



Backbench Business Committee

Representations: Backbench Debates

Tuesday 14 Jun 2016

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 14 Jun 2016.

Watch the meeting

Members present: Ian Mearns (Chair); Bob Blackman; Kevin Foster; Patricia Gibson; Wendy Morton; Gavin Newlands; Mr David Nuttall; Jess Phillips and William Wragg.

Questions 1-26

Maria Miller and Simon Hart

Jim Dowd

David Lammy

Jim Shannon

Jim Shannon and Henry Smith

Patricia Gibson

Written evidence from witnesses:

– [Add names of witnesses and hyperlink to submissions]



Body
UserTrail
Info3

Info1
Info2

DocName
Page 2 of 14
PhoneNumber

Chair: Good afternoon and welcome to the first Backbench Business Committee of the 2016-17 parliamentary session. I would like to welcome back returning members Bob Blackman, Kevin Foster, David Nuttall, Jess Phillips and Gavin Newlands and to give a particular warm welcome to our new members Wendy Morton and William Wragg—I am delighted to have you on board.

Mrs Maria Miller and Simon Hart made representations.

Q1 **Chair:** We have a number of applications to consider, the first being from Maria Miller on online abuse.

Mrs Miller: Simon and I believe that it is important that we have a specific debate on online abuse as a result of our discussions and those we have had more broadly across the House with Members from all parties. We believe that it is important that we have a general debate on the Floor of the House to call for action from the Government to determine whether the law, police training and CPS guidance is as it should be in this digital age. I am sure that I do not need to underline to colleagues present the relevance of this to our constituency work day in, day out. We are all experiencing constituency cases where online abuse is prevalent, whether that is revenge pornography—colleagues may be aware that I worked with the Government on the law that was enacted a year ago—or other forms of abuse including bullying and intimidation. The problem is widespread.

Interestingly, and I was somewhat surprised to learn, we have not had a debate on the Floor of the House on the issue. I had an Adjournment debate on revenge pornography, but I think that the issue goes beyond that. The motion is a call for action, as the Committee would want it to be, and it has extensive cross-party support as is evident from the list of Members who want to support that debate.

We have an opportunity, because in the Queen's Speech the Government have made it clear that they want to introduce a digital economy Bill. I believe strongly that if such a Bill is introduced, it must address the issues that are at the heart of the debate that we are calling for.

Simon Hart: I have little to add other than that we are becoming aware that the technology is advancing at a much faster rate than the law. We probably know of individual examples where people or their families have suffered from such abuse. It is not like bullying used to be when we were

Comment [HC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:30:52"
ServerTimeZone="14:30:52"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [HC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:30:52"
ServerTimeZone="14:30:52"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [HC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:32:24"
ServerTimeZone="14:32:24"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [HC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:32:49"
ServerTimeZone="14:32:49"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [HC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:33:14"
ServerTimeZone="14:33:14"
LocalTime="GMT" />



Body
UserTrail
Info3

Info1
Info2

DocName
Page 3 of 14
PhoneNumber

kids; this is permanent, often anonymous and sometimes it is extremely difficult to measure its long-term impact not just on the immediate victim but also on their families. We see it every day. Teachers that I speak to, and I am sure that this is the same for everyone else here, consider such abuse to be a real problem and one which is causing considerable hardship to teachers as well as to pupils.

Q2 **Bob Blackman:** I am very supportive of your bid. One thing I wonder is which Department would answer the debate. You could have the Home Office, Cabinet Office, Education or Culture, Media and Sport. There are range of different Departments with an interest in the subject, so which Department would be your preferred option?

Mrs Miller: You bring up a very important point, and I think more than one should be the answer. Obviously, we have an opportunity for the involvement of more than one Minister, because we need to send a very clear message to the Government that this is not just one Department's problem. They know that, because Karen Bradley, Ed Vaizey and a number of other Ministers have responsibilities in this regard. Personally, I would hope that the Home Office and DCMS would contribute to the debate, because I think that the digital economy Bill will be a DCMS Bill.

Bob Blackman: Can I just counsel you that, if you get a three-hour debate with two Ministers speaking and potentially three Opposition spokesmen, you have almost consumed half of your debate in that timeframe? Making sure you are clear on which Department answers this debate will possibly be quite helpful to your cause.

Q3 **Kevin Foster:** I have a couple of quick questions. First, in your notes you referred to 30 pieces of legislation. I am presuming some of those are now quite elderly. It might be interesting to know what is the oldest one being used, given what we are actually talking about in terms of the debate. Secondly, I noticed that an issue in this area is jurisdiction. I did my master's degree partly on the regulation of the internet when it was first starting to come out. How do you see some of those issues being teased out in the debate, given that one of the problems of online is the fact that someone can do things from outside the jurisdiction a lot easier than they could via traditional bullying methods?

Mrs Miller: Interestingly the most relevant and oldest piece of legislation well predates the internet—it is the Malicious Communications Act 1988. I was pressing the Minister on this yesterday in the Policing and Crime Bill, and while I understand the philosophy of the Government in saying that what's illegal offline is illegal online, I think what the revenge pornography Act has proven is that that only goes so far. You can actually improve things by having bespoke law, and the police would certainly be strong supporters of that.

Comment [HC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:33:55"
ServerTimeZone="14:33:55"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [HC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:34:20"
ServerTimeZone="14:34:20"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [BJ]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:35:20"
ServerTimeZone="14:35:20"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [BJ]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:36:02"
ServerTimeZone="14:36:02"
LocalTime="GMT" />



Body
UserTrail
Info3

Info1
Info2

DocName
Page 4 of 14
PhoneNumber

Mr Foster: you make a very important point about jurisdiction. However, I think the brilliant work the Prime Minister did around child abuse showed that where there is a will there is a way, and if there are child abuse images that are posted from foreign shores, there are ways in which techniques can be used to either take down those images or block them. I am not saying that every single piece of abuse that could be deemed illegal would be treated in that way, because that might involve a great deal of manpower, but the answer to your question is that it is not impossible to deal with things outside of the jurisdiction. I think the more telling conversation is how far the Government want to go in blocking information and not falling foul of freedom of **speech**.

Simon Hart: We thought very carefully about the last two lines of our substantive motion because we recognise that the solution to this does not necessarily lie in yet further legislation. It lies in some of those expressions that we have used in the final sentence for the reasons Maria has set out, as far as the legislation problems would be concerned.

Q4 **Chair:** Thank you for your application. There is one thing I will ask before you go. It is unusual for us to get two Departments to answer a debate together. If the Government refused to do that, or found it difficult, which Department would you plump **for**?

Mrs Miller: I guess that the Digital Economy Bill is going to be a DCMS Bill, and I therefore think it would be prudent to have that Minister—Minister Vaizey—respond, or the Secretary of State, John Whittingdale. Thank you for your time. I very much appreciate you accommodating me earlier in the list.

Chair: You are very welcome. Thank you.

Jim Dowd made representations.

Jim Dowd: I will not go through many of the arguments I hope to deploy should this be granted, but I want to try to suggest to the Committee why I would be grateful for consideration. The legislation currently covering the use of snares in England goes back some 35 years to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. All three of the devolved Administrations have, subsequent to their establishment, revised the position regarding snares in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Department commissioned its own research and development wing to undertake a report into this. It did field work between 2008 and 2010 culminating in a report, and a number of recommendations, which was published in March 2012. Since then—the four years-plus that has gone on—despite the Government saying that they would return to addressing this, they have failed to do so. I do think that they need a prod before—the next time it is considered—somebody says that the report is now so out of date we need to start the whole

Comment [BJ]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:37:26"
ServerTimeZone="14:37:26"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [BJ]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:37:40"
ServerTimeZone="14:37:40"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [BJ]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:38:31"
ServerTimeZone="14:38:31"
LocalTime="GMT" />



Body
UserTrail
Info3

Info1
Info2

DocName
Page 5 of 14
PhoneNumber

tortuous cycle again.

I would prefer—as would the 20 supporters you can see listed on the application form—to be in the Chamber on the Floor of the House, the main reason being to get the particular form of words that you have in the motion on the Order Paper. I know it might be divided upon. I would not hope to divide the House, should we be able to do that. Three hours would be ideal, but I accept the particular pressures that the Committee is under, particularly at the start, after the hiatus of the past couple of months. If 90 minutes would be easier for the Committee, I am quite happy to accept that.

Chair: Thank you very much Jim. The subject of the application is banning the manufacture, sale, possession and use of snares. Are there any questions from members of the Committee?

Q5 **Kevin Foster:** Given that there is a genuine debate around this area—I am probably more on your side of it—are any of the people who would like to speak actually against the ban? I am conscious that there is an ongoing debate, although I agree with the proposal.

Jim Dowd: I am quite happy to have that. I am not a great parliamentary archivist, but I cannot identify a single occasion when this has actually been debated as an issue in itself. It has clearly come up as part of the wider issues relating to animal welfare. I am quite happy to have that discussion, because they are used quite widely and it would be good to hear from those who would stand up for people's right to do it. I am not saying the right resides wholly on one side of this argument, but I think there is very strong feeling in the country. As every Member knows, issues relating to animal welfare are always very keenly observed by many constituents.

Chair: Thank you very much, Jim, for your application and for your succinctness.

Mr David Lammy made representations.

Chair: Next up, we have Mr David Lammy, who has the support of Caroline Lucas and Tom Brake. The subject of this application is privatisation of the Land Registry.

Mr Lammy: Can I just add that other Members who are supporting are Peter Bottomley and John Stevenson? I think this has been a surprise to a number of Members; there are 27 Members of Parliament who are currently supporting this debate and it crosses six parties. The Land Registry is obviously incredibly important in our country. It does a quiet

Comment [JL]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:40:21"
ServerTimeZone="14:40:21"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [JL]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:41:09"
ServerTimeZone="14:41:09"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [JL]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:41:25"
ServerTimeZone="14:41:25"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [HC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:30:52"
ServerTimeZone="14:30:52"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [JL]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:44:07"
ServerTimeZone="14:44:07"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [JL]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:42:35"
ServerTimeZone="14:42:35"
LocalTime="GMT" />



job, but an important one. It has done that very well for a number of years and is an effective organisation. Any decision to privatise the Land Registry is a major, major decision and I think there are serious issues that arise. The nature of housing in this country remains a top political issue, but the second issue is transparency. Who owns what land, particularly here in London, is a very hot issue; as are some of the implications around tax havens and things that might support those who wish to buy the Land Registry. There is also concern about price hikes that might come, if any ownership became for profit.

It seems to me that this is a very important issue. I think that it feels in Back-Bench territory. The Government have just finished consulting on the issue. They say that they have not reached a mind on the issue, but I think it is one that Back Benchers across the House will want to debate, discuss its implications and make their feelings known before any decisions come about. I had hoped that, if this is considered to be appropriate by the Committee, we might move on it quite quickly. That is all really.

Q6 **Mr Nuttall:** One of the matters that we frequently consider in determining whether to grant a debate is whether or not there will be any other opportunity to debate the subject matter in question. Is it your belief that, if this were to proceed, it would need Government legislation? Would it need Government legislation to go ahead?

Mr Lammy: I am not sure it would. I used to be the Minister responsible for the Land Registry, and my recollection is that it is a pretty quasi-independent part of Government. I am not sure that it would necessarily need legislation; it might depend on how it is done. But that would obviously be some considerable time off. This is not something that was in any manifesto; it has come from nowhere and, frankly, it feels like one of those quiet areas that civil servants might have been in charge of which has run coach and horses into a much bigger story—a story about land, a story about who owns it, a story about transparency, accountability and tax havens, the lot. I think that it is probably something that will not, because in the end I accept that it is a discrete area. I do not think that there are any other circumstances in which this will be debated in the House, unless it were in an individual Adjournment debate.

Q7 **Jess Phillips:** I just have to declare an interest—I don't own the Land Registry, yet—in that I signed the right hon. Gentleman's letter to *The Guardian* on the subject. I wanted to declare that for the public record. I would also support the debate.

Q8 **Bob Blackman:** David, you have hinted, I think, on the application that you want a debate in the main Chamber, but that you would accept Westminster Hall in the event that time was not available in the Chamber

Comment [JL]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:44:07"
ServerTimeZone="14:44:07"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [WJG]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:45:14"
ServerTimeZone="14:45:14"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [WJG]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:46:26"
ServerTimeZone="14:46:26"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [WJG]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:46:43"
ServerTimeZone="14:46:43"
LocalTime="GMT" />



Body
UserTrail
Info3

Info1
Info2

DocName
Page 7 of 14
PhoneNumber

in order to get a debate quickly. Is that the position, if I may clarify that?

Mr Lammy: I think this is timely, and therefore it would be good if it came on sooner rather than later. However, I have been slightly thrown by the number of Members who are concerned, so I think this has quietly come from nowhere. Therefore, it might well be something that would divide the House, to express the strength of feeling. I do not know whether that would be possible if it were in Westminster Hall—

Bob Blackman: It would not be. You would have to reach the end of the debate, and then they would have to agree not to have considered the motion and move to the Chamber to have a vote.

Mr Lammy: So you can't do it. For that reason, while I have indicated Westminster Hall, because I thought it would be fine, the strength of feeling that is coming back might mean that this is something that would cause a Division.

Q9 **Bob Blackman:** Just to be clear, because we have a large number of applications in front of us—as you will appreciate—many of which are time-bound as well, if there is no time available in the Chamber, would you rather have a debate in Westminster Hall, which—by the way and before you answer—would not preclude you from coming back to this Committee and seeking a debate in the Chamber, in the event that you do not get satisfactory answers from the Government?

Mr Lammy: If you are indicating that this would not come on before recess, then yes.

Q10 **Chair:** Summer recess, are you talking about?

Mr Lammy: Yes.

Chair: At the moment, David, we are only aware of one day that we have, which is on 30 June. After that, we do not yet know what time will be allocated to us as the Backbench Business Committee by the Government. That is what we are currently working with in terms of Chamber time.

Q11 **Gavin Newlands:** Mr Blackman essentially asked the same question that I was going to ask, perhaps in a somewhat more leading manner than I would have asked—but he asked the same question.

Chair: Okay, thank you very much indeed. Anything to add, David?

Mr Lammy: Thank you very much for your consideration.

Jim Shannon made representations.

Q12 **Chair:** Returning with his season ticket, Mr Jim Shannon. His first

Comment [WJG]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:47:06"
ServerTimeZone="14:47:06"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [WJG]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:47:42"
ServerTimeZone="14:47:42"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [WJG]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:47:47"
ServerTimeZone="14:47:47"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [WJG]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:48:06"
ServerTimeZone="14:48:06"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [WJG]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:48:34"
ServerTimeZone="14:48:34"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [WJG]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:48:36"
ServerTimeZone="14:48:36"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [WJG]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:48:57"
ServerTimeZone="14:48:57"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [WJG]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:49:15"
ServerTimeZone="14:49:15"
LocalTime="GMT" />



application this afternoon is on the United Nations resolution on human rights in Iran.

Kevin Foster: Only two applications, Jim?

Jim Shannon: Just the two. I would have brought more, but I thought it might be inappropriate. But it is always a pleasure to come before the Backbench Committee, as you know, Chair, and it is nice to renew friendships again.

This is one that has probably been niggling me a wee bit, to be truthful with you. When the House made the agreement on the Iran nuclear deal, part of that deal was that human rights and equality issues would be addressed and the Minister, Tobias Ellwood, indicated that in the Chamber. I was one of many, from both sides of the Chamber—to be fair, on the night there were probably more from the Conservative party—who made comments about human rights issues. It is therefore with great regret that we find out that despite all of that, the UN resolution on human rights in Iran has condemned Iran for very clear abuses of human rights—those human rights and abuses that we spoke about on the night the debate happened in this House. That is why I have asked for this to be considered.

If I can, I will give you some of the reasons why we are concerned. Iran is No. 9 on the 2016 Open Doors World Watch List—the list of those where persecution for Christians and other ethnic minorities and religious groups is very high. Converting from Islam is punishable by death for men and life imprisonment for women. Those who are being targeted in Iran are the Bahá'í faith Christians and Ahmadis—those who are anything but defined as Muslim. Underground churches are increasingly monitored, which makes some people afraid to attend, and at least 108 Christians were arrested in the last year. Interrogation methods in prison are very brutal, very harsh and sexually abusive to men and to women as well.

On the resolution, the Iranian President, Hassan Rouhani, referred to the important human rights issues, particularly in eliminating discrimination against women and members of ethnic minorities, and greater space for freedom of expression and opinion, but quite clearly none of those things have happened. So I was therefore hoping that the Backbench Business Committee would agree to this, especially in the light of the fact that the UN themselves have said there is blatant human rights abuse. I think the House needs to air those things.

There were many in the Chamber. We have 31 Members from all parties, and I think you have a copy of all those names. So I think there is a wealth of opinion that needs to be expressed.

Comment [WJG]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:49:34"
ServerTimeZone="14:49:34"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [WJG]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:49:34"
ServerTimeZone="14:49:34"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [WJG]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:49:51"
ServerTimeZone="14:49:51"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [OW]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:50:47"
ServerTimeZone="14:50:47"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [OW]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:51:50"
ServerTimeZone="14:51:50"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [OW]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:52:14"
ServerTimeZone="14:52:14"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [OW]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:52:28"
ServerTimeZone="14:52:28"
LocalTime="GMT" />



Body
UserTrail
Info3

Info1
Info2

DocName
Page 9 of 14
PhoneNumber

Q13 **Bob Blackman:** Jim, can I just clarify? On your application you have not specified an amount of time for a debate. You have got 16 speakers—

Jim Shannon: It has not been transferred—my apologies. I was thinking of one and a half hours in Westminster Hall.

Q14 **Bob Blackman:** If it is 90 minutes and you have got 16 speakers, allowing a reasonable time for an introduction, a response from the Government and probably from the Opposition, that would mean that each speaker would get about three minutes at best. I would not want to expand the time, but equally you have ticked the box for Westminster Hall on a Thursday, which would normally be a three-hour debate, if a Thursday is made available to us. Can we just clarify what you are doing? The other issue, while you are thinking about that, is, if you want a 90-minute debate on a Tuesday in Westminster Hall, which Department would answer?

Jim Shannon: It would be Tobias Ellwood's Department.

Q15 **Bob Blackman:** So the FCO?

Jim Shannon: Yes, the FCO.

Q16 **Bob Blackman:** There is a potential slot on 5 July for a 90-minute debate, which would fit that.

Jim Shannon: Mr Chairman, you have probably heard me say this before. I am not saying we shouldn't have debates on Thursday, but for the last one we had we didn't take the time that was allocated, but sometimes it is about getting people there. With respect, I think that Tuesday is a day when we would probably have more Members who want to participate in the debate. On the night, if you have a chance to look at Hansard, the human rights issue was expressed deeply by Members from both sides of the House. Therefore, if Tuesday 5 July is okay for an hour and a half, I am quite happy with that.

Chair: That is the point that Bob made.

Q17 **Bob Blackman:** The subject area we will accept. The issue is that if you've got 16 speakers, in a 90-minute debate, practically they are not going to get any time at all to speak. The issue is, have you really got 16 speakers? In that case, a three-hour debate is probably more suitable to allow them a reasonable time to speak. If you do not have 16 speakers and some of them are saying, "Well, I'll come and do a couple of interventions and leave it to others," a 90-minute debate might be more appropriate. The Committee needs to know whether you want a Tuesday morning, in which case you can potentially go in the queue for Tuesday 5 July, or whether you want a three-hour debate, which means that it will

Comment [OW]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:52:44"

Comment [OW]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:52:44"

Comment [OW]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:52:52"

Comment [OW]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:52:56"

Comment [HJ]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:53:28"

Comment [OW]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:53:42"

Comment [HJ]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:53:38"

Comment [HJ]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:53:40"

Comment [HJ]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:53:43"

Comment [HJ]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:53:43"

Comment [HJ]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:53:57"

Comment [HJ]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:54:19"

Comment [HJ]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:54:35"



be a different day in Westminster Hall but it will be a Thursday.

Jim Shannon: Sorry, Bob—my apologies for not following you more clearly. Some of those who have indicated that they want to speak will probably be interventions. They will not all be making speeches on the day. The 90 minutes on Tuesday 5 July, if that is possible, will suffice for this matter. It will give those who wish to participate the opportunity to do so.

Chair: Thank you. That concludes that particular application. Up next, we have Mr Jim Shannon.

Jim Shannon and Henry Smith made representations.

Q18 **Chair:** This application is for a debate on blood cancers and the Cancer Drugs Fund.

Jim Shannon: It is a bit like Groundhog Day. I am back again but with a different subject matter.

This issue has concerned many in the Chamber. We have had more signatures to this since we gave the Committee the copies of the list. We are now up to 27 people who have indicated an interest in the issue. Less than an hour ago, my colleague Henry became the chair of the APPG on blood cancer. The subject is deeply interesting to Members of this House. I have had a particular interest in it over the years. I will, very quickly, put forward the reasons that we need this debate.

The title is, "Blood cancers and the Cancer Drugs Fund" because it is not just about the issue of blood cancers. It is also about how we solve the problems. Part of those problems are to do with the response of the Cancer Drugs Fund. The main groups of blood cancers are leukaemia, lymphoma and myeloma. Blood cancer is an umbrella term for cancers that affect the blood, bone marrow and lymphatic system. Those are the issues that some of my constituents have, and I know that the chair of the APPG is very aware of them. Every type affects so many people in the UK. Every 20 minutes, someone in the UK is told they have blood cancer. Seventy people die a day. That is 25,000 people a year. It is a massive issue.

I believe that, in this House, we are tasked with responding to what our constituents want us to bring to the attention of the Members of this House. The Cancer Drugs Fund, which was introduced in 2010, has enabled thousands of cancer patients in England to access treatments, but not all those drugs are available at this moment in time. That is perhaps what we want to hit upon.

Comment [BC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:55:15"
ServerTimeZone="14:55:15"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [BC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:55:15"
ServerTimeZone="14:55:15"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [BC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:55:57"
ServerTimeZone="14:55:57"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [BC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:55:57"
ServerTimeZone="14:55:57"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [BC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:56:13"
ServerTimeZone="14:56:13"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [BC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:56:53"
ServerTimeZone="14:56:53"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [BC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:57:07"
ServerTimeZone="14:57:07"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [BC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:57:41"
ServerTimeZone="14:57:41"
LocalTime="GMT" />



Body
UserTrail
Info3

Info1
Info2

DocName
Page 11 of 14
PhoneNumber

Last December, 42 drugs were re-evaluated by the Cancer Drugs Fund. It has been estimated that that will affect some 5,500 patients. To put that into perspective, 1,750 of those will be blood cancer patients. It is a very specific issue to be discussed, hopefully in Westminster Hall, for blood cancer patients.

I know the Government have reassessed the CDF and have given it some extra money but, unfortunately, that has not addressed the issue of where we go. The fact is that the CDF enables patients to access cancer medicines that are routinely available in other EU countries. We still lag behind Germany, France and north America when it comes to medicines for patients. We need to debate the issue not only of blood cancers, but of the Cancer Drugs Fund. It is an issue that my constituents want me to bring forward and it is a debate that many other MPs will want to participate in.

Henry Smith: I would endorse everything that Jim has said. About an hour ago, as he mentioned, the APPG on blood cancers was launched, and so this is a topical issue. It is one that perhaps has not had as much attention as other cancers, although that is not to detract from those important conditions. To raise the profile of blood cancer is something that Jim's constituents in Northern Ireland feel is important and that is shared by my constituents in Sussex and across the country. People want to see it debated, the profile of the issue raised and perhaps more clearly brought to the attention of Government. If the Committee were so minded to grant a 90-minute debate in Westminster Hall, that would be greatly appreciated.

Q19 **Bob Blackman:** The issue here is what do you want the Government to do? You have talked about the problems, but what response do you expect from the Government, if any, because you are calling for a general debate and there will no resolution of the House to impact on the Government? Or are you waiting to see what the Government have to say?

Jim Shannon: In this case, we hope first of all to raise awareness. Lobby groups come to see me lots of time about the NCI drugs, to point out that certain drugs have not come through and to ask for more money to be set aside. There has to be a limit on the amount of money that the Government can spend on drugs, and on cancer drugs specifically, but some drugs have not been given the okay. When it comes to raising awareness, we are also trying to encourage, nudge perhaps, the Government to be more flexible to giving the go ahead for new drugs, and to make sure that those drugs are available, so that it is not just a postcode lottery, which means that some parts of the United Kingdom get them and some parts don't. There is a keenness among our constituents

Comment [BC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:58:23"
ServerTimeZone="14:58:23"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [BC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:58:53"
ServerTimeZone="14:58:53"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [BC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="14:58:53"
ServerTimeZone="14:58:53"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [HC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="15:00:06"
ServerTimeZone="15:00:06"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [HC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="15:00:26"
ServerTimeZone="15:00:26"
LocalTime="GMT" />



Body
UserTrail
Info3

Info1
Info2

DocName
Page 12 of 14
PhoneNumber

to raise awareness and to seek some response from the Government about what they are doing with the NCI system, and ultimately with the Cancer Drugs Fund.

Henry Smith: Awareness is very important. As we said, the issue of the availability of drugs for the treatment of blood cancers has not received the coverage of other forms of cancer. As Jim said, the debate would serve to nudge Government a little bit. It would also be important to have such a debate to mark the start of the all-party parliamentary group and to highlight that for the remainder of this Parliament we will be seeking to increase understanding of the issue.

Q20 **Jess Phillips:** I just have to declare an interest: I am a member of the APPG on blood cancer.

Chair: If there are no other questions, I thank you both for your application. We will make our decision at the end of the session.

Patricia Gibson made representations.

Chair: May I inform the Committee and the watching millions that the application is on scamming and its effect on vulnerable individuals?

Patricia Gibson: I should point out that my colleague, Julian Knight, is unable to be here.

We want a debate because we feel it is very timely. July is scams awareness month, and we know that financial harm is being caused to the most vulnerable in our communities. An increasing number of old people are living with dementia, and we recognise that a number of people live in our communities with additional support needs. We have evidence that scammers are deliberately targeting those vulnerable groups. We think that it is important in July, scammers awareness month, to bring this important issue to the Floor of the House to see what more can be done.

Q21 **Chair:** I take it that you are definitely angling for July?

Patricia Gibson: July would be the most timely point. I should also mention that we have significant interest across the House—20% of MPs approached have expressed an interest in such a debate, and I know from speaking to colleagues informally that they would be interested in coming along and/or speaking in the debate.

Q22 **Kevin Foster:** Just a question about the final line of the motion, which states, "and ask the government what more can be done to tackle this criminality". That does not reflect the content of the usual motions that are presented to us, and you may want to ask the Clerks about tightening it or I wonder whether you are open to slight changes to that wording at

Comment [HC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="15:01:27"
ServerTimeZone="15:01:27"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [HC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="15:02:07"
ServerTimeZone="15:02:07"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [HC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="15:02:50"
ServerTimeZone="15:02:50"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [HC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="15:02:59"
ServerTimeZone="15:02:59"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [HC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="15:03:39"
ServerTimeZone="15:03:39"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [HC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="15:03:41"
ServerTimeZone="15:03:41"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [HC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="15:04:06"
ServerTimeZone="15:04:06"
LocalTime="GMT" />



Body
UserTrail
Info3

Info1
Info2

DocName
Page 13 of 14
PhoneNumber

the end—

Mr Nuttall: "And calls on".

Kevin Foster: "And calls on the Government"—"and ask" could be a question rather than a resolution in a debate. It is only a minor point.

Patricia Gibson: I am quite sure that following the debate, the Minister who responds to it will be interested anyway in looking again at what more can be done to protect—

Kevin Foster: It is more about the style of the motion. It seems a bit clumsy at the end.

Q23 **Chair:** If you would be open to some small technical redrafting, that would help to facilitate a motion that would be meaningful to the House.

Patricia Gibson: Absolutely. I have no problem with that.

Q24 **Gavin Newlands:** I am sympathetic to a debate. What is most important for you? Obviously July being scams awareness month, would you prefer a debate in July but having it in Westminster Hall if the Chamber isn't available—obviously we don't know what time we have available—or would you prefer to wait until after the recess and have it in the Chamber?

Patricia Gibson: It is a substantive motion, so it would really need to go to the Floor of the House. July, of course, would be the most ideal time to have it. The Committee would appreciate that.

Q25 **Chair:** As I am sure you are aware, we do not yet have any idea of what time we will be allocated in July. There are three sitting weeks in July and we would hope to be allocated some time then, so there is obviously a possibility.

Patricia Gibson: Thank you.

Q26 **Chair:** Which Department would you want to respond? Would it be the Home Office or BIS?

Patricia Gibson: We have given some consideration to that, because we understand that legislation for consumer protection can come from a number of different Departments. We concluded that the Home Office has a far stronger link given that, in the end, you are talking about victims of criminality.

Chair: Thank you very much. Are there any other questions? In that case, I thank you very much for your application.

We have an application from Jim Fitzpatrick. He has supplied us with a

Comment [HC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="15:04:19"
ServerTimeZone="15:04:19"

Comment [HC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="15:04:20"
ServerTimeZone="15:04:20"

Comment [HC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="15:04:20"
ServerTimeZone="15:04:20"

Comment [HC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="15:04:32"
ServerTimeZone="15:04:32"

Comment [HC]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="15:04:47"
ServerTimeZone="15:04:47"

Comment [ER]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="15:04:54"
ServerTimeZone="15:04:54"

Comment [ER]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="15:04:59"
ServerTimeZone="15:04:59"

Comment [ER]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="15:05:17"
ServerTimeZone="15:05:17"

Comment [ER]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="15:05:47"
ServerTimeZone="15:05:47"

Comment [ER]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="15:05:52"
ServerTimeZone="15:05:52"

Comment [ER]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="15:06:19"
ServerTimeZone="15:06:19"

Comment [ER]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="15:06:23"
ServerTimeZone="15:06:23"



Body
UserTrail
Info3

Info1
Info2

DocName
Page 14 of 14
PhoneNumber

letter of application that I am quite happy to read out for the record—it is quite a short letter. He is writing in his capacity as chair of the all-party parliamentary group on deafness, and he is hoping that we can enlist the support of the Committee for a debate at around the time of the NHS's launch of its health action plan on hearing, which is expected on 17 July. There are a number of issues affecting the 3 million-plus citizens who are deaf or hard of hearing, including the provision of hearing aids, official status of British sign language, national screening initiatives, lip-reading classes, audit of audiology provision and clinical commissioning group commissioning, as well as other matters. The all-party group is well supported, and there is a list of members overleaf. He is sure that a 90-minute debate would attract significant attention from colleagues. I take it that that means he wants a 90-minute debate in Westminster Hall or either. That is Jim's application. Obviously I can't answer any questions on his behalf.

The only other thing to record for the official record is that a number of applications were withdrawn, but we also had an application from Dr Andrew Murrison for a debate to commemorate the centenary of the battle of the Somme. I contacted the Leader's office immediately on being re-elected Chair and, as we know, there is now going to be a debate of three hours on 29 June—the battle of the Somme commenced on 1 July 1916. That is just for the record to show that Dr Murrison's application has been dealt with by negotiation.

Thank you very much indeed.

Comment [ER]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="15:07:16"
ServerTimeZone="15:07:16"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [ER]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="15:07:31"
ServerTimeZone="15:07:31"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [ER]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="15:07:43"
ServerTimeZone="15:07:43"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [ER]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="15:07:50"
ServerTimeZone="15:07:50"
LocalTime="GMT" />

Comment [ER]: <TimeTag
ServerDate="14 June 2016"
ServerTime="15:08:28"
ServerTimeZone="15:08:28"
LocalTime="GMT" />