 bookings into 2021. They have spent money on deposits to secure tickets, bookings, hotel accommodation—all manner of things—for trips this summer. The businesses do not currently have or hold that money. If customers start to cancel, the Government will need to support inbound tourism businesses that are struggling to return those deposits. They will also need to support the golf clubs that were relying on the prospect of inbound tourism this summer.

There is a real opportunity here. If these businesses survive until summer 2022, we will hopefully see the Open return to St Andrews for its 150th edition. That will be a huge opportunity for celebration, but if we are going to get there, the Government need to take those

[Wendy Chamberlain]

steps on clarity, support and listening to the concerns and needs of businesses in the sector. If the Government can do that, we can make sure that the fantastic, vibrant golf businesses of the home of golf and elsewhere across the UK make it through their biggest challenge yet. I urge the Government to listen and to take those steps, and I hope that the Minister will be able to meet me and businesses in my constituency to discuss what further steps might be taken.

8.29 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Nigel Huddleston): It is a pleasure to respond on the Government's behalf to this debate on golf tourism, which fits neatly within my portfolio as the Minister for both sport and tourism, and I congratulate the hon. Member for North East Fife (Wendy Chamberlain) on securing it. She spoke eloquently and with passion and knowledge about all dimensions of tourism and golf. She gave us a good history of golf, which I very much appreciated, and I particularly appreciated her highlighting the increasing importance of women's golf and disability golf.

I make it clear from the outset that tourism and sport are devolved matters, meaning that the devolved Administrations are responsible for any targeted policy intervention in their respective nations, but, as the hon. Lady pointed out, a number of matters are also UK-wide, so I will talk broadly.

I will start by highlighting the valuable contribution of sport to the UK tourism sector before moving on to address the current pandemic's impact on inbound tourism and the Government's response. Turning to the second half of the debate, or perhaps I should say the back nine, I will summarise the Government's work to help sports clubs through this period and reiterate our commitment to reopening golf courses and other sports facilities as soon as the broader health situation allows. That is absolutely our goal, which I know is shared by all hon. Members on both sides of the House.

The UK's sporting calendar is recognised as one of our greatest tourism assets. In 2017, the last year for which we have detailed figures available, over 2 million visitors attended a live sporting event as part of their trip to the UK, accounting for 6% of all visits that year. In particular, 18,000 of these international visitors watched a live golf event during their stay, perhaps in the hon. Lady's constituency, spending at least £30 million.

The hon. Member for North Antrim (Ian Paisley) will appreciate my saying that the Open championship, held in Royal Portrush in Northern Ireland in 2019, served as a major tourist draw, and he mentioned how important tourism and golf tourism are for Northern Ireland.

As well as attending prestigious events, international visitors also come here to get involved in the sporting action themselves. Over 350,000 inbound visitors played golf during a trip to the UK in 2017, spending about £418 million, which is an immense sum and hence the importance of this debate. Given the stunning scenery to be found right across the country, golf tourists are spoiled for choice when it comes to choosing where to go for a round, although I am sure that many will have made the pilgrimage to St Andrews in the constituency of the hon. Member for North East Fife.

In England, the £45 million Discover England fund has helped businesses to tap into the lucrative golf tourism market. The Golf Tourism England project, in particular, helps businesses to create bookable itineraries aimed at international audiences, connecting visitors with destinations across the country.

Although I wish I could use this speech to point to an upward trend in golf tourism, we all know that the events of the past year have clearly overshadowed proceedings. Inbound tourism was one of the first industries to be hit by covid, with the effects on bookings and confidence felt even before we entered the first lockdown last March. The subsequent drop in international arrivals had a devastating impact on tourism businesses and suppliers—in this case, the tour operators, the coach drivers, the hotels and many other businesses that contribute to delivering the golf tourism experience, as the hon. Lady articulated.

The Government acted quickly to help businesses through lockdown with a comprehensive package of support, much of which the hon. Lady mentioned. When the sector reopened in July we took targeted fiscal action to aid the sector further, including cutting the rate of VAT on tourism and hospitality-related activities to 5% until the end of March this year.

Although summer may have gone well for some businesses with a domestic focus, many in this sector, particularly those highly dependent on international travel, continued to struggle and are still struggling. Last autumn, to help chart a path forward for these businesses, the Transport Secretary launched a global travel taskforce to consider what steps the Government could take to enable the safe and sustainable recovery of international travel.

In November, the taskforce published its report outlining 14 recommendations focused on ensuring clear public health measures, increasing demand safely and taking the lead on global standards. My Department, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, continues to work closely with the Department for Transport on progressing these recommendations, including the development of a tourism recovery plan, which we are currently working on, and, at the appropriate time, running a flagship overseas marketing campaign to promote the UK as an attractive and safe place to visit.

Ian Paisley: I am following closely the serious points that the Minister is making. In order to assist golf courses and, indeed, people and their wellbeing at the present time, and while he is on that holy ground of golf tonight, may I tell him that people do not yet appreciate why they can walk around supermarkets and be in close contact with many people, yet they cannot walk out in the fresh air and golf in a socially distanced, safe way that would keep their local course open? Can he explain that and help us to get out of this pandemic?

Nigel Huddleston: I thank the hon. Gentleman for that comment. Of course, nobody wanted to close down golf courses. It is vital that we let people get out and exercise. The problem was that we would have had confusing messages. The fundamental clear message is to stay at home unless you have to leave for certain reasons or for a limited number of low-impact exercises, and there would have been confusing messages had we

done anything else. As I say, the goal is to try to get golf and other sports open as soon as possible; that is absolutely the shared aim.

Before we can welcome back international visitors, we first need to help the tourism sector through the final stretch of the pandemic. At a UK-wide level, the Chancellor has implemented further support for businesses and individuals in the light of the winter's heightened restrictions, including extending various Government-backed loans as well as extending the furlough and self-employed schemes. In England, the Chancellor has also announced one-off top-up grants for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses worth up to £9,000 per property, plus a further £594 million discretionary fund to support other impacted businesses. That builds on the £1.1 billion discretionary fund that local authorities in England have already received to help impacted businesses.

The guidance for these additional restrictions grants encourages local authorities to develop discretionary schemes to help those businesses that are perhaps not legally forced to close but are none the less severely impacted by the restrictions put in place to control the spread of covid. These could include, for example, businesses that supply the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors or businesses in the events sector. On this point, I have received a number of reports that some tourism-related businesses, which might not be ratepayers and are not explicitly mentioned in the guidance on these grant schemes, are being deemed ineligible by some local authorities. To be clear to those local authorities and those businesses, although the ultimate decision is at the local authority's discretion, the fund can, and in my opinion certainly should, be used to provide grants to tour operators, coach operators, school travel companies, English language schools, event organisers and similar businesses, all of which serve as vital facilitators to the tourism industry even if they do not sell to consumers directly on a specific premise. I therefore encourage and expect local authorities to be sympathetic to applications from those businesses and others that have been impacted by covid-19 restrictions but are ineligible for the other grant schemes. We had a debate on a similar issue with funfairs and other sectors in Westminster Hall recently.

We also know that these remain incredibly challenging conditions for the golf clubs themselves. No Government would want to be in a position of needing to close sports

facilities such as golf courses. Golf has great reach across society, as people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities can take part in the game. It brings people together to experience the outdoors and enjoy nature, and makes great contributions to mental health.

Golf courses were one of the first sports facilities to be reopened following the initial lockdown, and they were able to stay open in the local tiered restrictions, including and up to tier 4; however, the current spread of the virus risks the healthcare system becoming overwhelmed, which we cannot allow to happen. That is why the current national lockdown was introduced. I understand the frustrations of those who are desperate to get back on the course. As I said, we want to get them back on the courses as soon as possible and start lifting restrictions, and grassroots sports will be among the first to return.

To support the return of grassroots sport, including golf courses, the Government have supported businesses through unprecedented pan-economic measures, on top of the funding that Sport England has provided, which represents over £220 million in direct support for the sport and physical activity sector, with £35 million set aside as a community emergency fund. In addition, just yesterday Sport England published its strategy "Uniting the Movement", as part of which it has committed an extra £50 million to help grassroots sports clubs and organisations affected by the pandemic. Further information on how to apply to those funds will be released shortly, and I am aware that similar funds are available in other parts of the country.

Golf tourism is a hugely valuable activity, which supports a whole chain of tourism businesses and jobs. We will continue to engage with tourism sector stakeholders as we look into how we can most effectively support the inbound sector through covid and beyond, and we hope to share our tourism recovery plan in due course. I would be delighted to have a meeting with the hon. Lady, as she requested, and I assure all hon. Members that the Government overall are listening and will continue to work with stakeholders on ideas further to support all strands of inbound tourism.

Question put and agreed to.

8.40 pm

House adjourned.

Members Eligible for a Proxy Vote

The following is the list of Members currently certified as eligible for a proxy vote, and of the Members nominated as their proxy:

Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy
Ms Diane Abbott (Hackney North and Stoke Newington) (Lab)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy
Debbie Abrahams (Oldham East and Saddleworth) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Nigel Adams (Selby and Ainsty) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Bim Afolami (Hitchin and Harpenden) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Imran Ahmad Khan (Wakefield) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Nickie Aiken (Cities of London and Westminster) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Peter Aldous (Waveney) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Rushanara Ali (Bethnal Green and Bow) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Tahir Ali (Birmingham, Hall Green) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Lucy Allan (Telford) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Dr Rosena Allin-Khan (Tooting) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Mike Amesbury (Weaver Vale) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Sir David Amess (Southend West) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Fleur Anderson (Putney) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Lee Anderson (Ashfield) (Con)	Chris Loder
Stuart Anderson (Wolverhampton South West) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Caroline Ansell (Eastbourne) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Tonia Antoniazzi (Gower) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Edward Argar (Charnwood) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Jonathan Ashworth (Leicester South) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Sarah Atherton (Wrexham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Victoria Atkins (Louth and Horncastle) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Gareth Bacon (Orpington) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mr Richard Bacon (South Norfolk) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Kemi Badenoch (Saffron Walden) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Shaun Bailey (West Bromwich West) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Siobhan Baillie (Stroud) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Duncan Baker (North Norfolk) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mr Steve Baker (Wycombe) (Con)	Stuart Andrew

Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy
Harriett Baldwin (West Worcestershire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Steve Barclay (North East Cambridgeshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Hannah Bardell (Livingston) (SNP)	Patrick Grady
Paula Barker (Liverpool, Wavertree) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Mr John Baron (Basildon and Billericay) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Simon Baynes (Clwyd South) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Margaret Beckett (Derby South) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Apsana Begum (Poplar and Limehouse) (Lab)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy
Aaron Bell (Newcastle-under-Lyme) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Hilary Benn (Leeds Central) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Scott Benton (Blackpool South) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Sir Paul Beresford (Mole Valley) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Jake Berry (Rossendale and Darwen) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Clive Betts (Sheffield South East) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Saqib Bhatti (Meriden) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mhairi Black (Paisley and Renfrewshire South) (SNP)	Patrick Grady
Ian Blackford (Ross, Skye and Lochaber) (SNP)	Patrick Grady
Bob Blackman (Harrow East) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Kirsty Blackman (Aberdeen North) (SNP)	Patrick Grady
Olivia Blake (Sheffield, Hallam) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Paul Blomfield (Sheffield Central) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Crispin Blunt (Reigate) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mr Peter Bone (Wellingborough) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Steven Bonnar (Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill) (SNP)	Patrick Grady
Andrew Bowie (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Tracy Brabin (Batley and Spen) (Lab/Co-op)	Mark Tami
Ben Bradley (Mansfield) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Karen Bradley (Staffordshire Moorlands) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Ben Bradshaw (Exeter) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Suella Braverman (Fareham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Kevin Brennan (Cardiff West) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Jack Brereton (Stoke-on-Trent South) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Andrew Bridgen (North West Leicestershire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew

Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy	Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy
Steve Brine (Winchester) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Maria Caulfield (Lewes) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Paul Bristow (Peterborough) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Alex Chalk (Cheltenham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Sara Britcliffe (Hyndburn) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Sarah Champion (Rotherham) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Deidre Brock (Edinburgh North and Leith) (SNP)	Patrick Grady	Douglas Chapman (Dunfermline and West Fife) (SNP)	Patrick Grady
James Brokenshire (Old Bexley and Sidcup) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Bambos Charalambous (Enfield, Southgate) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Alan Brown (Kilmarnock and Loudon) (SNP)	Patrick Grady	Joanna Cherry (Edinburgh South West) (SNP)	Patrick Grady
Ms Lyn Brown (West Ham) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Rehman Chishti (Gillingham and Rainham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Anthony Browne (South Cambridgeshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Jo Churchill (Bury St Edmunds) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Fiona Bruce (Congleton) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Feryal Clark (Enfield North) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Chris Bryant (Rhondda) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Greg Clark (Tunbridge Wells) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Felicity Buchan (Kensington) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mr Simon Clarke (Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Ms Karen Buck (Westminster North) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Theo Clarke (Stafford) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Robert Buckland (South Swindon) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Brendan Clarke-Smith (Bassetlaw) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Alex Burghart (Brentwood and Ongar) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Chris Clarkson (Heywood and Middleton) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Richard Burgon (Leeds East) (Lab)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy	James Cleverly (Braintree) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Conor Burns (Bournemouth West) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown (The Cotswolds) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Dawn Butler (Brent Central) (Lab)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy	Dr Thérèse Coffey (Suffolk Coastal) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Rob Butler (Aylesbury) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Elliot Colburn (Carshalton and Wallington) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Ian Byrne (Liverpool, West Derby) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Damian Collins (Folkestone and Hythe) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Liam Byrne (Birmingham, Hodge Hill) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Daisy Cooper (St Albans) (LD)	Wendy Chamberlain
Ruth Cadbury (Brentford and Isleworth) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Rosie Cooper (West Lancashire) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Alun Cairns (Vale of Glamorgan) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Yvette Cooper (Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Amy Callaghan (East Dunbartonshire) (SNP)	Patrick Grady	Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Ind)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy
Dr Lisa Cameron (East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow) (SNP)	Patrick Grady	Alberto Costa (South Leicestershire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Sir Alan Campbell (Tynemouth) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Robert Courts (Witney) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mr Gregory Campbell (East Londonderry) (DUP)	Ian Paisley	Claire Coutinho (East Surrey) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Dan Carden (Liverpool, Walton) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Ronnie Cowan (Inverclyde) (SNP)	Patrick Grady
Mr Alistair Carmichael (Orkney and Shetland) (LD)	Wendy Chamberlain	Sir Geoffrey Cox (Torridge and West Devon) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Andy Carter (Warrington South) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Neil Coyle (Bermondsey and Old Southwark) (Lab)	Mark Tami
James Cartlidge (South Suffolk) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Stephen Crabb (Preseli Pembrokeshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Sir William Cash (Stone) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Angela Crawley (Lanark and Hamilton East) (SNP)	Patrick Grady
Miriam Cates (Penistone and Stocksbridge) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Stella Creasy (Walthamstow) (Lab)	Mark Tami

Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy	Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy
Virginia Crosbie (Ynys Môn) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Steve Double (St Austell and Newquay) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Tracey Crouch (Chatham and Aylesford) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Stephen Doughty (Cardiff South and Penarth) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Jon Cruddas (Dagenham and Rainham) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Peter Dowd (Bootle) (Lab)	Mark Tami
John Cryer (Leyton and Wanstead) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Oliver Dowden (Hertsmere) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Judith Cummins (Bradford South) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Richard Drax (South Dorset) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Alex Cunningham (Stockton North) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Jack Dromey (Birmingham, Erdington) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Janet Daby (Lewisham East) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Mrs Flick Drummond (Meon Valley) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
James Daly (Bury North) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	James Duddridge (Rochford and Southend East) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Ed Davey (Kingston and Surbiton) (LD)	Wendy Chamberlain	Rosie Duffield (Canterbury) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Wayne David (Caerphilly) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Sir Iain Duncan Smith (Chingford and Woodford Green) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
David T. C. Davies (Monmouth) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Philip Dunne (Ludlow) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Gareth Davies (Grantham and Stamford) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Ms Angela Eagle (Wallasey) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Geraint Davies (Swansea West) (Lab/Co-op)	Mark Tami	Maria Eagle (Garston and Halewood) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Dr James Davies (Vale of Clwyd) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Colum Eastwood (Foyle) (SDLP)	Patrick Grady
Mims Davies (Mid Sussex) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mark Eastwood (Dewsbury) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Alex Davies-Jones (Pontypridd) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Jonathan Edwards (Carmarthen East and Dinefwr) (Ind)	Stuart Andrew
Philip Davies (Shipley) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Ruth Edwards (Rushcliffe) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mr David Davis (Haltemprece and Howden) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Clive Efford (Eltham) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Dehenna Davison (Bishop Auckland) (Con)	Ben Everitt	Julie Elliott (Sunderland Central) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Martyn Day (Linlithgow and East Falkirk) (SNP)	Patrick Grady	Michael Ellis (Northampton North) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Thangam Debbonaire (Bristol West) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Mr Tobias Ellwood (Bournemouth East) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Marsha De Cordova (Battersea)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy	Mark Tami (Ogmore) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesei (Slough) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Mrs Natalie Elphicke (Dover) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Caroline Dinenage (Gosport) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Florence Eshalomi (Vauxhall) (Lab/Co-op)	Mark Tami
Miss Sarah Dines (Derbyshire Dales) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Bill Esterson (Sefton Central) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Jonathan Djanogly (Huntingdon) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	George Eustice (Camborne and Redruth) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Martin Docherty-Hughes (West Dunbartonshire) (SNP)	Patrick Grady	Chris Evans (Islwyn) (Lab/Co-op)	Mark Tami
Anneliese Dodds (Oxford East) (Lab/Co-op)	Mark Tami	Dr Luke Evans (Bosworth) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Sir Jeffrey M. Donaldson (Lagan Valley) (DUP)	Ian Paisley	Sir David Evennett (Bexleyheath and Crayford) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Michelle Donelan (Chippenham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Ben Everitt (Milton Keynes North) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Dave Doogan (Angus) (SNP)	Patrick Grady	Michael Fabricant (Lichfield) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Allan Dorans (Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock) (SNP)	Patrick Grady	Laura Farris (Newbury) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Ms Nadine Dorries (Mid Bedfordshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Tim Farron (Westmorland and Lonsdale) (LD)	Wendy Chamberlain

Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy	Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy
Stephen Farry (North Down) (Alliance)	Wendy Chamberlain	Mr Robert Goodwill (Scarborough and Whitby) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Simon Fell (Barrow and Furness) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Michael Gove (Surrey Heath) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Marion Fellows (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)	Patrick Grady	Richard Graham (Gloucester) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Margaret Ferrier (Rutherglen and Hamilton West) (Ind)	Stuart Andrew	Mrs Helen Grant (Maidstone and The Weald) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Katherine Fletcher (South Ribble) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Peter Grant (Glenrothes) (SNP)	Patrick Grady
Mark Fletcher (Bolsover) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	James Gray (North Wiltshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Nick Fletcher (Don Valley) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Neil Gray (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)	Patrick Grady
Stephen Flynn (Aberdeen South) (SNP)	Patrick Grady	Chris Grayling (Epsom and Ewell) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Vicky Ford (Chelmsford) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Damian Green (Ashford) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Kevin Foster (Torbay) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Kate Green (Stretford and Urmston) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Yvonne Fovargue (Makerfield) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Lilian Greenwood (Nottingham South) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Dr Liam Fox (North Somerset) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Margaret Greenwood (Wirral West) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Vicky Foxcroft (Lewisham, Deptford) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Andrew Griffith (Arundel and South Downs) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mary Kelly Foy (City of Durham) (Lab)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy	Nia Griffith (Llanelli) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Mr Mark Francois (Rayleigh and Wickford) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Kate Griffiths (Burton) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Lucy Frazer (South East Cambridgeshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	James Grundy (Leigh) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
George Freeman (Mid Norfolk) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Jonathan Gullis (Stoke-on-Trent North) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mike Freer (Finchley and Golders Green) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Andrew Gwynne (Denton and Reddish) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Richard Fuller (North East Bedfordshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Louise Haigh (Sheffield, Heeley) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Marcus Fysh (Yeovil) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Robert Halfon (Harlow) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Sir Roger Gale (North Thanet) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Luke Hall (Thornbury and Yate) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Barry Gardiner (Brent North) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Fabian Hamilton (Leeds North East) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Mark Garnier (Wyre Forest) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Stephen Hammond (Wimbledon) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Nusrat Ghani (Wealden) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Matt Hancock (West Suffolk) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Nick Gibb (Bognor Regis and Littlehampton) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Greg Hands (Chelsea and Fulham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Patricia Gibson (North Ayrshire and Arran) (SNP)	Patrick Grady	Claire Hanna (Belfast South) (SDLP)	Ben Lake
Peter Gibson (Darlington) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Neale Hanvey (Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath) (SNP)	Patrick Grady
Jo Gideon (Stoke-on-Trent Central) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Emma Hardy (Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Preet Kaur Gill (Birmingham, Edgbaston) (Lab/Co-op)	Mark Tami	Ms Harriet Harman (Camberwell and Peckham) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Dame Cheryl Gillan (Chesham and Amersham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Carolyn Harris (Swansea East) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Paul Girvan (South Antrim) (DUP)	Ian Paisley	Rebecca Harris (Castle Point) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
John Glen (Salisbury) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Trudy Harrison (Copeland) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mary Glindon (North Tyneside) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Sally-Ann Hart (Hastings and Rye) (Con)	Stuart Andrew

Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy	Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy
Simon Hart (Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Rupa Huq (Ealing Central and Acton) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Helen Hayes (Dulwich and West Norwood) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Imran Hussain (Bradford East) (Lab)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy
Sir John Hayes (South Holland and The Deepings) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mr Alister Jack (Dumfries and Galloway) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Sir Oliver Heald (North East Hertfordshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Christine Jardine (Edinburgh West) (LD)	Wendy Chamberlain
John Healey (Wentworth and Dearne) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Dan Jarvis (Barnsley Central) (Lab)	Mark Tami
James Heapey (Wells) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Sajid Javid (Bromsgrove) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Chris Heaton-Harris (Daventry) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mr Ranil Jayawardena (North East Hampshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Gordon Henderson (Sittingbourne and Sheppey) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Sir Bernard Jenkin (Harwich and North Essex) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Sir Mark Hendrick (Preston) (Lab/Co-op)	Mark Tami	Mark Jenkinson (Workington) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Drew Hendry (Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey) (SNP)	Patrick Grady	Andrea Jenkyns (Morley and Outwood) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Darren Henry (Broxtove) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Robert Jenrick (Newark) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Anthony Higginbotham (Burnley) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Boris Johnson (Uxbridge and South Ruislip) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mike Hill (Hartlepool) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Dr Caroline Johnson (Sleaford and North Hykeham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Damian Hinds (East Hampshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Dame Diana Johnson (Kingston upon Hull North) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Simon Hoare (North Dorset) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Gareth Johnson (Dartford) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Wera Hobhouse (Bath) (LD)	Wendy Chamberlain	Kim Johnson (Liverpool, Riverside) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Dame Margaret Hodge (Barking) (Lab)	Mark Tami	David Johnston (Wantage) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mrs Sharon Hodgson (Washington and Sunderland West) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Darren Jones (Bristol North West) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Kate Hollern (Blackburn) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Andrew Jones (Harrogate and Knaresborough) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Kevin Hollinrake (Thirsk and Malton) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mr David Jones (Clwyd West) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Adam Holloway (Gravesham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Fay Jones (Brecon and Radnorshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Paul Holmes (Eastleigh) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Gerald Jones (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Rachel Hopkins (Luton South) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Mr Marcus Jones (Nuneaton) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Stewart Hosie (Dundee East) (SNP)	Patrick Grady	Ruth Jones (Newport West) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Sir George Howarth (Knowsley) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Sarah Jones (Croydon Central) (Lab)	Mark Tami
John Howell (Henley) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Simon Jupp (East Devon) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Paul Howell (Sedgefield) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mike Kane (Wythenshawe and Sale East) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Nigel Huddleston (Mid Worcestershire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Daniel Kawczynski (Shrewsbury and Atcham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Dr Neil Hudson (Penrith and The Border) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Alicia Kearns (Rutland and Melton) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Eddie Hughes (Walsall North) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Gillian Keegan (Chichester) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Jane Hunt (Loughborough) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Barbara Keeley (Worsley and Eccles South) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Jeremy Hunt (South West Surrey) (Con)	Stuart Andrew		

Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy	Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy
Liz Kendall (Leicester West) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Kenny MacAskill (East Lothian) (SNP)	Patrick Grady
Afzal Khan (Manchester, Gorton) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Steve McCabe (Birmingham, Selly Oak) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Stephen Kinnock (Aberavon) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Kerry McCarthy (Bristol East) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Sir Greg Knight (East Yorkshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Jason McCartney (Colne Valley) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Julian Knight (Solihull) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Siobhain McDonagh (Mitcham and Morden) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Danny Kruger (Devizes) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Andy McDonald (Middlesbrough) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Kwasi Kwarteng (Spelthorne) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Stewart Malcolm McDonald (Glasgow South) (SNP)	Patrick Grady
Peter Kyle (Hove) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Stuart C. McDonald (Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East) (SNP)	Patrick Grady
Mr David Lammy (Tottenham) (Lab)	Mark Tami	John McDonnell (Hayes and Harlington) (Lab)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy
John Lamont (Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mr Pat McFadden (Wolverhampton South East) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Robert Langan (High Peak) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Conor McGinn (St Helens North) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Mrs Pauline Latham (Mid Derbyshire) (Con)	Mr William Wragg	Alison McGovern (Wirral South) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Ian Lavery (Wansbeck) (Lab)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy	Craig Mackinlay (South Thanet) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Chris Law (Dundee West) (SNP)	Patrick Grady	Catherine McKinnell (Newcastle upon Tyne North) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Andrea Leadsom (South Northamptonshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Cherilyn Mackrory (Truro and Falmouth) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Sir Edward Leigh (Gainsborough) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Anne McLaughlin (Glasgow North East) (SNP)	Patrick Grady
Ian Levy (Blyth Valley) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Rachel Maclean (Redditch) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck (South Shields) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Jim McMahon (Oldham West and Royton) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Andrew Lewer (Northampton South) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Anna McMorrin (Cardiff North) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Brandon Lewis (Great Yarmouth) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	John Mc Nally (Falkirk) (SNP)	Patrick Grady
Clive Lewis (Norwich South) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Angus Brendan MacNeil (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)	Patrick Grady
Dr Julian Lewis (New Forest East) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Karl McCartney (Lincoln) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger (Bridgwater and West Somerset) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Stephen McPartland (Stevenage) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Tony Lloyd (Rochdale) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Esther McVey (Tatton) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Carla Lockhart (Upper Bann) (DUP)	Ian Paisley	Justin Madders (Ellesmere Port and Neston) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Mark Logan (Bolton North East) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Khalid Mahmood (Birmingham, Perry Barr) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Rebecca Long Bailey (Salford and Eccles) (Lab)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy	Shabana Mahmood (Birmingham, Ladywood) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Marco Longhi (Dudley North) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Alan Mak (Havant) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Julia Lopez (Hornchurch and Upminster) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Seema Malhotra (Feltham and Heston) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Jack Lopresti (Filton and Bradley Stoke) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Kit Malthouse (North West Hampshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mr Jonathan Lord (Woking) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Scott Mann (North Cornwall) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Tim Loughton (East Worthing and Shoreham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew		
Caroline Lucas (Brighton, Pavilion) (Green)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy		
Holly Lynch (Halifax) (Lab)	Mark Tami		

Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy	Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy
Julie Marson (Hertford and Stortford) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	David Mundell (Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Rachael Maskell (York Central) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Ian Murray (Edinburgh South) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Christian Matheson (City of Chester) (Lab)	Mark Tami	James Murray (Ealing North) (Lab/Co-op)	Mark Tami
Mrs Theresa May (Maidenhead) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mrs Sheryll Murray (South East Cornwall) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Jerome Mayhew (Broadland) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Andrew Murrison (South West Wiltshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Paul Maynard (Blackpool North and Cleveleys) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Lisa Nandy (Wigan) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Ian Mearns (Gateshead) (Lab)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy	Sir Robert Neill (Bromley and Chislehurst) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mark Menzies (Fylde) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Gavin Newlands (Paisley and Renfrewshire North) (SNP)	Patrick Grady
Johnny Mercer (Plymouth, Moor View) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Charlotte Nichols (Warrington North) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Huw Merriman (Bexhill and Battle) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Lia Nici (Great Grimsby) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Stephen Metcalfe (South Basildon and East Thurrock) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	John Nicolson (Ochil and South Perthshire) (SNP)	Patrick Grady
Edward Miliband (Doncaster North) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Caroline Nokes (Romsey and Southampton North) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Robin Millar (Aberconwy) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Jesse Norman (Hereford and South Herefordshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mrs Maria Miller (Basingstoke) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Alex Norris (Nottingham North) (Lab/Co-op)	Mark Tami
Amanda Milling (Cannock Chase) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Neil O'Brien (Harborough) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Nigel Mills (Amber Valley) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Brendan O'Hara (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)	Patrick Grady
Navendu Mishra (Stockport) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Dr Matthew Offord (Hendon) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mr Andrew Mitchell (Sutton Coldfield) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Sarah Olney (Richmond Park) (LD)	Wendy Chamberlain
Gagan Mohindra (South West Hertfordshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Chi Onwurah (Newcastle upon Tyne Central) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Carol Monaghan (Glasgow North West)	Patrick Grady	Guy Opperman (Hexham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Damien Moore (Southport) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Abena Oppong-Asare (Erith and Thamesmead) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Layla Moran (Oxford West and Abingdon) (LD)	Wendy Chamberlain	Kate Osamor (Edmonton) (Lab/Co-op)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy
Penny Mordaunt (Portsmouth North) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Kate Osborne (Jarrow) (Lab)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy
Jessica Morden (Newport East) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Kirsten Oswald (East Renfrewshire) (SNP)	Patrick Grady
Stephen Morgan (Portsmouth South) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Taiwo Owatemi (Coventry North West) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Anne Marie Morris (Newton Abbot) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Sarah Owen (Luton North) (Lab)	Mark Tami
David Morris (Morecambe and Lunesdale) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Neil Parish (Tiverton and Honiton) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Grahame Morris (Easington) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Priti Patel (Witham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Joy Morrissey (Beaconsfield) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mr Owen Paterson (North Shropshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Wendy Morton (Aldridge-Brownhills) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mark Pawsey (Rugby) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Dr Kieran Mullan (Crewe and Nantwich) (Con)	Chris Loder	Stephanie Peacock (Barnsley East) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Holly Mumby-Croft (Scunthorpe) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Sir Mike Penning (Hemel Hempstead) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
		Matthew Pennycook (Greenwich and Woolwich) (Lab)	Mark Tami

Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy	Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy
John Penrose (Weston-super-Mare) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Matt Rodda (Reading East) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Andrew Percy (Brigg and Goole) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Andrew Rosindell (Romford) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mr Toby Perkins (Chesterfield) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Douglas Ross (Moray) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Jess Phillips (Birmingham, Yardley) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Lee Rowley (North East Derbyshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Bridget Phillipson (Houghton and Sunderland South) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Dean Russell (Watford) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Chris Philp (Croydon South) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Lloyd Russell-Moyle (Brighton, Kemptown) (Lab/Co-op)	Mark Tami
Christopher Pincher (Tamworth) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	David Rutley (Macclesfield) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Luke Pollard (Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport) (Lab/Co-op)	Mark Tami	Liz Saville Roberts (Dwyfor Meirionnydd) (PC)	Ben Lake
Dr Dan Poulter (Central Suffolk and North Ipswich) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Selaine Saxby (North Devon) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Rebecca Pow (Taunton Deane) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Paul Scully (Sutton and Cheam) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Lucy Powell (Manchester Central) (Lab/Co-op)	Mark Tami	Bob Seely (Isle of Wight) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Victoria Prentis (Banbury) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Andrew Selous (South West Bedfordshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mark Pritchard (The Wrekin) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Naz Shah (Bradford West) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Tom Pursglove (Corby) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP)	Ian Paisley
Jeremy Quin (Horsham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Grant Shapps (Welwyn Hatfield) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Will Quince (Colchester) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Alok Sharma (Reading West) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Yasmin Qureshi (Bolton South East) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Mr Virendra Sharma (Ealing, Southall) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Dominic Raab (Esher and Walton) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mr Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield) (Lab/Co-op)	Mark Tami
Tom Randall (Gedling) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Alec Shelbrooke (Elmet and Rothwell) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Angela Rayner (Ashton-under-Lyne) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Tommy Sheppard (Edinburgh East) (SNP)	Patrick Grady
John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Tulip Siddiq (Hampstead and Kilburn) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Steve Reed (Croydon North) (Lab/Co-op)	Mark Tami	David Simmonds (Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Christina Rees (Neath) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Chris Skidmore (Kingswood) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Ellie Reeves (Lewisham West and Penge) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Andy Slaughter (Hammersmith) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Rachel Reeves (Leeds West) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Alyn Smith (Stirling) (SNP)	Patrick Grady
Jonathan Reynolds (Stalybridge and Hyde) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Cat Smith (Lancaster and Fleetwood) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Nicola Richards (West Bromwich East) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Chloe Smith (Norwich North) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Angela Richardson (Guildford) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Greg Smith (Buckingham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Ms Marie Rimmer (St Helens South and Whiston) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Henry Smith (Crawley) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Rob Roberts (Delyn) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Jeff Smith (Manchester, Withington) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Mr Laurence Robertson (Tewkesbury) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Julian Smith (Skipton and Ripon) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Gavin Robinson (Belfast East) (DUP)	Ian Paisley	Nick Smith (Blaenau Gwent) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Mary Robinson (Cheadle) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Royston Smith (Southampton, Itchen) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
		Karin Smyth (Bristol South) (Lab)	Mark Tami

Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy	Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy
Alex Sobel (Leeds North West) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Edward Timpson (Eddisbury) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Amanda Solloway (Derby North) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Kelly Tolhurst (Rochester and Strood) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Dr Ben Spencer (Runnymede and Weybridge) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Justin Tomlinson (North Swindon) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Alexander Stafford (Rother Valley) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Michael Tomlinson (Mid Dorset and North Poole) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Keir Starmer (Holborn and St Pancras) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Craig Tracey (North Warwickshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Chris Stephens (Glasgow South West) (SNP)	Patrick Grady	Anne-Marie Trevelyan (Berwick-upon-Tweed) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Andrew Stephenson (Pendle) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Jon Trickett (Hemsworth) (Lab)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy
Jo Stevens (Cardiff Central) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Laura Trott (Sevenoaks) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Jane Stevenson (Wolverhampton North East) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Elizabeth Truss (South West Norfolk) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
John Stevenson (Carlisle) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Tom Tugendhat (Tonbridge and Malling) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Bob Stewart (Beckenham) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Karl Turner (Kingston upon Hull East) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Iain Stewart (Milton Keynes South) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Derek Twigg (Halton) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)	Wendy Chamberlain	Mr Shailesh Vara (North West Cambridgeshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Sir Gary Streeter (South West Devon) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Martin Vickers (Cleethorpes) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Wes Streeting (Ilford North) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Theresa Villiers (Chipping Barnet) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Mel Stride (Central Devon) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mr Robin Walker (Worcester) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Graham Stringer (Blackley and Broughton) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Mr Ben Wallace (Wyre and Preston North)	Stuart Andrew
Graham Stuart (Beverley and Holderness) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Dr Jamie Wallis (Bridgend) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Julian Sturdy (York Outer) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Matt Warman (Boston and Skegness) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Zarah Sultana (Coventry South) (Lab)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy	David Warburton (Somerset and Frome) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Rishi Sunak (Richmond (Yorks)) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Giles Watling (Clacton) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
James Sunderland (Bracknell) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Suzanne Webb (Stourbridge) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Sir Robert Syms (Poole) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Claudia Webbe (Leicester East) (Ind)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy
Sam Tarry (Ilford South) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Catherine West (Hornsey and Wood Green) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Alison Thewliss (Glasgow Central) (SNP)	Patrick Grady	Matt Western (Warwick and Leamington) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Derek Thomas (St Ives) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Helen Whately (Faversham and Mid Kent) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Gareth Thomas (Harrow West) (Lab/Co-op)	Mark Tami	Mrs Heather Wheeler (South Derbyshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Nick Thomas-Symonds (Torfaen) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Dr Alan Whitehead (Southampton, Test) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Owen Thompson (Midlothian) (SNP)	Patrick Grady	Dr Philippa Whitford (Central Ayrshire) (SNP)	Patrick Grady
Richard Thomson (Gordon) (SNP)	Patrick Grady	Mick Whitley (Birkenhead) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Emily Thornberry (Islington South and Finsbury) (Lab)	Mark Tami	Craig Whittaker (Calder Valley) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Stephen Timms (East Ham) (Lab)	Mark Tami	John Whittingdale (Malden) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
		Nadia Whittome (Nottingham East) (Lab)	Mark Tami

Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy	Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy
Bill Wiggin (North Herefordshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Pete Wishart (Perth and North Perthshire) (SNP)	Patrick Grady
James Wild (North West Norfolk) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Mike Wood (Dudley South) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Craig Williams (Montgomeryshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Jeremy Wright (Kenilworth and Southam) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Hywel Williams (Arfon) (PC)	Ben Lake	Mohammad Yasin (Bedford) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Gavin Williamson (Montgomeryshire) (Con)	Stuart Andrew	Jacob Young (Redcar) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Munira Wilson (Twickenham) (LD)	Wendy Chamberlain	Nadhim Zahawi (Stratford-on-Avon) (Con)	Stuart Andrew
Sammy Wilson (East Antrim) (DUP)	Ian Paisley	Daniel Zeichner (Cambridge) (Lab)	Mark Tami
Beth Winter (Cynon Valley) (Lab)	Rachel Hopkins		

Deferred Division

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

That the draft West Yorkshire Combined Authority (Election of Mayor and Functions) Order 2021, which was laid before this House on 17 December, be approved.

The House divided: Ayes 553, Noes 2.

Division No. 218]

AYES

Abbott, rh Ms Diane
 Abrahams, Debbie
 Adams, Nigel
 Afolami, Bim
 Aiken, Nickie
 Aldous, Peter
 Ali, Rushanara
 Ali, Tahir
 Allan, Lucy
 Allin-Khan, Dr Rosena
 Amesbury, Mike
 Amess, Sir David
 Anderson, Fleur
 Anderson, Lee
 Anderson, Stuart
 Andrew, Stuart
 Ansell, Caroline
 Antoniazzi, Tonia
 Argar, Edward
 Ashworth, Jonathan
 Atherton, Sarah
 Atkins, Victoria
 Bacon, Gareth
 Bacon, Mr Richard
 Badenoch, Kemi
 Bailey, Shaun
 Baillie, Siobhan
 Baker, Duncan
 Baker, Mr Steve
 Baldwin, Harriett
 Barclay, rh Steve
 Barker, Paula
 Baron, Mr John
 Baynes, Simon
 Beckett, rh Margaret
 Begum, Apsana
 Bell, Aaron
 Benn, rh Hilary
 Benton, Scott
 Beresford, Sir Paul
 Berry, rh Jake
 Betts, Mr Clive
 Bhatti, Saqib
 Blackman, Bob
 Blake, Olivia
 Blomfield, Paul
 Blunt, Crispin
 Bone, Mr Peter
 Bottomley, Sir Peter
 Bowie, Andrew
 Brabin, Tracy
 Bradley, Ben
 Bradley, rh Karen
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
 Braverman, rh Suella
 Brennan, Kevin
 Brereton, Jack
 Bridgen, Andrew
 Brine, Steve
 Bristow, Paul
 Britcliffe, Sara
 Brokenshire, rh James

Brown, Ms Lyn
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
 Browne, Anthony
 Bruce, Fiona
 Bryant, Chris
 Buchan, Felicity
 Buck, Ms Karen
 Buckland, rh Robert
 Burghart, Alex
 Burgon, Richard
 Burns, rh Conor
 Butler, Dawn
 Butler, Rob
 Byrne, Ian
 Byrne, rh Liam
 Cadbury, Ruth
 Cairns, rh Alun
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Campbell, Mr Gregory
 Carden, Dan
 Carter, Andy
 Cartledge, James
 Cash, Sir William
 Cates, Miriam
 Caulfield, Maria
 Chalk, Alex
 Champion, Sarah
 Charalambous, Bambos
 Chishty, Rehman
 Churchill, Jo
 Clark, Feryal
 Clark, rh Greg
 Clarke, Mr Simon
 Clarke, Theo
 Clarke-Smith, Brendan
 Clarkson, Chris
 Cleverly, rh James
 Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey
 Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse
 Colburn, Elliot
 Collins, Damian
 Cooper, Rosie
 Cooper, rh Yvette
 Corbyn, rh Jeremy
 Costa, Alberto
 Courts, Robert
 Coutinho, Claire
 Cox, rh Sir Geoffrey
 Coyle, Neil
 Crabb, rh Stephen
 Creasy, Stella
 Crosbie, Virginia
 Crouch, Tracey
 Cruddas, Jon
 Cryer, John
 Cummins, Judith
 Cunningham, Alex
 Daby, Janet
 Daly, James
 David, Wayne
 Davies, David T. C.
 Davies, Gareth

Davies, Geraint
 Davies, Dr James
 Davies, Mims
 Davies-Jones, Alex
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Davison, Dehenna
 De Cordova, Marsha
 Debonnaire, Thangam
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Dinenage, Caroline
 Dines, Miss Sarah
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Docherty, Leo
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
 Donelan, Michelle
 Dorries, Ms Nadine
 Double, Steve
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Dowden, rh Oliver
 Drax, Richard
 Dromey, Jack
 Drummond, Mrs Flick
 Duddridge, James
 Duffield, Rosie
 Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
 Dunne, rh Philip
 Eagle, Dame Angela
 Eagle, Maria
 Edwards, Ruth
 Efford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Ellis, rh Michael
 Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
 Elmore, Chris
 Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
 Eshalomi, Florence
 Esterson, Bill
 Eustice, rh George
 Evans, Chris
 Evans, Dr Luke
 Evennett, rh Sir David
 Everitt, Ben
 Fabricant, Michael
 Farris, Laura
 Fell, Simon
 Fletcher, Colleen
 Fletcher, Katherine
 Fletcher, Mark
 Fletcher, Nick
 Ford, Vicky
 Foster, Kevin
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Fox, rh Dr Liam
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Foy, Mary Kelly
 Francois, rh Mr Mark
 Frazer, Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 Fuller, Richard
 Furniss, Gill
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Gale, rh Sir Roger
 Gardiner, Barry
 Garnier, Mark
 Ghani, Ms Nusrat
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gibson, Peter
 Gideon, Jo

Gill, Preet Kaur
 Gillan, rh Dame Cheryl
 Girvan, Paul
 Glen, John
 Glindon, Mary
 Goodwill, rh Mr Robert
 Gove, rh Michael
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Mrs Helen
 Gray, James
 Grayling, rh Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Green, Kate
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Andrew
 Griffith, Nia
 Griffiths, Kate
 Grundy, James
 Gullis, Jonathan
 Gwynne, Andrew
 Haigh, Louise
 Halfon, rh Robert
 Hall, Luke
 Hamilton, Fabian
 Hammond, Stephen
 Hancock, rh Matt
 Hands, rh Greg
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harris, Carolyn
 Harris, Rebecca
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Sally-Ann
 Hart, rh Simon
 Hayes, Helen
 Hayes, rh Sir John
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Healey, rh John
 Heappey, James
 Heaton-Harris, Chris
 Henderson, Gordon
 Hendrick, Sir Mark
 Henry, Darren
 Higginbotham, Antony
 Hill, Mike
 Hillier, Meg
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Holden, Mr Richard
 Hollern, Kate
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Holloway, Adam
 Holmes, Paul
 Hopkins, Rachel
 Howarth, rh Sir George
 Howell, John
 Howell, Paul
 Huddleston, Nigel
 Hudson, Dr Neil
 Hughes, Eddie
 Hunt, Jane
 Hunt, rh Jeremy
 Huq, Dr Rupa
 Hussain, Imran
 Jack, rh Mr Alister
 Jarvis, Dan
 Javid, rh Sajid
 Jayawardena, Mr Ranil

Jenkin, Sir Bernard	Matheson, Christian	Penrose, John	Starmer, rh Keir
Jenkinson, Mark	May, rh Mrs Theresa	Percy, Andrew	Stephenson, Andrew
Jenkyns, Andrea	Mayhew, Jerome	Perkins, Mr Toby	Stevens, Jo
Jenrick, rh Robert	Maynard, Paul	Phillips, Jess	Stevenson, Jane
Johnson, rh Boris	McCabe, Steve	Phillipson, Bridget	Stevenson, John
Johnson, Dr Caroline	McCarthy, Kerry	Philp, Chris	Stewart, Bob
Johnson, Dame Diana	McCartney, Karl	Pincher, rh Christopher	Stewart, Iain
Johnson, Gareth	McDonagh, Siobhain	Pollard, Luke	Streeter, Sir Gary
Johnson, Kim	McDonald, Andy	Poulter, Dr Dan	Streeting, Wes
Johnston, David	McDonnell, rh John	Pow, Rebecca	Stride, rh Mel
Jones, Andrew	McFadden, rh Mr Pat	Powell, Lucy	Stringer, Graham
Jones, Darren	McGinn, Conor	Prentis, Victoria	Stuart, Graham
Jones, rh Mr David	McGovern, Alison	Pritchard, Mark	Sturdy, Julian
Jones, Fay	McKinnell, Catherine	Pursglove, Tom	Sultana, Zarah
Jones, Gerald	McMahon, Jim	Quin, Jeremy	Sunak, rh Rishi
Jones, Mr Marcus	McMorrin, Anna	Quince, Will	Sunderland, James
Jones, Ruth	McPartland, Stephen	Qureshi, Yasmin	Syms, Sir Robert
Jones, Sarah	McVey, rh Esther	Raab, rh Dominic	Tami, rh Mark
Jupp, Simon	Mearns, Ian	Randall, Tom	Tarry, Sam
Kane, Mike	Menzies, Mark	Rayner, Angela	Thomas, Derek
Kawczynski, Daniel	Mercer, Johnny	Redwood, rh John	Thomas, Gareth
Kearns, Alicia	Merriman, Huw	Reed, Steve	Thomas-Symonds, Nick
Keegan, Gillian	Metcalfe, Stephen	Rees, Christina	Thornberry, rh Emily
Keeley, Barbara	Miliband, rh Edward	Rees-Mogg, rh Mr Jacob	Throup, Maggie
Kendall, Liz	Millar, Robin	Reeves, Ellie	Timms, rh Stephen
Khan, Afzal	Miller, rh Mrs Maria	Reeves, Rachel	Timpson, Edward
Kinnock, Stephen	Milling, rh Amanda	Reynolds, Jonathan	Tolhurst, Kelly
Knight, rh Sir Greg	Mills, Nigel	Ribeiro-Addy, Bell	Tomlinson, Justin
Knight, Julian	Mishra, Navendu	Richards, Nicola	Tomlinson, Michael
Kruger, Danny	Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew	Richardson, Angela	Tracey, Craig
Kwarteng, rh Kwasi	Mohindra, Mr Gagan	Rimmer, Ms Marie	Trevelyan, rh Anne-Marie
Kyle, Peter	Moore, Damien	Roberts, Rob	Trickett, Jon
Lammy, rh Mr David	Mordaunt, rh Penny	Robertson, Mr Laurence	Trott, Laura
Lamont, John	Morden, Jessica	Robinson, Gavin	Truss, rh Elizabeth
Largan, Robert	Morgan, Stephen	Robinson, Mary	Tugendhat, Tom
Latham, Mrs Pauline	Morris, Anne Marie	Rodda, Matt	Turner, Karl
Lavery, Ian	Morris, David	Rosindell, Andrew	Twigg, Derek
Leadsom, rh Andrea	Morris, Grahame	Ross, Douglas	Twist, Liz
Leigh, rh Sir Edward	Morris, James	Rowley, Lee	Vara, Mr Shailesh
Levy, Ian	Morrissey, Joy	Russell, Dean	Vaz, rh Valerie
Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma	Morton, Wendy	Russell-Moyle, Lloyd	Vickers, Martin
Lewer, Andrew	Mullan, Dr Kieran	Rutley, David	Villiers, rh Theresa
Lewis, rh Brandon	Mumby-Croft, Holly	Sambrook, Gary	Wakeford, Christian
Lewis, Clive	Mundell, rh David	Saxby, Selaine	Walker, Mr Robin
Lewis, rh Dr Julian	Murray, Ian	Scully, Paul	Wallace, rh Mr Ben
Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian	Murray, James	Seely, Bob	Wallis, Dr Jamie
Lloyd, Tony	Murray, Mrs Sheryll	Selous, Andrew	Warburton, David
Lockhart, Carla	Murrison, rh Dr Andrew	Shah, Naz	Warman, Matt
Loder, Chris	Nandy, Lisa	Shannon, Jim	Watling, Giles
Logan, Mark	Neill, Sir Robert	Shapps, rh Grant	Webb, Suzanne
Long Bailey, Rebecca	Nichols, Charlotte	Sharma, rh Alok	Webbe, Claudia
Longhi, Marco	Nici, Lia	Sharma, Mr Virendra	West, Catherine
Lopez, Julia	Nokes, rh Caroline	Sheerman, Mr Barry	Western, Matt
Lopresti, Jack	Norman, rh Jesse	Siddiq, Tulip	Whately, Helen
Lord, Mr Jonathan	Norris, Alex	Simmonds, David	Wheeler, Mrs Heather
Loughton, Tim	O'Brien, Neil	Skidmore, rh Chris	Whitehead, Dr Alan
Lucas, Caroline	Offord, Dr Matthew	Slaughter, Andy	Whitley, Mick
Lynch, Holly	Onwurah, Chi	Smith, Cat	Whittingdale, rh Mr John
Mackinlay, Craig	Opperman, Guy	Smith, Chloe	Whittome, Nadia
Mackrory, Cherilyn	Oppong-Asare, Abena	Smith, Greg	Wiggin, Bill
Maclean, Rachel	Osamor, Kate	Smith, Henry	Wild, James
Madders, Justin	Osborne, Kate	Smith, Jeff	Williams, Craig
Mahmood, Mr Khalid	Owatemi, Taiwo	Smith, rh Julian	Williamson, rh Gavin
Mahmood, Shabana	Owen, Sarah	Smith, Nick	Wilson, rh Sammy
Mak, Alan	Paisley, Ian	Smith, Royston	Winter, Beth
Malhotra, Seema	Parish, Neil	Smyth, Karin	Wood, Mike
Malthouse, Kit	Patel, rh Priti	Sobel, Alex	Wright, rh Jeremy
Mangnall, Anthony	Paterson, rh Mr Owen	Solloway, Amanda	Yasin, Mohammad
Mann, Scott	Pawsey, Mark	Spellar, rh John	Young, Jacob
Marson, Julie	Peacock, Stephanie	Spencer, Dr Ben	Zahawi, Nadhim
Maskell, Rachael	Penning, rh Sir Mike	Spencer, rh Mark	Zeichner, Daniel
	Pennycook, Matthew	Stafford, Alexander	

NOES

Brady, Sir Graham

Wragg, Mr William

The list of Members currently certified as eligible for a proxy vote, and of the Members nominated as their proxy, is published at the end of today's debates.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Written Statements

Wednesday 27 January 2021

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Electronic Communications Code Consultation

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Matt Warman): The Government have ambitious plans to achieve nationwide roll-out of future-proof, gigabit-capable broadband and 5G networks as soon as possible to unlock the huge economic and social benefits this will bring. As we emerge from the covid-19 pandemic, ensuring the whole country has access to world-class digital infrastructure will be critical to our economic recovery.

We are working with industry to target a minimum of 85% gigabit-capable coverage by 2025 and to get as close to 100% as possible. We are also aiming to ensure that 95% of the UK's geographic landmass has 4G coverage from at least one mobile network operator by 2025 and that the majority of the UK population has 5G coverage by 2027.

My Department is making significant progress, through the implementation of the recommendations made in our "Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review" published in 2018. However, in order to accelerate this work it is important that we deliver the changes that are needed to speed up commercial and public investment in gigabit-capable networks.

The electronic communications code ("the code") is the legal framework underpinning the rights of telecoms operators to install and keep electronic communications apparatus on public and private land, and to carry out other activities needed to maintain and improve digital communications networks. The code was substantially reformed in 2017. Those reforms specifically recognised the increasing importance of access to fast and reliable digital services for society and the economy. While there have been no substantive changes to the policy underpinning the 2017 reforms, feedback from a wide range of stakeholders suggests further changes may be needed.

I am pleased to inform the House that we have today published a consultation to examine the scope for further legislative changes to the electronic communications code. If we decide changes to the code are needed, these will be focused on supporting our digital networks and ensuring the aims of the 2017 reforms are realised.

Telecommunications policy is reserved and the electronic communications code applies and extends across the UK. As with the 2017 reforms, we will work closely with the devolved Administrations to develop the finalised policy.

I have placed a copy of the consultation in the Libraries of both Houses.

Attachments can be viewed online at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2021-01-27/HCWS739/>.

[HCWS739]

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Bovine TB

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (George Eustice): I am updating the House on publication of a consultation on delivery of the next phase of our 25-year strategy to eradicate bovine TB (bTB) in England by 2038.

BTB is one of the most difficult and intractable animal health challenges that England faces today. In the last year, we compulsorily slaughtered over 27,000 cattle in England to tackle the disease. This causes devastation and distress for hard-working farmers and rural communities and is damaging our reputation as world leaders in high standards of animal health and welfare.

The bTB eradication strategy we published in 2014 is making progress. We are now seeing sustained improvements in the high-risk area. We need to build on this momentum to achieve bTB free status for England by 2038.

In 2018, my predecessor commissioned Professor Sir Charles Godfray to conduct an independent review of our strategy ("the Godfray review"). In March 2020, we published a response setting out key priorities for the next phase. Today, I am launching a public consultation and a call for views on a range of proposals and longer-term options in keeping with that response, to take us into this next phase.

I am also pleased to report that work on developing a deployable cattle bTB vaccine continues and is on track to be completed within the next five years. Our goal is to deliver on the significant investment we have made to date in developing a candidate diagnostic test to detect infected animals among vaccinated animals to enable use of the vaccine. Although a cattle bTB vaccine will not be the single solution to the problem of bTB, it will be a strong additional tool at our disposal. The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) has awarded a contract to Eville & Jones to run veterinary field trials aimed at generating the necessary evidence to enable UK marketing authorisations. The trials are scheduled to get under way in the coming months.

Badger culling is one of the most contentious and divisive policies within our bTB eradication strategy. Our current policy enables four-year intensive cull licences in defined areas with scope for a further five years of supplementary culling. The consultation sets out proposals for Natural England (NE) to stop issuing the current intensive cull licences for new areas post 2022 and enable new licences issued to be cut short if the chief veterinary officer considers this acceptable. Furthermore, I am proposing to restrict any new supplementary cull licences to two years and cease re-issuing such licences in any areas in which supplementary culling has previously been licensed.

As proposed in the Government's response to the Godfray review, APHA recently released a new analysis showing the estimated distribution of TB infection in badgers in England's bTB edge area. This will be of assistance to NE in assessing applications for badger culling and vaccination licences in the future.

The farming community has invested heavily in badger culling, which the evidence shows has played a critical role in helping to start to turn the tide on this terrible disease. But we were clear that culling badgers indefinitely is not acceptable. My proposed approach will enable us to complete the objective we set out to achieve when we

started the culls. It will also support our stated intention of phasing out culling over the next few years. I envisage that in future some form of culling would be an option in exceptional circumstances to address any local disease flare-ups. This transitional period will also give us time to undertake badger vaccination pilots and develop our future badger vaccination policy. The end of widespread culling is also anticipated to coincide with changes in cattle measures, including our timeline for a deployable cattle bTB vaccine. Taken together, it is anticipated that these cattle and badger measures should preserve the benefits from intensive culling.

I am also proposing some targeted changes to our cattle bTB testing policy, to ensure we root out the disease more effectively in herds with recurring problems, and further help protect lower bTB risk areas.

In parallel to the consultation, I am also seeking views to explore other options for further accelerating eradication of disease. These include possible further changes and improvements to bTB testing, supporting responsible cattle movements and rewarding low-risk cattle purchasing behaviour. Our call for views also discusses ways we can continue to adapt how we reward farmers for “best practice”, in line with our wider agricultural transition plan.

There is no single solution to the scourge of bTB, but by deploying a range of policy interventions we can continue to turn the tide on this terrible disease and achieve our long-term objective of eradicating it in England by 2038.

[HCWS738]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Contingencies Fund Advance

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Trade (Graham Stuart): UK Export Finance is seeking a repayable cash advance from the Contingencies Fund of £500,000. The requirement has arisen due to an urgent need to refresh its existing IT equipment (laptops) to meet the needs of the Department and manage its response to covid-19.

Parliamentary approval for additional capital of £500,000 will be sought in a supplementary estimate for UK Export Finance. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £500,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

The cash advance will be repaid upon receiving Royal Assent on the Supply and Appropriation Bill.

[HCWS737]

Petition

Wednesday 27 January 2021

OBSERVATIONS

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Waste incinerator on Portland

The petition of residents of the constituency of South Dorset,

Declares that the proposal to build a waste incinerator on Portland should not go ahead and that the Government should review its support for incinerators more generally; notes that almost 7,000 people have signed a corresponding online petition to stop the waste incinerator; further declares that South Dorset is a beautiful part of the world and that it should remain a healthy place for our children, grandchildren and ourselves; further that research has shown that a waste incinerator will cause the release of tiny dangerous particles into the air; further that a waste incinerator will cause a small increase in health risks for children; further that it will bring more lorries thundering along already busy roads; further that there is a possible need for the incinerator to be “fed” in the future by waste imported from outside the UK; further that it will create a big, unsightly blot on our beautiful landscape and coast; further that it will discourage recycling; and further that it will not create many jobs for local residents.

The petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urge the Government to rethink its support for incinerators and look towards a greener, circular economy.

And the petitioners remain, etc.—[Presented by Richard Drax, *Official Report*, 8 December 2020; Vol. 685, c. 804.]

[P002634]

Observations from the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (George Eustice):

Thank you very much for sharing the petition of residents of the constituency of South Dorset regarding a proposal to build a waste incinerator on Portland, South Dorset.

The Government’s Resources and Waste Strategy (RWS), published in 2018, set out plans to preserve material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency and moving towards a circular economy. The RWS includes the Government’s approach to energy from waste (EfW).

A key principle of the RWS is to prevent waste occurring in the first place. This is in keeping with the waste hierarchy, which ranks options for waste management according to their environmental impact. Where waste does occur, it needs to be managed in the most resource-efficient way possible while minimising environmental harm. After waste prevention, priority goes to preparing waste for reuse, recycling and then recovery. Disposal, for example in landfill, is regarded as the worst option.

Through the landmark Environment Bill, the Government are taking the powers necessary to deliver on many of the commitments in the RWS, such as introducing a deposit return scheme, reforming the UK packaging producer responsibility system, and introducing

greater consistency in recycling collections in England. These measures are aimed at reducing waste and increasing recycling rates—with a 65% municipal waste recycling target by 2035.

However, even after achieving higher recycling rates, there will still be some residual waste to deal with that cannot be recycled or reused because, for example, it is contaminated or there are no end markets for the material. This residual waste is generally dealt with in three main ways: landfill, incineration with energy recovery (i.e. EfW) or exported as refuse derived fuel.

For most residual waste, EfW is generally considered the best management option, in terms of environmental impact and getting value from the waste as a resource. EfW does therefore play an important role in diverting waste from landfill. Nevertheless, the Government are very clear that EfW should not compete with greater waste prevention, reuse or recycling.

In relation to decisions on new EfW plants, established planning and permitting processes should be followed. Determining planning applications is a matter for the relevant local planning authority. Development proposals should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It is for the planning authority to take material planning considerations into account. This includes the assessment of the impact of traffic generated by this type of proposed development, along with all other relevant considerations.

Planning applications for waste management facilities of this type are often subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (under The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 EIA Regulations), which means that the planning application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement that addresses a range of environmental factors.

In terms of permitting, all EfW plants in England are regulated by the Environment Agency (EA) and must comply with the strict emissions limits set out in legislation. Each permit application is assessed to ensure that the proposed plant will use the best available techniques (BAT) to minimise emissions, and that it will not have a significant effect on local air quality.

Permits contain limits for a number of pollutants, including total particulate matter (TPM) which includes particulates of all sizes, including PM_{2.5} and smaller. The EA will not issue a permit if the plant could have a significant effect on the environment or human health.

The EA consults Public Health England (PHE) on every permit application it receives. PHE’s position is that modern, well run and regulated municipal waste incinerators are not a significant risk to public health. While it is not possible to rule out adverse health effects from these incinerators completely, any potential effect for people living close by is likely to be very small. This view is based on detailed assessments of the effects of air pollutants on health and on the fact that waste incinerators make only a very small contribution to local concentrations of air pollutants.

Once operational, EfW plants are closely regulated through a programme of regular inspections and audits carried out by the EA, who also carefully check the results of the continuous air emissions monitoring which all plants must do to meet the conditions of their environmental permit.

In 2019, the Government's Clean Air Strategy (CAS) set out new and ambitious goals, legislation, investment and policies to improve air quality faster and more effectively. The Environment Bill delivers key parts of the CAS by establishing a duty to set a target on PM_{2.5}, alongside a long-term target on air quality, as part of the wider framework for setting legally binding environmental targets.

In summary, EfW has its place in managing residual waste as part of a holistic waste management system delivering value from waste as a resource—but only where that waste cannot be reused or recycled. However, the Government are committed to closely monitoring EfW capacity as they take action to continue the shift away from a take, make, use, throw system to a greener, more circular economy.

Ministerial Correction

Wednesday 27 January 2021

EDUCATION

Skills for Jobs White Paper

The following is an extract from the oral statement on the Skills for Jobs White Paper on Thursday 21 January 2021.

Neil O'Brien: Level 4 apprentices go on to earn more than the average undergraduate. According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, 30% of undergraduate degrees lead to negative returns overall. Does my right hon. Friend agree that rebalancing the system towards our neglected technical education sector is the right thing for young people and the right thing for the country?

Gavin Williamson: I absolutely agree. It is a real Achilles heel of this country. In this country, 10% of the 18 to 65 workforce has higher technical qualifications, as compared with 20% in Germany and 34% in Canada. [*Official Report, 21 January 2021, Vol. 687, c. 1164.*]

Letter of correction from the Secretary of State for Education:

An error has been identified in the response I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Harborough (Neil O'Brien).

The correct response should have been:

Gavin Williamson: I absolutely agree. It is a real Achilles heel of this country. In this country, 10% of **20 to 45-year-olds hold** higher technical qualifications **as their highest qualifications**, as compared with **around** 20% in Germany and 34% in Canada.

ORAL ANSWERS

Wednesday 27 January 2021

	<i>Col. No.</i>		<i>Col. No.</i>
PRIME MINISTER	363	SCOTLAND—continued	
Engagements	363	Seed Potato Industry	359
SCOTLAND	355	Strength of the Union	357
COP26	363	Trade Deals	359
Covid-19 Vaccination Programme	361	UK-EU Agreement: Scottish Economy	363
Covid-19 Vaccine Roll-out	355	UK-EU Agreement: Scottish Exports	361

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

Wednesday 27 January 2021

	<i>Col. No.</i>		<i>Col. No.</i>
DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	7WS	INTERNATIONAL TRADE	10WS
Electronic Communications Code Consultation	7WS	Contingencies Fund Advance	10WS
ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS.	8WS		
Bovine TB	8WS		

PETITION

Wednesday 27 January 2021

	<i>Col. No.</i>	<i>Col. No.</i>
ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	3P	
Waste incinerator on Portland	3P	

MINISTERIAL CORRECTION

Wednesday 27 January 2021

	<i>Col. No.</i>
EDUCATION	3MC
Skills for Jobs White Paper	3MC

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**not later than
Wednesday 3 February 2021**

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CONTENTS

Wednesday 27 January 2021

Oral Answers to Questions [Col. 355] [see index inside back page]

Secretary of State for Scotland
Prime Minister

Russian Federation: Human Rights [Col. 375]

Answer to urgent question—(Wendy Morton)

Covid-19 Update [Col. 386]

Statement—(Prime Minister)

Health Measures at UK Borders [Col. 406]

Statement—(Priti Patel)

Ministerial Interests (Emergency Powers) [Col. 421]

Motion for leave to bring in Bill—(Owen Thompson)—agreed to
Bill presented, and read the First time

Covert Human Intelligence Sources (Criminal Conduct) Bill [Col. 423]

Programme motion (No. 2)—(Rebecca Harris)—agreed to
Lords amendments considered

Medicines and Medical Devices Bill [Col. 485]

Programme motion (No. 3)—(Rebecca Harris)—agreed to
Lords amendments considered

Golf Tourism [Col. 497]

Debate on motion for Adjournment

Local Government [Col. 525]

Motion, on a deferred Division, agreed to

Written Statements [Col. 7WS]

Petition [Col. 3P]

Observations

Ministerial Correction [Col. 3MC]

Written Answers to Questions [The written answers can now be found at <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers>]
