

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT

Fifth Delegated Legislation Committee

DRAFT FOOTBALL SPECTATORS (RELEVANT
OFFENCES) REGULATIONS 2022

Thursday 3 November 2022

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Monday 7 November 2022

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The Committee consisted of the following Members:

Chair: MRS SHERYLL MURRAY

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| † Aiken, Nickie (<i>Cities of London and Westminster</i>)
(Con) | † Philp, Chris (<i>Minister of State, Home Department</i>) |
| † Bailey, Shaun (<i>West Bromwich West</i>) (Con) | † Robinson, Mary (<i>Cheadle</i>) (Con) |
| † Baker, Duncan (<i>North Norfolk</i>) (Con) | † Russell-Moyle, Lloyd (<i>Brighton, Kemptown</i>) (Lab/
Co-op) |
| Baldwin, Harriett (<i>West Worcestershire</i>) (Con) | Seely, Bob (<i>Isle of Wight</i>) (Con) |
| Byrne, Liam (<i>Birmingham, Hodge Hill</i>) (Lab) | † Shah, Naz (<i>Bradford West</i>) (Lab) |
| † Double, Steve (<i>Lord Commissioner of His Majesty's
Treasury</i>) | † Sunderland, James (<i>Bracknell</i>) (Con) |
| † Elmore, Chris (<i>Ogmore</i>) (Lab) | † Warman, Matt (<i>Boston and Skegness</i>) (Con) |
| Johnson, Dame Diana (<i>Kingston upon Hull North</i>)
(Lab) | Winter, Beth (<i>Cynon Valley</i>) (Lab) |
| † McDonald, Andy (<i>Middlesbrough</i>) (Lab) | Seb Newman, George James, <i>Committee Clerks</i> |
| | † attended the Committee |

Fifth Delegated Legislation Committee

Thursday 3 November 2022

[MRS SHERYL MURRAY *in the Chair*]

Draft Football Spectators (Relevant Offences) Regulations 2022

11.30 am

The Minister of State, Home Department (Chris Philp): I beg to move,

That the Committee has considered the draft Football Spectators (Relevant Offences) Regulations 2022.

It is a pleasure, as always, to serve under your chairmanship, Mrs Murray. I expect many members of the Committee will be aware of the recent concerns about football-related violence, disorder and antisocial behaviour. In fact, the 2021-22 season saw arrests far higher than in any of the previous seven seasons. The increase in that year followed a long-term downward trend, but is none the less a matter of significant concern. A particularly low point came during the Euro 2020 tournament, where we saw not only horrendous and unacceptable racist abuse directed at some England football players but serious incidents in the vicinity of Wembley stadium, particularly on the day of the final in July 2021.

Baroness Casey, in her review of those events, found numerous infractions, one of which was the blatant use of cocaine by some football fans in front of other law-abiding citizens, including young children. That is completely unacceptable. A recent study found cocaine traces on nearly all tested toilet cisterns at major football grounds, and the police have carried out match day operations to seize drugs at football matches and to

arrest individuals. Unfortunately, the trend of using and supplying cocaine at football matches continued into the 2021-22 season, during which, according to police data, there were over 140 reported arrests for drug offences.

The police have been clear that they have seen an increase in drug-fuelled disorder across all forms of regulated football matches. Cocaine, which is a matter of particular concern, is a class A drug. It is highly harmful and often leads to extremely disorderly behaviour. The trend of detection of cocaine use at football matches is extremely worrying. We have therefore taken the necessary steps to lay this instrument, which will see all those who attend football matches and who supply or use class A drugs subject, or potentially subject, to football banning order proceedings upon conviction.

Football banning orders are an appropriate and effective tool to help to combat football-related disorder. In addition to a regular criminal conviction and whatever sentence may get passed, football banning orders can be used to ban the individual from attending regulated football matches for between three and 10 years. That will obviously prevent troublemakers from continuing to attend football matches, and will provide an extremely strong deterrent. We are determined, alongside the police, to drive down football-related violence and disorder, and this instrument is an extremely important part of that work. I commend the draft regulations to the Committee.

11.32 am

Naz Shah (Bradford West) (Lab): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mrs Murray. The official Opposition are grateful to the Minister for setting out the context of the draft regulations, to which we have no objection.

Question put and agreed to.

11.33 am

Committee rose.