

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT
GENERAL COMMITTEES

Public Bill Committee

CHILD SUPPORT COLLECTION (DOMESTIC ABUSE) BILL

Wednesday 14 December 2022

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CLAUSES 1 to 4 agreed to.
Bill to be reported, without amendment.

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

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Sunday 18 December 2022

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The Committee consisted of the following Members:

Chair: ESTHER McVEY

† Ali, Tahir (*Birmingham, Hall Green*) (Lab)
 Brennan, Kevin (*Cardiff West*) (Lab)
 Bryant, Chris (*Rhondda*) (Lab)
 † Chamberlain, Wendy (*North East Fife*) (LD)
 † Courts, Robert (*Witney*) (Con)
 † Davies, Mims (*Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions*)
 † Firth, Anna (*Southend West*) (Con)
 Green, Sarah (*Chesham and Amersham*) (LD)
 † Hart, Sally-Ann (*Hastings and Rye*) (Con)
 † Maclean, Rachel (*Redditch*) (Con)

† Morton, Wendy (*Aldridge-Brownhills*) (Con)
 † Phillips, Jess (*Birmingham, Yardley*) (Lab)
 Qureshi, Yasmin (*Bolton South East*) (Lab)
 † Richards, Nicola (*West Bromwich East*) (Con)
 † Russell, Dean (*Watford*) (Con)
 Saxby, Selaine (*North Devon*) (Con)
 † Wild, James (*North West Norfolk*) (Con)

Laura-Jane Tiley, Anne-Marie Griffiths, *Committee Clerks*

† **attended the Committee**

Public Bill Committee

Wednesday 14 December 2022

[ESTHER McVEY *in the Chair*]

Child Support Collection (Domestic Abuse) Bill

Clause 1

COLLECTION OF MAINTENANCE IN ENGLAND AND
WALES AND SCOTLAND: CASES INVOLVING DOMESTIC
ABUSE

9.25 am

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

The Chair: With this it will be convenient to discuss clauses 2 to 4 stand part.

Sally-Ann Hart (Hastings and Rye) (Con): It is an honour to serve under your chairship, Ms McVey. I am grateful to you, and to the Committee members, for joining me today to look at the Bill in more detail. The Bill, which will make provision to enable the making of arrangements for the collection of child support maintenance in cases involving domestic abuse, has only four clauses. I am sure, however, that all hon. Members recognise its importance, as it will help to protect victims of domestic abuse when using the Child Maintenance Service.

Before going into more detail about the specifics of the Bill, it may be helpful if I recap how the Child Maintenance Service operates for those Members present who might not be aware. The purpose of the Child Maintenance Service is to facilitate the payment of child maintenance between separated parents who are unable to reach their own agreement following separation—a challenging job, done in very difficult circumstances. I am sure we all recognise from our casework that some separated parents find it very difficult to co-operate, especially when there may have been a history of domestic abuse.

Once parents are in the system, the CMS manages child maintenance cases through one of two service types: direct pay, and collect and pay. For direct pay, the CMS provides a calculation and a payment schedule, but payments are arranged privately between the two parents. For collect and pay, the CMS calculates how much maintenance should be paid, collects the money from the paying parent, and pays it to the receiving parent.

Wendy Morton (Aldridge-Brownhills) (Con): I commend my hon. Friend on introducing an excellent piece of legislation and highlighting some of the challenges faced by victims of domestic abuse. Will she provide some clarity with regards to collect and pay, and confirm that under the Bill no charges will be imposed on the payee?

Sally-Ann Hart: I thank my right hon. Friend for her question, which I have raised with the Department for Work and Pensions and the Minister. I understand the Department is looking seriously at how to deal with that matter.

Under the current legislation, direct pay is the default option unless the paying parent agrees to collect and pay, or demonstrates an unwillingness to pay their liability. The Bill aims to extend the collect and pay service to victims of domestic abuse, regardless of payment history. Evidence tells us that this is where extra support could be offered, which is why the Bill is so important. The proposals are about giving victims of domestic abuse the choice to use collect and pay, so that they can decide what is best for their personal circumstances.

Although the CMS can act as an intermediary for parents using direct pay, the Bill will, for the first time under the CMS service, mean that those parents for whom it is appropriate can avoid entirely any need to transact with the other parent. That should ensure that parents who need that protection can feel as safe as possible using the Child Maintenance Service. The Bill will achieve that by amending primary legislation to allow victims of domestic abuse to use the collect and pay service where there is evidence of domestic abuse against the requesting parent—the paying or receiving parent—or even against children in the household by the other parent involved in the case.

Let me turn to the specifics of the Bill. Clause 1 gives the Bill its substance. It relates to the collection of maintenance in England and Wales, and Scotland, and amends the Child Support Act 1991 to allow for a child maintenance case to be placed on the collect and pay service where either parent applies on the grounds of domestic abuse, and where there is evidence of domestic abuse against the requesting parent or children in their household.

9.30 am

Given the importance of tackling domestic abuse to hon. Members from throughout the United Kingdom, I will say a few words about working with colleagues in devolved Administrations. Primary child maintenance legislation is a reserved matter in Great Britain, but it is devolved in Northern Ireland, which typically maintains parity by mirroring child maintenance legislation. However, because of the suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly, officials in Northern Ireland have confirmed that it will not be possible for them to make the necessary mirroring legislation at this time. Officials have assured me that they will work with Northern Ireland colleagues and Scottish colleagues on areas where, because of different legal frameworks around domestic abuse, there may need to be differences in practice from England and Wales if domestic abuse victims are to be protected and treated the same throughout the United Kingdom.

Committee members will see that clause 1(2) provides the power to make regulations that will set out the evidence requirements for domestic abuse. The aim is to produce evidence requirements that are sensitive to the needs of domestic abuse victims and that have been carefully evaluated and tested. Officials have assured me that they will work with other Departments, such as the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice, to ensure that the definition of domestic abuse is consistent, where that is appropriate, across Government. The regulations will follow the affirmative procedure, so hon. Members will have a vote on proposals for secondary legislation.

Clause 2 allows for a child in Scotland to apply on the grounds of domestic abuse. That is important because a child who is over 12 years old can legally make an

application for child maintenance in Scotland. Clause 3 sets out minor and consequential amendments, which include setting out that domestic abuse has the same meaning in the Child Support Act as it does in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. That will apply in England, Scotland and Wales for the purposes of the Bill. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 does not extend to Scotland, where the definition of domestic abuse is set out in legislation passed by the Scottish Parliament. However, clause 3 allows the definition in the Domestic Abuse Act to apply to Scotland for the purposes of the Bill. That will ensure clarity and efficacy for customers in the administration of child maintenance.

The collection of child maintenance is governed by the same statutory provisions in England and Wales as in Scotland, so it is logical to avoid different definitions applying in each jurisdiction. I reassure my Scottish colleagues that officials will work with legal colleagues and the Scottish Government to ensure the policy aim is effectively delivered in Scotland and works effectively alongside devolved legislative provisions in this vital area.

Finally, clause 4 sets out standard but crucial information about the Bill. It covers the extent, short title and commencement, which will bring the Bill into force. The Bill is an important measure that will protect victims of domestic abuse when using the Child Maintenance Service. On Second Reading, the Bill received cross-party support, and I hope that it will continue to do so today.

Jess Phillips (Birmingham, Yardley) (Lab): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairship, Ms McVey—especially as I seem to recall that when I was first in this place, you were in charge of this particular Department.

I rise in total support of the Bill, which seeks to address something that has long been a problem. The Labour party would never stand in the way of any such progress.

I want to push on some areas of the Bill that the Government may need to look at as it goes through the House, to ensure that it is what it should be. As the right hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills mentioned, domestic abuse victims using the collect and pay system, which is the better system for them, would currently have to pay 4% of any take. Through no fault of their own, these women are often destitute, and they would be being charged 4%. Will the Minister also tell us about the training that CMS officials will have? It is my understanding that it is in-house training, not provided by specialists, and concerns have been raised about the standards of domestic abuse training.

I want to make special mention of a woman called Emma Day. Emma Day was murdered by her partner, and I work with her family regularly. Her domestic homicide review stated:

“The current response of the CMS to domestic abuse could potentially heighten the risk to victims when making a child maintenance application.”

Emma was murdered by her ex-partner in May 2017. He had warned her not to pursue him for child support, threatening her life. Emma told the CMS staff this, but they reinstated a claim for Mr Morris to pay. He killed her shortly afterwards. The coroner’s inquest said:

“A public body has an obligation to minimize risk when there is evidence of a threat to life.”

Although the Bill is a step forward, it should be the first step in a long line. Frankly, anybody in this room who has done constituency casework will know how woeful the Child Maintenance Service is. There is also a problem of enforcement. Enforcement is used by the Department for Work and Pensions incredibly effectively in other areas, but not so much in this area, where very little is done when people do not pay, leaving women destitute, more vulnerable and more likely to end up in further danger and peril.

This is a brilliant Bill, and I commend the hon. Member for Hastings and Rye on it and support it completely. Could the Minister tell us when the review promised by the Government of the CMS response in the case of Emma Day will be with us? It was completed in May. We have had no response, and Emma’s family were told in October that it would be coming forward. On this day, as we are talking about domestic abuse and the Child Maintenance Service, I wonder if she could answer that question.

Rachel Maclean (Redditch) (Con): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Birmingham, Yardley, and I give my strong support to my hon. Friend the Member for Hastings and Rye, who has done a fantastic job of progressing this really important piece of legislation. I will not detain the Committee long, but I want to reference the work she is doing, which sits in the wider context of all the work the Government are doing to tackle the horrendous, insidious, dangerous and life-threatening issue of domestic abuse.

What we are doing here is really important, because it shines a light on the economic abuse and coercive control aspects of domestic abuse, which we now understand, thanks to this Government passing the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and implementing all the measures that flow from that, including the offence of coercive and controlling behaviour. We understand that domestic abuse can be about manipulating finances and manipulating access to children. Children are often at the frontline of the awful tension and dynamic between the partners, and are often used as a weapon by an abusive or manipulative man against a woman. As the hon. Member for Birmingham, Yardley rightly said, it can often become a threatening and escalating pattern of violence and abuse, which unfortunately all too often ends in a woman being killed.

The Bill is a really important piece of the jigsaw. We must keep pushing across the whole of Government to implement the series of measures highlighted in the domestic abuse plan. My hon. Friend the Minister and I have worked closely together, because of the vital links between the DWP, the Home Office and other Government Departments; this is not an issue that any Government Department can tackle on its own. I commend the Minister and her Department for all the work that they have done, including the vital responses in Jobcentre Plus, the training that the Minister has brought in, and initiatives such as the black dot. All that work adds to the frontline support for victims of abuse, alongside things such as the Ask for ANI—Action Needed Immediately—service, and the other vital helplines that the Government have provided.

I thank the organisation Surviving Economic Abuse, which has done some fantastic work, supported by the Government, and has provided vital advice. It has really

[*Rachel Maclean*]

raised the game in highlighting what economic abuse looks like and where people can go to get help. My right hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills rightly highlighted the issue of deductions from payments. These people really need those payments, especially in a cost of living crisis. Surviving Economic Abuse, in its report “The Cost of Covid-19”, highlighted that 84% of women were worried about access to child maintenance payments

“as a result of the perpetrator’s actions”.

Often the fear of being unable to support their children if they leave can be a reason why women choose to stay in an abusive relationship. Sorting that out will be tremendously helpful. We found that during covid sometimes people stopped making payments, adding to the already unbearable pressure.

I look forward to hearing from the Minister how she will continue all the work she is already doing to ensure that frontline staff understand the issues. We talk about domestic abuse needing to be evidenced by the victim. We must remember that these are traumatised women, who are already facing an incredibly difficult situation. We need to make the process as light-touch, trauma-informed and compassionate as possible, so that when they come and explain their situation, they will be received sympathetically and measures can be put in place swiftly. I would be keen to hear what the evidence gathering process will look like, to ensure that the DWP is working with the specialist organisations that are doing so much on this front.

I wish the Bill well. I again thank my hon. Friend the Member for Hastings and Rye, and I look forward to hearing from the Minister.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mims Davies): It is a great pleasure, as ever, to serve under your chairmanship, Ms McVey. I thank all hon. Members who have joined us this morning, in particular my hon. Friend the Member for Hastings and Rye, who has made a brilliant contribution in introducing the Bill, and covered it in great detail. I thank the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, my hon. Friend the Member for Corby (Tom Pursglove), for his excellent speech and engagement on Second Reading, and all Members who have contributed to, and helped to shape, the process. I also thank the charities that campaign on this important issue, particularly Gingerbread and, as we have heard, Surviving Economic Abuse.

Hon. Members have highlighted just how important the Bill is to better support those who have suffered domestic abuse. I will cover some of the Bill’s content and underline the points made by my hon. Friend the Member for Hastings and Rye, and by other colleagues. I will pick up on the points made by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Yardley and my right hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills regarding cost, and I will talk about the training of our CMS officials. I will also of course pick up on the Emma Day case. I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Redditch for the points she made and for her work in the area, in particular in highlighting coercive control and the need for women in that position to be able to move forward, which has to be with financial support.

This weekend marks two years since the DWP and our partners launched the employers domestic abuse covenant, which is about supporting women in such situations with employment or to stay in employment. I am wearing my J9 badge; the Ask for ANI campaign and the J9 work are incredibly important in our jobcentres. I remind anyone listening to or reading the debate that our jobcentres are a safe place to disclose, and to get support and help.

9.45 am

Jess Phillips: Is the Minister aware that if someone who has a job tries to get into a refuge, it is almost impossible to pay the cost of living in that refuge? The vast majority of people who live in a domestic abuse refuge are benefit dependent. In case after case, year after year, if women in work come forward, the decision is to leave their job or get out of the situation; and nothing has been done about that. Although the issue is important in jobcentres, the current situation is discriminatory.

Mims Davies: I thank the hon. Lady for that point. That is exactly why the EDAC and working with employers is vital.

Jess Phillips: What about the benefits system?

Mims Davies: I will come to that. It is vital for employers to have that advice, so that they can understand such a situation and support people—if those people are in work, or if they are coming out of a refuge situation and want to go into work. I am very aware of the benefits situation that the hon. Lady mentioned; it is part of my new portfolio and something I am looking at. I will be happy to engage with the hon. Lady. It concerns me deeply as a woman. If I were in that situation, it would be difficult to move forward. I take her point.

Dean Russell (Watford) (Con): I pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Hastings and Rye for promoting the Bill. On communications, may I get two clarifications from the Minister? First, if any additional information is needed once the Bill has passed through the House and, I hope, becomes law, how will that be communicated to victims of domestic abuse? Secondly, will she ensure that work is done with organisations such as, in my constituency, the Watford Women’s Centre, which works directly with victims of domestic abuse to ensure they are aware of their rights and the support available?

Mims Davies: I thank my hon. Friend. I commend the work of the groups in his community. We all have many groups in our communities, which help us as Members of Parliament to learn more and to understand what needs to be done, hence the Bill. That is exactly our situation with regard to the Child Maintenance Service—that we learn what does and does not work, and that we put supporting victims and survivors at the heart of that learning. I take the point about communications. As the Bill, I hope, makes its passage through this place, we will ensure that such communications are delivered to those organisations and the women in need.

Wendy Morton: This morning we are talking about victims of domestic abuse, and we are rightly focusing a lot on women, but does the Minister also acknowledge that some victims in the domestic abuse space can be men?

Mims Davies: Very much so. This legislation is important for anyone in a perilous situation at home. To be clear, such abuse is criminality in the home. If it took place on our neighbour's front lawn or down the precinct, it would be criminal. Whoever is involved and however it is brought about, it is criminality. For anyone involved in domestic abuse—anyone perpetrating it, male or female, and whether on a male or a female—it is criminality, fair and square. Those people it is happening to should be empowered and supported to come forward. I thank my right hon. Friend for making that point.

Let me make some progress. I will discuss why the Bill came about, which we have touched on briefly. The CMS processes and policies are regularly reviewed and kept in line with best practice. The Department commissioned an independent review of the way in which the CMS supports survivors of domestic abuse, because we want to take practical steps to ensure that those who have suffered domestic abuse can use the CMS safely and with confidence.

We have learned lessons from customers' experiences and acted on their feedback. We have consulted with stakeholders, some of whom we have heard about today. The Independent Case Examiner—ICE—who is the complaints arbitrator, highlighted a case where a paying parent was allowed access to direct pay, despite there being a non-molestation order in place. That is incredibly worrying. We need to make sure we have aligned our policy in accordance with the ICE view that that was inappropriate, despite the paying parent paying their maintenance in full and on time.

We are not complacent with this. The day-to-day policy sits with my noble Friend in the other place, Baroness Stedman-Scott. She is very strident that the CMS must be at its best. We must learn when things go wrong, and we must be strident in pursuit of parents doing the right thing for their children. We can all agree on that.

The collection charges are applied to all CMS collect and pay cases. The charges are 20% on top of the liability for the paying parent, and 4% of the maintenance received for the receiving parent. I appreciate and understand colleagues' points. The charges were originally introduced to provide both parents with an incentive to collaborate. Running the collect and pay service incurs costs to the taxpayer. It is therefore reasonable for most parents to contribute towards running this service.

However, we recognise that many parents who the Bill aims to support could be among the most vulnerable groups, as my hon. Friend the Member for Hastings and Rye has said. Full consideration is being given to exempting victims of domestic abuse from collection charges, although collection charges do not form part of the primary legislation and are set out in secondary legislation. We are clear that charges on the whole are the right approach, but we are willing to consider, and are rightly considering, where exemptions may be appropriate. I hope that reassures the Committee.

The hon. Member for Birmingham, Yardley asked about domestic abuse training. We have substantially strengthened the CMS procedures and processes to

support customers experiencing domestic abuse, and to help them to tell us what is going on. I hope this reassures the hon. Member: with particular input from Women's Aid, a programme of domestic abuse training has been designed and delivered for all CMS caseworkers. *[Interruption.]* If the hon. Member knows different and is concerned, I am happy to hear more from her and from Women's Aid.

Let me provide some details. The training recognises that domestic abuse can take various forms, as we heard from my hon. Friend the Member for Redditch. It can be physical, psychological, emotional and financial. The training gives appropriate signposting to domestic abuse support groups, and advice on contacting the police if necessary. If customers do not feel able to do that, they are asked whether they are content for the Child Maintenance Service to do so on their behalf. We are strident in making sure that those people engage with us and are supported.

Jess Phillips: As a professional in this area, even from the description of the training I have concerns about the line being taken. For example, I would never tell somebody that I was going to call the police unless there was a genuine threat to their life in that moment. The training is not designed or delivered by Women's Aid; there has been a conversation with Women's Aid. I urge the Department to have independent specialist training by professionals.

Mims Davies: I am telling the Committee the steps we have taken to secure better training for the people on our phones, but I appreciate the hon. Lady's point and that her for it. A complex needs toolkit has been developed for caseworkers that includes clear steps to follow to support customers who are experiencing abuse. The toolkit is regularly reviewed and strengthened on the basis of customer insight to ensure that we evaluate the effectiveness of the guidance and training on domestic abuse. This is a complex area that I cannot cover fully in Committee, but I am happy to take the hon. Lady's points, including on Women's Aid, to the service as a challenge. I hope that comforts her.

Rachel Maclean: Does the Minister recognise that it is vital that frontline services, such as Jobcentre Plus and the DWP, pay attention to and access the statutory guidance that the Government have already published? That is guidance to which they must have reference, and it covers issues such as that mentioned by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Yardley—namely, when it is appropriate to phone the police. The police are a vital partner in the fight against domestic abuse; they are trained to deal with it. It is vital that all authorities work together. That guidance is there, so will the Minister ensure that her frontline staff read it and refer to it?

Mims Davies: My hon. Friend speaks with real knowledge and experience, and I shall take all those points to my officials. She spoke about a joined-up approach in Government, which is key. We know that the financial challenge—both to people leaving domestic abuse, and to those who wish to continue to exert control and power—is one of the potential touchpoints. I take my hon. Friend's point, and we will take on that challenge.

[Mims Davies]

Let me make some progress. I want to say something in support of the Child Maintenance Service, which has some great, hard-working people, who are very committed to their roles. They focus on doing the right thing to support children and do what is needed to get support to them. The impact of domestic abuse on how the service works for people was discussed on Second Reading, and it is no surprise that it has been raised today. The CMS is fully committed to ensuring that all parents feel positive and safe when using the service. Whatever parents' circumstances, the CMS has procedures in place to ensure that cases are handled appropriately. The application fee is waived for survivors of domestic abuse, and, as I have said, CMS caseworkers will signpost people to suitable domestic abuse support organisations where necessary.

As I mentioned, domestic abuse training has been developed with input from Women's Aid, but I take the challenge from the hon. Member for Birmingham, Yardley as to whether that is enough. She speaks with passion and conviction on the issue, and I am happy to ensure that we match that in our response. Our caseworkers are involved in difficult and complex cases—as MPs, we know that what people bring to us is not always exactly what is going on—so we have to ensure that caseworkers are well equipped to support parents in vulnerable situations.

Domestic abuse can take various forms, and that is exactly what our caseworkers look for. They signpost, call in authorities where appropriate and follow the guidance, including the complex needs toolkit. I reiterate that the toolkit has clear steps to follow to support customers experiencing abuse. It is regularly reviewed and strengthened on the basis of customer insight and input from organisations. I take the challenge from the hon. Member for Birmingham, Yardley, and will ensure that the toolkit is fully rounded.

Members raised several issues on Second Reading, including an incredibly important issue about the banking system in relation to the CMS, which I want to address. The CMS can act as an intermediary to facilitate the exchange of bank details, to ensure there is no unwanted contact between parents and no personal information is shared. CMS caseworkers also provide advice on how to set up bank accounts with a centralised sort code, so that parents cannot be traced. However, I acknowledge that, despite having those measures in place, the banking system can sometimes be used to continue to perpetrate abuse. I assure Committee members that the CMS is doing everything in its remit to look at this matter, but this is one of the reasons why the Bill is so important, as parents will be able to fully avoid transacting with each other in these situations.

10 am

My hon. Friend the Member for Hastings and Rye highlighted the importance of the Bill's clauses, so I will just provide a brief recap. Clause 1 provides the substance

for the Bill. It creates the power to place a child maintenance arrangement on to the collect and pay service when either parent applies on the grounds of domestic abuse and where there is evidence of domestic abuse against the requesting parent or children in their household. Clause 1(2) gives the power to make regulations that will set out evidence requirements for the domestic abuse.

Clause 2 allows for a child in Scotland to apply on the grounds of domestic abuse. We recognise the importance of allowing all who have suffered domestic abuse to be able to request this service. Both the receiving and paying parent, and a child, in Scotland will be able to request collect and pay in these circumstances. Clause 3 allows for the definition of domestic abuse as set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 to extend to Scotland. We are committed to working with legal colleagues and the Scottish Government to ensure that the policy aim is effectively delivered in Scotland.

The Government are committed to ensuring that survivors of domestic abuse feel safe when using the CMS. We recognise the importance of the Bill and welcome this additional protection for those who have suffered domestic abuse. I thank all the officials for their engagement, and commend my hon. Friend the Member for Hastings and Rye for all her work on the Bill. I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Sally-Ann Hart: I thank the Minister for her remarks and her support, and I thank all Members here today for their support of the Bill. I also thank the DWP officials and parliamentary officials for all their guidance and support, and I thank you, Ms McVey, for your excellent chairing of the Committee.

The Bill is about giving victims of domestic abuse further protection when using the Child Maintenance Service. It is of great importance, and I am very pleased with the support it has received. As a lawyer, a justice of the peace—a magistrate—and an MP, I have witnessed the distress of victims and the manipulation and evasion of perpetrators of domestic abuse. We must all do what we can to support victims and stamp out this insidious crime. I thank my colleagues from across the House for their contributions and for being here to support the Bill. I know that the Minister will take away the important points raised today and engage with Members on them, and I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 1 accordingly ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 2 to 4 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Bill to be reported, without amendment.

10.4 am

Committee rose.