

Home Affairs Committee

Oral evidence: [Work of the Home Secretary](#), HC 434

Wednesday 28 March 2018

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Members present: Yvette Cooper (Chair); Rehman Chishti; Sir Christopher Chope; Stephen Doughty; Kirstene Hair; Sarah Jones; Tim Loughton; Stuart C. McDonald; Douglas Ross; Naz Shah; John Woodcock.

Questions 202–364

Witnesses

I: Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP, Home Secretary, and Sir Philip Rutnam, Permanent Secretary, Home Office.

Examination of witnesses

Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP, Home Secretary, and Sir Philip Rutnam, Permanent Secretary, Home Office

Q202 **Chair:** Good morning. Home Secretary, Sir Philip, welcome to the Committee. Thank you very much for coming to give evidence to us today. We are very grateful for your time. Before we start on the main evidence session, Home Secretary, at 2.30 pm today the Home Office is going to be releasing four reports by the independent borders inspector. We asked for a copy of those last night. Have you sent them to us?

Amber Rudd: No, because we need to submit them to Parliament first, which is what we are doing.

Chair: Which is what we are.

Amber Rudd: No, we have a procedure for doing it through Parliament rather than through the Select Committee. If Madam Chairman wants me to release them to her first, then I will have to set up a separate procedure with David Bolt. We have a plan to release them to Parliament at 2.30 pm. We received your request late last night, but I will look at it in future if you want me to deal with you ahead of Parliament in that way.

Q203 **Chair:** What we want is for Parliament to receive them in a timely way. You have had these reports for eight weeks and you are supposed to publish them within eight weeks of receiving them. I think for two of those reports you are now past the eight weeks today. You are publishing four together on the same day at 2.30 in the afternoon, so you cannot be questioned on them by this Committee, journalists have less time to look at them, on the same day the Prime Minister is setting out national security strategy issues, and there is also a report on the Westminster terror attack and the John Worboys judgment coming out. Can we assume that these reports from the independent inspectorate are not complimentary to the Home Office?

Amber Rudd: These reports are published in the normal course of work of the Home Office. We have published 30 reports to Parliament in the past four months. We do many other publications of other material. Yesterday—we may get on to it—we published the material to do with Channel and Prevent. We had planned to publish them this afternoon. We do so in consultation with the independent reporter, David Bolt, and they will be done so at 2.30 pm. There is nothing else to read into this timing.

Q204 **Chair:** But you have chosen to do so at 2.30 pm. You are sitting before us at 9.30 am and you have chosen to publish them at 2.30 pm. The independent inspector's predecessor, John Vine, said, "I consider that lengthy delays in publishing reports ... is contributing to a sense that the independence of my role is being compromised." He was so worried about the way in which the Home Office was deciding to publish his reports either to delay things or potentially to bury bad news that he took



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independent advice from the Treasury Solicitor. How are we supposed to not conclude that what you are doing is trying to avoid scrutiny of these by publishing them so late at the end of the parliamentary session so you cannot be questioned on them by this Committee?

Amber Rudd: As you say, it was his predecessor, it was not David Bolt, with whom we have an effective but sometimes challenging relationship because it is his job to be independent, as he is, and I would not want to compromise that independence. I am sure there will be further opportunities to come before the Committee when the Committee has had a good amount of time to consider the publications that will be coming out this afternoon.

Q205 **Chair:** They are good news, are they, these reports?

Amber Rudd: I will leave the Committee to make up their mind on that.

Q206 **Chair:** I would just say to any Home Affairs journalists who are watching this I think there is a pretty screaming loud Klaxon coming from the Home Secretary to say, "Have a look at these reports and do not be distracted by anything else that is happening today".

Amber Rudd: I am in no way trying to hide those reports.

Chair: I think everybody will judge that when we see those reports, all four of them, being published on the one day, this afternoon. I do have to say to you as Home Secretary I know that you will appreciate the importance of our democratic institutions and accountability to Parliament. I would hope that you would respect that in making sure that all future reports are published in a timely way so that Parliament has time to look at them and to quiz you on them. We are going to turn to the main issues for the Committee, Stuart McDonald.

Q207 **Stuart C. McDonald:** Good morning, Home Secretary. Yesterday obviously we had the first interim report from the Migration Advisory Committee published. In it, it referred to a sense of pervasive uncertainty in some of the submissions it had received. Just now it looks like we might not even have a White Paper by March 2019. Originally, it was supposed to have been published by the end of last year. Why the delay?

Amber Rudd: The situation in terms of what we are trying to achieve from the White Paper and the Immigration Bill has changed, as has the timing for the negotiations with the European Union.

If I may take first your reference to the Migration Advisory Committee, I commissioned them last year to report by September this year to give us a view on EU migration, its benefits to the economy, its impact socially and any other matters across the regions and the nations that it wants to look at. It has given us the interim report just yesterday. The timing for the Immigration Bill has been delayed because the key element of protecting EU citizens in their rights in the UK has now been achieved with the withdrawal agreement, which is going to be coming before Parliament later this year. The Immigration Bill will cover the future



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immigration arrangement with the EU post-2020, post the implementation period. The urgency that we had before with the White Paper and with the Immigration Bill has to a certain extent been removed because the EU citizens' rights are protected in the withdrawal agreement and implementation Bill coming later this year. We have decided to wait until the Migration Advisory Committee reports in its entirety in September this year to go forward with the policy and the White Paper after that.

Q208 Stuart C. McDonald: Eventually, in the future immigration system, you are only going to leave businesses essentially with a few months before the implementation period comes to an end in December 2020. Surely it is unthinkable that there is not going to be an extension of free movement beyond that if you are only going to be leaving folk, including the Home Office, in fact, just two or three months potentially to get adjusted to a new system.

Amber Rudd: No, I believe we can do this in good time for the end of the implementation period. It is a challenge, but we have set up systems in order to do just that. The first challenge is to make sure that we have the 3.3 million existing EU citizens who are resident in the UK properly registered. That system will be up by the end of the year. We have already begun testing it. We have taken it out to Brussels to show MEPs out there, and I hope the Committee will come and have a look at it when it suits them to do so. That is the first challenge, the 3.3 million. The new system needs to be agreed and debated and arranged for post the implementation period.

Q209 Stuart C. McDonald: When the White Paper is eventually published, will it be setting out essentially what the Government view is of how the future system should look or will it have different options in it that you will be consulting on?

Amber Rudd: The White Paper is expected to be published at the end of this year. It will be in the wake of the suggestions and the report from the MAC. I will come forward with what level of content it will have in terms of consultation or proposals closer to the time.

Q210 Stuart C. McDonald: To what extent is our future immigration system part of ongoing negotiations with the EU and to what extent might there be a trade-off between allowing greater freedom of movement for EU nationals in exchange for better access to the single market?

Amber Rudd: Well, Mr McDonald, it is my job to come forward with proposals and alternatives for the Prime Minister and David Davis to decide whether to have as part of the negotiations or not. It will be up to them to decide whether that is going to be the case or not.

Q211 Stuart C. McDonald: There is certainly not a red line that says, "We decide our immigration system and this is absolutely definitely not part of negotiations"? It is possible that there could be a trade-off there?



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Amber Rudd: As I say, it is for me to make sure that there are different options available, because there are many different ways of delivering on a future immigration policy, and I will leave the negotiations at the coalface, as it were, for the Prime Minister and David Davis.

Q212 **Stuart C. McDonald:** Okay. Turning now to what has been agreed so far, UK citizens who are currently exercising free movement rights on the continent have expressed some considerable disappointment about the fact that they will no longer be able to exercise free movement in the sense of being able to move to another member state, for example. Why has that been agreed if there is a potential for further trade-offs further down the line? Why give up on their right of free movement now?

Amber Rudd: I am very conscious of the need to protect the rights of UK citizens in the EU. They are just as important to us and I am pleased that the implementation period has been welcomed by many of their groups because it gives them certainty in the same way that it gives EU citizens in the UK certainty during that period to carry on being able to have access to freedom of movement. As we leave the European Union, it will be up to the individual countries to make their decisions about what the future is for UK citizens living in different EU countries.

Q213 **Stuart C. McDonald:** Again, it is not out of the question if the future of our immigration systems could be caught up in negotiations that that question might be reopened again and an argument might be made for UK citizens living on the continent to have fuller rights to free movement?

Amber Rudd: I think it is going to be difficult because it will be up to EU member countries to decide on what sort of arrangements they want to put in place for UK citizens. We in the UK have put in place a system that we think is fair for EU citizens, but which gives them access to settled status, which is like indefinite leave to remain, over the next few years. It will be up to EU countries to make their own decisions on what they will do with UK citizens.

Q214 **Stuart C. McDonald:** Another concern that those UK citizens abroad have, and indeed EU citizens who are already here, relates to family rights. UK citizens living abroad, for example, are concerned that in future if they want to return to the United Kingdom they will then have to abide by the normal non-EEA spouse rules. If, for example, I am living in France, my spouse or partner is the main breadwinner, a French national earning maybe £30,000 a year, if I am not earning anything or I am earning less than £18,500, that pretty much closes off my option to come back here and bring my spouse with me, does it not?

Amber Rudd: Mr McDonald, I think I will have to take that question out of this Committee and look at it. There are certain elements of the post-implementation period that have not been agreed and that may be one of them, but I would like to come back to you.

Q215 **Stuart C. McDonald:** The same thing would apply to EU nationals who are living in the United Kingdom. Okay, the family rights of their current



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family members appear to be protected to an extent, but future spouses, for example, if they meet somebody in their home country, they would not be allowed to bring them over under free movement rules? They will have to meet this £18,500 threshold as other UK nationals do?

Amber Rudd: That is the current state of play, yes, that the rights of EU citizens in the UK are protected in terms of family reunion during the implementation period, but when it comes to future spouses or partners or family they revert to the same arrangements that UK citizens have living in the UK, which is what we think is fair. EU citizens staying on after the implementation period should have in the future the same rights as UK citizens.

Q216 **Stuart C. McDonald:** Is there no possibility that the Home Office will look again at the very least at the rule that prevents the Home Office taking into account the potential future earnings of the non-UK spouse? Why is it that, say, for example, my French spouse is earning £35,000, I cannot use that as evidence that we will be able to maintain ourselves in this country if we return here?

Amber Rudd: Again, I am going to come back to you on that particular example to look at, but the principle of EU citizens and UK citizens having the same rights through the implementation period I think is the fair one and the right one that we have negotiated.

Q217 **Stuart C. McDonald:** Okay. The draft withdrawal agreement also seems to muddy the waters again on comprehensive sickness insurance. If the UK is definitely going to unilaterally waive that requirement, why is that not in the draft withdrawal treaty?

Amber Rudd: The reason we have decided to take that action is we are confident that EU countries will do the same.

Q218 **Stuart C. McDonald:** If you look at the withdrawal treaty, there seems to be confusion there. There seems to be a suggestion that requiring comprehensive sickness insurance would still be possible. Why is that clause in there?

Amber Rudd: On that particular matter I will ask the Health Secretary to come back to us and give an explanation.

Q219 **Stuart C. McDonald:** My very final question relates to two particular types of non-EEA nationals but who in a sense have rights under EU treaties. Those are the Chen carers and the Zambrano carers. I do not know if you will be able to answer this just now, but the Zambrano carers in particular do not appear to be covered by the terms of the treaty. This must be a small group and there seems to be absolutely no reason why they alone should lose the rights that they currently have, but again there is just silence in your treaty. Why is that?

Amber Rudd: Do you want to answer that?



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Sir Philip Rutnam: We are still considering the position of those groups, the Chen, the Teixeira and the Zambrano groups. Some are related to children in education; some are related to carers. They are not covered by the withdrawal agreement but we are still considering the position on those groups.

Q220 **Stuart C. McDonald:** When will you be able to give them an idea of where they stand?

Sir Philip Rutnam: I cannot give you a date now, I am afraid, but perhaps when we come back to you on those other matters we can come back on that as well.

Q221 **Chair:** Can I just follow up? You have just said, Home Secretary, that your job is to come up with the options and then for the Brexit Secretary and Prime Minister to decide. Have you come up with options for immigration for inclusion in the negotiation process?

Amber Rudd: There is a whole range of different options that could be considered by the Government in terms of the future immigration policy.

Q222 **Chair:** Do you have a recommendation that you have made to them?

Amber Rudd: No, I do not. I am leaving it to the Prime Minister and David Davis to lead on those discussions.

Q223 **Chair:** But you just said it was your job to come up with the options for the discussions. What is the current Cabinet position on whether or not immigration should be included in the discussions on the future partnership?

Amber Rudd: It is for the Prime Minister to decide that.

Q224 **Chair:** Does the Cabinet have a position on whether immigration will be included in the future partnership or not?

Amber Rudd: It is for the Prime Minister to decide what the state of the negotiations are going forward. We have achieved a lot in the past few months and going forward it is going to be for the Prime Minister to decide.

Q225 **Chair:** Do I take that to mean that there is no Government proposal on even whether or not immigration is going to be included in the discussions on the future partnership?

Amber Rudd: Madam Chairman, you can take it as you want. All I can say is that we have options, which the Prime Minister will be deciding how to take forward in the negotiations when we go forward for discussing the final agreement.

Q226 **Chair:** The guidelines adopted by the European Council say that their objective is that the future partnership should include ambitious provisions on movement of natural persons based on full reciprocity and non-discrimination among member states. They clearly expect that



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immigration will be part of the negotiations. Do you think the British Government will just refuse to have immigration as part of the negotiations?

Amber Rudd: Obviously, I have seen that document and they have made a very full statement there. It will be up to the Prime Minister and David Davis to decide to what level they engage with that.

Q227 **Chair:** Do you accept that if it is not included in the negotiations then the deal is likely to be a Canada deal?

Amber Rudd: I am not going to be drawn any further than that, Madam Chairman, because it is going to be up to David Davis and the Prime Minister to take forward those negotiations. I do not think it is helpful for me to speculate on the outcome.

Q228 **Chair:** What is your proposal in terms of handling Parliament and scrutiny of Parliament about what the Government's objectives might be? You just set out for Mr McDonald a timetable for a White Paper and for an Immigration Bill that do not seem to fit at all with the negotiation timetable. If you are going to need options for the negotiations within the next six months, how will Parliament ever see what those objectives are?

Amber Rudd: I think that there are obviously many opportunities for the Brexit Secretary to come to Parliament and be challenged on issues or to give statements. I am sure he will be able to take those as the negotiations advance.

Q229 **Chair:** It is March now, 12 months until Brexit day, and you are saying that the Home Office has not taken a position; never mind the Government taking a position, you as Home Secretary have not taken a view on what the immigration proposals or objectives should be in the future partnership?

Amber Rudd: I have provided and will continue to provide the negotiators, the Prime Minister and David Davis, with information that they require in order to take forward the negotiations for the future arrangements.

Q230 **Chair:** You are the Home Secretary. Presumably, you have to make some decisions about what you think are the best immigration arrangements for the country in the future. Have you really not taken any view at all about what the best immigration objectives should be from the future partnership negotiations?

Amber Rudd: At the moment my commitment is to make sure that the Prime Minister and David Davis have the information they need to make sure they get the best deal for the UK in any negotiations with the European Union.

Q231 **Chair:** If there has been no discussion at all, no decisions made within the Cabinet and no public discussion or parliamentary discussion of immigration, how on earth do you expect to get a consensus around



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some immigration proposals for the future partnership negotiations?

Amber Rudd: I think there will be plenty of opportunity for discussions as the negotiations go forward, as I have said. The Brexit Secretary is often in front of Parliament. There are often opportunities for Opposition Day debates and statements about subjects to do with the European Union and I fully expect that to continue.

Q232 **Chair:** But you will still be doing so without the advice from the MAC, without a White Paper, without any proper debate and process. Given that immigration was one of the biggest issues certainly that I heard on the doorstep during the referendum campaign, do you not think it is a problem? There have been huge debates about the customs union and the single market but no discussion either, it appears, in the Cabinet or in Parliament or in the country about what future immigration arrangements should be.

Amber Rudd: I think that these negotiations with the European Union have been sequenced in a way that has not allowed that debate to take place yet. The focus has been, as you are aware, for the past few weeks or few months on the element of getting through to the implementation period and also on citizens' rights. There has been a lot of discussion on immigration because of the emphasis on citizens' rights, the 3.3 million here and the over 1 million in the EU. From that point of view, there has been a lot of talk about immigration in terms of protecting people's established positions.

In terms of the future immigration arrangements, as I have said, the White Paper will come forward at the end of the year and the Immigration Bill at the start of next year sometime, I would expect, in order to make sure that we have the benefit of the MAC. For negotiations going forward the EU has set out its guidelines and David Davis and the Prime Minister will enter into those discussions with them.

Q233 **Chair:** Just to confirm, the White Paper will come out after the future partnership has been agreed and the future partnership may well include immigration arrangements?

Amber Rudd: I do not know whether that is going to be the case because those negotiations have not yet started. That was the EU's decision on the sequencing and David Davis and the Prime Minister will be taking that forward.

Q234 **Chair:** It is just slightly baffling that there is not more of a plan for what should happen on immigration. Are you still planning or aiming to meet the net migration target by the end of the Parliament?

Amber Rudd: I am still focused on making sure that we continue to reduce net migration to sustainable levels.

Q235 **Chair:** Is that yes or no to the target?

Amber Rudd: I think I gave my answer.



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Q236 Chair: If you were to try to meet the target given the balance between EU and non-EU migration, given that we can presume you have had eight years obviously to change non-EU migration and we will presume that the scope is limited for that, and you I think rightly support international students coming to this country, you would have to get EU migration to go from net immigration of 100,000 to net emigration of 50,000 to meet that target. Can you confirm that you are not currently drawing up proposals to get EU migration to go from net immigration of 100,000 to net emigration of 50,000?

Amber Rudd: Net migration from the EU is currently at 90,000, which is down substantially on what it was a year ago. It is still net migration so it is still quite a substantial number, and net migration from non-EU remains considerably higher. The total net migration is 244,000. The point about the target is to focus each Government Department on making sure that we do reduce immigration and that we will have a commitment to do that. I am going to make sure that we continue to do that.

It is a challenging target, I agree with that, and it is also challenging as a Government to make sure that we remain supportive of businesses, that businesses can continue to employ the people they need and that we continue to reduce it. As the right honourable lady absolutely said, it is a concern to many people, particularly the people who voted to leave the European Union, that immigration is too high. I will be making sure that we continue to reduce it.

Q237 Chair: I am assuming that you do not have an internal objective within the Home Office to get EU migration from net immigration of 90,000 to 100,000 down to net emigration of 50,000. Can you just confirm that that is not your objective as part of the EU negotiations?

Amber Rudd: My objective is to make sure that we continue to reduce immigration from its still high level of 244,000 and to do so in a way that protects businesses and our great universities.

Q238 Chair: If you are not aiming to meet the net migration target in the course of the Parliament and not aiming to meet the net migration target through the EU negotiations, shouldn't you just start to be honest with the public and say so?

Amber Rudd: There are many ways of reducing immigration and there are going to be more ways of doing it once we leave the European Union. I think it is right to—

Q239 Chair: But on that scale, to go from net 90,000 immigration to net 50,000 emigration, you are not proposing to do something on that scale?

Amber Rudd: I am only proposing to continue to make sure that we reduce the net migration targets in accordance with what the public expect us to do. That is exactly what has been happening for the past two years.



Q240 Chair: The reason for pushing you on this, Home Secretary, is you will have seen our report on immigration consensus. What we concluded, after meetings across the country, was that one of the most important things to building any kind of consensus on immigration and stop this being a hugely divisive issue across the country was to be honest and open with the public. The problem is you have a net migration target on the one hand. You have some unknown, hidden objectives on the negotiations on the other that none of us have any idea where they are. Do you think you are remotely being honest and open with the public about what future immigration policy and reality is going to be?

Amber Rudd: I think what the public want is to make sure that they see a Government that are committed to reducing the high numbers of net migration, and they are seeing that with this Government. They also want to see that we are a Government that supports our great universities and makes sure that students can come here and do that. That is what they see in this Government. They also want to see a Government that are going to make sure that our businesses are able to access great talent across the world, and that is what they see in this Government.

Chair: The trouble is that a lot of those objectives may be contradictory and certainly contradict your target.

Q241 Stephen Doughty: Home Secretary, you will be aware of our reports on preparations for Brexit by the Home Office. I have tried and failed to get a clear answer from the Department on what the £60 million additional contingency funding that you have received from the Treasury has been spent on. Can you tell me what it has been spent on?

Amber Rudd: Yes. We have been supported by the Treasury in our bids last year for £60 million and this year for a considerably higher amount. I am going to ask the Permanent Secretary to take us through the numbers on it.

Sir Philip Rutnam: The £60 million figure refers to additional funding received from the Treasury in this financial year just about to end, 2017-18, which we have used for additional staffing. We have recruited and put in place now something like an additional 1,200 staff to work to provide support around European casework, initially the permanent resident scheme but now preparing for the settled status scheme. We have been using the £60 million to recruit those staff, recruitment that is in some areas complete, in other areas well under way, and also additional investment in technology. That has been the £60 million. Then, as the Home Secretary has referred to, we have received a significant further allocation from the Treasury.

Q242 Stephen Doughty: How much?

Sir Philip Rutnam: £395 million for the next financial year, 2018-19, which was the largest single departmental allocation from the Chancellor for the funding for Brexit purposes.



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Q243 **Stephen Doughty:** Will that be spent in a similar way?

Sir Philip Rutnam: It will be spent in a similar way in that the principal areas of spend are people and technology, but the range of things on which we will be spending money is somewhat different. We are still in the process of allocating the £395 million within the Department. If I can give you some broad numbers, I would say that we would expect about £150 million broadly to be spent on strengthening the border. We have already under way a recruitment of an additional 300 staff in relation to the border, and we may have more to say on that. There is also systems development around the border, and then around £170 million for the further development and early delivery of the settled status scheme, which we expect to bring into operation on a voluntary basis before the end of this year.

Q244 **Stephen Doughty:** Specifically on the border staff issue, are those 300 individuals you referred to new or have they been diverted?

Sir Philip Rutnam: No, they are new recruits.

Q245 **Stephen Doughty:** They are new. How many additional border staff covering both customs and immigration functions do you expect to be in place by the end of the transition period?

Sir Philip Rutnam: The Home Secretary may want to pick that up.

Amber Rudd: I can announce today that we are launching a national advertising campaign for another 1,000 Border Force staff in order to improve the quality of our border and prepare specifically for Brexit.

Q246 **Stephen Doughty:** So there will be 1,300 in place by the end of the transition period then?

Amber Rudd: Of the new recruits that we have been pursuing?

Stephen Doughty: It is 1,300 additional? You said 300 are already in place.

Amber Rudd: Three hundred are in place, 1,000—

Stephen Doughty: One thousand extra, so 1,300 by the end of the transition period?

Amber Rudd: Yes, that is correct.

Q247 **Stephen Doughty:** Okay. Do you think that is enough? The Dutch have told us that they are recruiting 750 new customs agents. The French told me that they are recruiting 700 new staff. That is obviously fairly comparable, but that does not include Ireland and others. Are you sure that is going to be enough, 1,300?

Amber Rudd: Yes, we think it is going to be enough. We have done a careful analysis of it. If we need more, we will make that decision as we go forward.



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Q248 **Stephen Doughty:** A proportion of those will be placed, I assume, at Welsh ports dealing with issues at Welsh ports?

Amber Rudd: They will be placed across the country. We need to make sure that every area is made secure.

Q249 **Stephen Doughty:** But there would be some in Wales, in Fishguard and Holyhead?

Amber Rudd: That is highly likely. We do not specify exactly where different Border Force go.

Q250 **Stephen Doughty:** I appreciate that, but there will be staff there, okay, so there will be a hard border between Wales and the Republic of Ireland?

Amber Rudd: I am not saying that. I am saying they will be placed throughout the nation.

Q251 **Stephen Doughty:** If they are additional staff, there currently are not those types of checks at Holyhead and Fishguard, so if they are going to be placed throughout the nation I assume Wales and Scotland as well?

Amber Rudd: I cannot say, as I said, where they are actually going to go, but when we know where they are going to go I will come back and happily tell you.

Q252 **Stephen Doughty:** It sounds very much like they will be placed there because that does not make sense.

Amber Rudd: As you know, Mr Doughty, there has been no decision on the border arrangements yet. What I want to make sure is that we have the support from the Treasury, which we have, to make sure that we recruit additional staff.

Q253 **Stephen Doughty:** They will all be placed in England?

Amber Rudd: Well, it has not been decided yet.

Sir Philip Rutnam: If I can add just one detail, we are also recruiting into immigration enforcement, which provides a very important intelligence function. Immigration enforcement certainly has a presence in Welsh ports.

Stephen Doughty: That is very helpful. Can I turn to another issue, social media and hate crime?

Q254 **Chair:** Can I just confirm that that 1,000 that you referred to is not just backfilling existing vacancies, that is additional posts on top of unfilled vacancies, is it?

Amber Rudd: It is a combination. As I am sure the right honourable lady is aware, the previous staffing requirements for the Home Office from the 2015 settlement were for staffing numbers to go down. We are now



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making sure that we are moving away from that and having, contrary to that coming down, 1,000 coming in plus the 300.

Q255 **Chair:** Could you clarify for us in writing whether any of those are just backfilling existing vacancies? We did take evidence previously on a lot of vacancies.

Amber Rudd: We are certainly happy to do that.

Q256 **Stephen Doughty:** Can I turn to social media and hate crime? First, Home Secretary, you will be aware of the neo-Nazi incident in Cardiff in recent weeks. I just want to put on record my thanks to the South Wales Police for the response that they gave in responding to that. It was obviously a very concerning incident in the middle of one of the most diverse communities.

Obviously, we have seen a very significant rise, as we have been told by many, of far right hate crime, both online and elsewhere. You will be aware of our concerns previously about social media companies. We have obviously had Facebook, YouTube and Twitter in front of us on their failures to deal with the content, whether that is extremist Islamist content, far right, or Northern Irish related, which you will have seen I raised. What are you going to do to bring YouTube, Facebook and Twitter to heel on this issue?

Amber Rudd: You are absolutely right, Mr Doughty, there has been a growth in extreme right-wing hate and violence. We saw that from the departing head of counterterrorism police, Mark Rowley, when he made his speech. I have taken action by proscribing a number of extreme right-wing groups, which is the first time that it has been done. That is one of the actions I have taken because that, of course, makes it illegal to promote them or to join them. That is an additional power that the police can have.

I have been dealing with the large internet companies through the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism, which we called for and they set up last year. I have been over to talk to them about the need to make sure that this material is taken down. I suppose the distinction has to be made between illegal material and material that is offensive. In terms of illegal material, I still think there is much more that they can do.

Q257 **Stephen Doughty:** We have repeatedly raised with them potentially illegal material, including the proscribed organisations. We are not talking about grey area issues here.

Amber Rudd: Yes, those are the conversations.

Stephen Doughty: We are talking about national action. We are talking about Northern Irish terrorist organisations. We are talking about Islamist content that they have repeatedly failed to remove. Is it not the time now for some severe penalties, financial penalties, other regulatory action, to bring them to heel because they are clearly not responding to either this



Committee or to the pressure that you are putting?

Amber Rudd: I think I have to say that what they do does make some progress. We know that 400 hours of YouTube video, for instance, is put up every minute on YouTube. The fact that some get on is completely unwelcome and they need to take everything down as we asked them to, but 400 hours a minute is a sobering thought in terms of the coverage they need to have.

I took action by commissioning through the Home Office a new technology company, ASI, to develop a system that used artificial intelligence, which could show that they could take this material down before it came up by using the signals that can be used in that way. We were able to demonstrate, and I demonstrated at my last visit earlier this year, that this can take down 95% of the illegal material. It was a powerful tool to be able to show them that they can do that. In fact, most of them are taking action and are taking down the vast majority, over 95%, of what goes up. The scale of material still, the numbers—

Q258 **Stephen Doughty:** But they have admitted to us they are not routinely even searching for the names of the proscribed organisations. We have repeatedly found the content. For example, a well-known anti-Semitic mural I have reported to Facebook and I received a reply yesterday saying that they were not going to remove it and I could just block the person if I did not like it. Does that disappoint you?

Amber Rudd: Yes, it does disappoint me.

Q259 **Stephen Doughty:** Facebook should be removing that sort of material?

Amber Rudd: I would like to see that sort of material removed. I know that in some instances they do make a decision themselves to remove material that they find offensive. I do think there is more that can be done. I am no apologist for the internet companies, but I think it is worth acknowledging that there is some good work being done by them. One of the things that I was particularly pleased on the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism is that part of their plan is to make sure that they work with smaller companies. We know, for instance, that last year Islamic terrorist material appeared on 400 new sites. We cannot have a situation where Facebook and the other companies take down the material but instead it can just migrate to another site. Making sure that they work in conjunction with smaller sites is just as important as getting them to take it down themselves.

Q260 **Stephen Doughty:** I have one last question. The talking is all very well and good. They have repeatedly failed to remove this content, whether using technology or experts. I was shocked to be told they had reviewers in Ireland looking at this material, yet there is all this Northern Irish-related terrorist material online. Given that they are repeatedly failing through those informal channels to do so, do you not think it is time for a German-style mechanism or another similar mechanism for fines or penalties if they refuse to remove this within a set period of time?



Amber Rudd: The German legislation is that it has to be taken down within a day. I do not want it going up in the first place. If you have a situation where it has to be taken down within a day, within the first hour and a half that material has got halfway round the world. What I want is much more ambitious than what the Germans have. In terms of legislation, we do not rule anything out.

Q261 **Kirstene Hair:** Home Secretary, as you are aware, my constituency of Angus has a very heavy reliance on seasonal agricultural workers. We produce over 30% of Scotland's soft fruit. There is now an undeniable urgency within the industry. There are quotes flying around about a 15% to 20% decline in this workforce and that it is disincentivising people to invest in their particular businesses. In fact, many think that if this goes on they will have to leave this iconic British industry. Can you provide reassurance for those fruit farmers not just in my constituency but across Scotland and the UK that they will get the clarity that they need for business certainty in weeks rather than months?

Amber Rudd: I understand the concern that farmers have and this goes right across the country. I have had a number of meetings with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to discuss it and a number of MPs have been to see me about it, like yourself, to make sure that I am aware of the difficulties they are having.

What I would say is that there will still be people from the EU who can come and work on the farms, which is what is happening now, until the end of the implementation period. I would urge MPs and leaders in this area to make sure that farmers are aware of that so they can still have access to EU labour during that period. I hope that that would continue. I am aware that there is a request to have a seasonal agricultural worker scheme set up, and I am looking very carefully to see how we can address it.

Q262 **Kirstene Hair:** You mentioned that they can still access EU workers at the moment and that is widely recognised, but this decline of 15% to 20% started before 2016. It is not getting any better. They know they have access to these workers; the workers simply are not coming across. That is having a massive impact on farms. There is fruit in my constituency that is having to be left to rot in the fields. I do not feel that we can just sit on our hands and suggest that if they try a bit harder to get workers that they will, indeed, come across. I think that we need the Home Office to act urgently on this and that is why I am asking you. Can you give clarity on that timescale of when farmers in my constituency and across the UK will have a bit of certainty around their workforce?

Amber Rudd: I do understand the urgency. We have not had a SAWS regime in a while so it takes time to set one up. I am looking at the best way to address it. I am sympathetic and trying to make sure that we have a system that could assist your farmers, but it is going to take a little time to set up. I will be coming forward shortly, shall we say? I am afraid I cannot give any more certainty than that.



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Q263 **Kirstene Hair:** Could I move on to the second topic that I wanted to discuss, which is detention centres? We heard a lot of evidence last week around this and it compelled me to pick it up. I want to pick up, first, the adult at risk policy. Do you believe since the introduction of that that the average length of detention for vulnerable people specifically has increased or decreased?

Amber Rudd: In the past few years, we have worked hard to make sure that our adult detention policy improves. The average detention for adults being detained has gone down from 29 days to 26. Overall, it has come down by a significant but small number. Ninety-five per cent of asylum seekers are actually held in the community. The amount we detain is relatively small.

Q264 **Kirstene Hair:** Evidence from Women For Refugee Women last week told the Committee that 85% of women they spoke to who had claimed asylum who had subsequently been detained in Yarl's Wood had survived rape or other forms of gender violence. Is that acceptable?

Amber Rudd: It sounds like they have had terrible assaults on them. These assaults were taking place before they came to the UK?

Kirstene Hair: That is correct.

Amber Rudd: I hope that they were well looked after. We have a policy that makes sure that we do look after people. If they were detained in Yarl's Wood I hope they got the medical support that they would need.

Q265 **Kirstene Hair:** Do you believe that the current process is an acceptable process to protect these vulnerable people if they continue to be detained, knowing that information of what they have previously been—

Amber Rudd: It depends on the individual case. We have a compassionate detention policy that makes sure that people do have access to medical support where they need it.

Sir Philip Rutnam: The Home Secretary has emphasised the importance that we attach to this issue. Of course, there was a very important review undertaken by Stephen Shaw for the Government. We have since asked Stephen Shaw to come back and review the implementation of his recommendations, and we expect his report on that in the near future. This is just to reassure you this is an issue that we take extremely seriously, as the Home Secretary has said.

Q266 **Kirstene Hair:** There is an understanding that there is still an issue that the most vulnerable people are still being detained for periods of time when, in fact, they should not be or they should perhaps not be detained at all because of the state that they arrive in?

Sir Philip Rutnam: We take the healthcare of people who are in immigration detention very seriously. That includes special arrangements for paying particular attention and care to those who are regarded as vulnerable, which is taken into account in decision making in relation to



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their cases and detention. I would just assure you that this is a matter that is taken very seriously, both at the policy level and in the operation of these centres. The Stephen Shaw review I think will be a helpful assessment of progress in implementing his recommendations.

Q267 Kirstene Hair: I want to go on to timescales. Following evidence last week, one of the witnesses suggested that this indefinite detention period takes away the hope that detainees possibly have and it seriously affects their mental health. In itself you could describe it as torture because there is absolutely no end period. Do you think there is a case, as we have seen in many other countries that have a time limit in place, that we as the United Kingdom should also be looking along those lines?

Amber Rudd: I do not, no. I think that the system we have is fair and proportionate. As I say, we have managed to reduce the amount of time that people do spend being detained by careful management. I think it is important that we have an immigration policy that is fair. People who are here illegally should be removed and some people are very reluctant to be removed. Some people have committed offences and are dangerous people. They need to be removed. Staying in the UK is something that some people spend a lot of time, money and effort applying for and getting, so we need to make sure that we have a fair policy, which means enforcing our immigration rules.

Q268 Kirstene Hair: For 59 detainees to be detained for one to two years, that is acceptable?

Amber Rudd: We would much rather that people were removed earlier than that. Sometimes there are specific reasons. It may be the individuals themselves who are refusing to go.

Q269 Kirstene Hair: You do not think it is anything to do with the processes? I find it hard to understand how other countries can do it in a number of days, maybe up to a month, and we are holding people for one to two years, sometimes up to four years.

Amber Rudd: Sometimes it is our legal system that can stop people being removed. Other countries may not have as supportive a legal system for the individuals. Again, I repeat that I would much rather we did not detain people for longer periods. That is why I was determined to make sure that we drive down the average amount, which has happened, and 95% of people who are due to be removed are held within the community.

Sir Philip Rutnam: Can I perhaps add one or two points? As I think you may be aware, there is no policy of indefinite detention. That is not our policy. Nobody is held indefinitely. For anybody who is detained there needs to be a reasonable prospect of removal. That is the test that is applied.

Q270 Chair: What definite date are they given? What definite end to their detention are they given?



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Sir Philip Rutnam: There is not a policy nor of giving individuals a definite date by which they will be removed.

Q271 **Chair:** So they are being held indefinitely then?

Sir Philip Rutnam: No, I think there is an important distinction there. They are not—

Chair: No, there is not. I think this playing with words is not helpful. We have heard this evidence before. I do not think we want to hear this again.

Q272 **Douglas Ross:** Good morning, Home Secretary. Can you tell me how you think the tier 2 visa system is operating?

Amber Rudd: People who use the tier 2 visa system tell me they like it because it is efficient and it is more straightforward than other countries have. I am aware, though, that it has reached its cap for the past three months, which is the first time since 2015.

Q273 **Douglas Ross:** Four months?

Amber Rudd: Yes.

Q274 **Douglas Ross:** Up until December 2017, June 2015 was the only time it had reached the cap, so why had it only happened once up until December last year and now it has happened every month since then?

Amber Rudd: I think there is a higher number of doctors and nurses applying is one of the key elements that has taken place. There may be other aspects that are hitting it because of a growing economy, but I am looking at what can be done to address it. The shortage occupation list has a number of doctors on it already so that the doctors who are in particular demand or in particular areas are able still to come to the UK. I am aware that there are some hospitals that have not been able to recruit some of the doctors they want and, as I said, I am looking at what can be done.

Q275 **Douglas Ross:** Do you know the geographical spread of tier 2 sponsors?

Amber Rudd: I do not, no.

Q276 **Douglas Ross:** Part of the problem is it is very difficult to get that information. I wonder why that should be so difficult. We have to go back to 2013 to find out that 63% of tier 2 sponsors come from London and the south-east, and then we are into single figures for Scotland and Northern Ireland. First, why should it be so difficult to find out where tier 2 sponsors come from? Secondly, do you have concerns that five years ago it was 63% in London and the south-east, particularly for areas such as mine in Scotland?

Amber Rudd: I will certainly take a look and see what the basis was for releasing that information in 2013 and come back to you with any information I can give and any further update.



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Q277 **Douglas Ross:** You said you would look at the issues surrounding the increase in the number of healthcare professionals coming in through tier 2 visas. Would that also look at those healthcare professionals that are not on the current list of recognised priority professions?

Amber Rudd: Yes. I am looking at this in the round. As I say, although the shortage occupation list has some doctors on it, it does not have all types of doctors on it. I need to make sure that it reflects more what people need and what we are seeing is some hospitals not able to recruit the doctors they want from outside the UK. I am going to look at this constructively to find a way of addressing that particular need.

Q278 **Douglas Ross:** It is not just doctors either. There are other healthcare professionals. I have a significant issue at the moment with optometrists. I raised this at the last Home Office questions in the Chamber.

Amber Rudd: Yes, you did.

Q279 **Douglas Ross:** I have had a response from the Minister. I think in fairness to the Minister when she reads the response again it is a very bland response and it could have been about any profession that is not currently on the priority list. Eye care is as important to constituents as having a doctor looking after them in the hospital. Therefore, why should we have such an issue with optometrists in Scotland just because they are not on the priority list? The problem then comes in that the salaries to get you on to a tier 2 visa are going up. I have optometrists in Moray who are paying £10,000 above the basic salary for an optometrist but still cannot get anyone. They used to use the vacancies on the tier 2 system because they were not a priority professional. That has been breached for the last four months so they cannot get anyone. They are also being priced out of the market because, certainly historically, the vast majority of these people have been coming into London and the south-east where wages are higher.

Amber Rudd: Yes, of course, the shortage occupation list covers England and Wales and the priority list covers Scotland, which is assessed on Scotland's particular needs. It sounds to me—and I remember your question—that it is the fact that at the moment that priority list is not meeting sufficiently Scotland's needs. I have said at the start of my answers—and I will take away and consider particularly what you have said—we need to do something to make sure that we address that. When it was put in place in good faith at the time it did meet the needs, and the priority list was supposed to reflect different regions' particular needs, which it did for Scotland up until very recently. I want to take another look at it to make sure that we can accommodate more effectively the people who are now being required by local communities. The priority list and the shortage occupation list, though, are assessed independently and put together by the MAC, but I recognise the urgency of what you have raised with me and I will take it away.

Q280 **Douglas Ross:** Thank you. Are you satisfied with the progress of the



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upgrade of the emergency services network?

Amber Rudd: That is an ongoing challenge to make sure that we get it right. We are making good progress—

Q281 **Douglas Ross:** I am interested in the progress, but are you satisfied with the progress at the moment or do you have concerns there?

Sir Philip Rutnam: This is the Home Office's largest single programme and it is one I have been giving particular personal attention to. Progress is being made, some very good progress in a number of areas. Is there more that needs to be done? Yes, there is. As an example of progress, we demonstrated with our partners Motorola and EE at the recent emergency services communication conference, which happens annually, how calls can now be made over the relevant network giving the emergency services priority and pre-emption over the spectrum and the radio network into a handset. We now have a handset that is available and has attracted a lot of interest and support in the emergency services community.

There is real progress that is being made, real progress in the rollout of the network, real progress in the software, real progress in, for example, cabling up Transport for London's underground network with the infrastructure that will be needed. But it remains a very challenging programme and, as I have described to the Public Accounts Committee, we are looking at whether we can make the programme. The strategic importance of it is huge and the strategic intent behind it remains absolutely right, but can we deliver the programme in a way that is somewhat more incremental perhaps than the original idea, which was that you would deliver everything that was needed in a particular part of the country, switch off Airwave and switch on the new programme, all essentially at the same time? We are looking at whether we can essentially roll out the features of the new network while continuing to operate Airwave for longer. That is a process that is in hand.

Q282 **Douglas Ross:** You have to do them both because you are worried about the new programme?

Sir Philip Rutnam: These are very complicated projects. Having been involved in the rollout of other telecoms networks in the past, developing and then delivering a new radio network to meet all of the functionality that is delivered in the present one and more—

Q283 **Douglas Ross:** If you have been involved in earlier projects you would know the pitfalls, but it sounds like we are falling into the same pitfalls we always do.

Sir Philip Rutnam: No. I think what we are doing is looking for a way of delivering the programme that delivers all the benefits, probably takes longer to realise the benefits, which inherently, I am afraid, costs a bit more, but doing so in a way that has less risk and also allows the user community, the emergency services, to experience the new service and



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provide feedback. Essentially, there is a philosophy of agile delivery of programmes, which is founded in IT.

Q284 Douglas Ross: You mentioned the PAC. In their inquiry published in January last year, recommendation 5 said the Home Office Department, working with Ofcom, should ensure other network operators have sufficient and timely information to enable them to make use of the ESN infrastructure and should report back to the Committee in 2017. What was your report back to that Committee?

Sir Philip Rutnam: We have continued to work—

Douglas Ross: What was your report back to the Committee?

Sir Philip Rutnam: I am afraid I would need to write to you specifically on that, but on the more general point—

Q285 Douglas Ross: Do you think you are doing enough, particularly with the state aid that is involved with this project, to involve other operators?

Sir Philip Rutnam: We believe that we are.

Q286 Douglas Ross: If there are concerns, you will look into that for me?

Sir Philip Rutnam: Of course we would look into the concerns you have. EE, which is the network provider, has made its offer to other mobile operators for using their infrastructure clear, and we believe that that is appropriate. Of course, I can respond to any further concerns.

Q287 Rehman Chishti: I am just looking at a report by the BBC, which says passport and exit checks began in the UK ports and borders on 8 April 2015, which were brought into effect under the amendment to the Immigration Act 2014. How effective have they been in relation to checking those individuals who should be leaving the UK when they ought to be leaving the UK?

Amber Rudd: I think that having exit checks has been important for building our knowledge base about who is in the UK and who is coming and going. It helps to inform our immigration policy and making sure that we have a more secure and effective border. As you rightly say, they were introduced in 2015. We are going to continue, I hope, to improve them to make sure that we have a more secure border and get more information about immigration in terms of people coming and going.

Q288 Rehman Chishti: How would you improve them further?

Amber Rudd: By continuing to learn from what has been taking place. We are already investing in the border quite considerably. We are going to continue to step that up and make sure that we are able to use the information we have to more effectively target both the support in terms of smoother borders for people coming and going but also for security purposes.

Q289 Rehman Chishti: Linked to the issue of immigration, one of the



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concerns that individuals raise at the front line with the judiciary and the Home Office on immigration is appeals. Everyone accepts those who work hard and want to contribute are more than welcome in our great country and we want them here. But you have situations where immigration judges make a determination to say somebody's appeal has been lost and, therefore, they should leave the country, and currently we have a system that then allows one to go off and make another fresh application and then make another fresh application. Do we have the data in relation to those who have lost their appeals at the tribunal and have then gone back to their countries of origin? That would identify the number of individuals who leave when they ought to leave or the number of fresh applications that are being made year after year, leading to a long period of time when individuals are still in this country.

Amber Rudd: We have some of that data. We have some of the data because obviously the people who we successfully remove, either on a voluntary basis or through an enforced basis, that is the information we have to hand. It is not possible to keep a complete track of the illegal population, of people who should leave but who have not, but we are determined to make sure that the country is effective at removing people who should not be here, which is why I have stepped up immigration enforcement through a compliant regime.

Q290 **Rehman Chishti:** Is it possible for you to send to the Committee afterwards the number of decisions made by tribunals where they say an individual has lost and now they should return back to their country of origin and then those individuals, the same individuals, who then make a fresh application to stay in the United Kingdom? That way we would know those who have had decisions made against them and those who repeatedly make fresh applications, which could go on for 10 to 15 years and they are still in the United Kingdom.

Amber Rudd: Just so I am clear, you are interested in the number of people who appeal their results and carry on doing so?

Rehman Chishti: Correct. That would then mean that we need to change the legislation.

Amber Rudd: I see.

Rehman Chishti: The system would then mean you have a certain number of applications. A decision has been made by a tribunal judge to say you have lost your appeal and you should go back to your country of origin. That individual then does not leave; they stay in the United Kingdom for a number of years, five years, 10 years, and then remake fresh applications. It would be interesting to see how many of those do go back or whether the system needs to be changed to say you can only make one or two applications appealing that decision. That would give us the figure on that.



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Amber Rudd: I think that the judiciary is quite difficult to interfere with when it makes its decisions about whether people should be able to appeal again and again, but I will certainly come back to you.

Q291 **Rehman Chishti:** I completely believe in independent judiciary, but it just then means that we as Parliament need to put legislation in place to say there should only be one or two appeals rather than repeated new applications.

Amber Rudd: Yes.

Q292 **Rehman Chishti:** The other point I will raise has been raised with me by the former Bishop of Rochester, Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali, who sat in the House of Lords for 10 years. That is in relation to individuals who want to come to our great country, who can offer a lot to this country, who are bright, smart and talented. Under the current system with entry clearance, individuals, say, from Commonwealth countries or other parts of the world, even if they are smart and academic and able and talented, unless they show they have certain assets in their bank accounts the entry clearance officer does not deem it right to give them a visa to enter the United Kingdom. That means you have a system that favours the most affluent in other parts of the world who come here and who want to contribute, not necessarily those who are smart and able and talented. Is that something that the Home Office will go away and look at?

Amber Rudd: We have increased our quota for tier 1 visas for exceptional talent. The Chancellor and I announced that I think about six months ago, up from 1,000 to 2,000. I think it is exactly the sort of thing that this country should be doing, making sure that it attracts the brightest and the best throughout the world.

Q293 **Rehman Chishti:** I have a specific case that has been put to me by Bishop Michael. If I pass it to your office, could you look at it?

Amber Rudd: Certainly, write to me about it and I will be happy to set out for you the tier 1 visa route if it is applicable in this case.

Q294 **Rehman Chishti:** Sure. The other point I want to raise on this issue before I move on is the £18,200 benchmark that individuals have to earn to bring their spouses over to the United Kingdom. Of course, everyone accepts you have to be in a position to support your family and we want them to come to the United Kingdom. When one travels around the country listening to communities, what might be a lot, £18,200, up north may in the south-east be in a different category. In the interests of fairness and looking at the regions around the country, will the Government relook at that figure to ensure that it is fair across the board?

Amber Rudd: We have looked at it. It has been tested in the court, actually, because it was challenged. I do think it is the right thing to do to have that figure because we do not want people bringing over their



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partners and spouses who then become dependants in the country. It is unlikely, to be honest, that we would look at that again.

Q295 Rehman Chishti: Moving on to policing resources, in relation to the police forces across the country a key question arises about police forces and the funding and support they are given. Can you clarify the reserves that the police forces have throughout the country so that we know that all police forces are using the resources at their disposal, which they should be doing? We have had them give evidence to us that there is quite a disparity in relation to the large pool of resources that they do currently have and some have not used.

Amber Rudd: Yes, we are always determined to make sure that the police have the resources they need to do their duties, which is why we set out some additional powers for the Police and Crime Commissioner to raise additional money through the precept, which the vast majority are going to be doing. In fact, those numbers came out just today. They should absolutely be using their reserves as well.

Q296 Rehman Chishti: Touching on extremism and radicalisation, following on from the judgment and the decision in the Finsbury Park case, I am aware Mrs Justice Grubb said the time it took for the individual in that case to see the materials, to be radicalised and to carry out that horrific attack was very short and the individual was, in part, influenced by watching material of Tommy Robinson, EDL. The Government have proscribed National Action. Are the Government looking to take further action against organisations like that? Often what happens, like we saw with the Anjem Choudary case, is certain individuals stop short of breaking the law and the Government need to be in a position to take firm action to address that.

Amber Rudd: Yes, it is absolutely the case that certain individuals will stop short of breaking the law, yet the law is there. We have to make sure that we get the right balance between removing hate content from the internet and protecting people's civil rights and liberties. As I said, I was the first Home Secretary to proscribe an extreme right movement, National Action, and I will always keep a careful eye on any additional proscription that is required.

Q297 Rehman Chishti: I have 30 seconds for this, and it is with regards to what Assistant Commissioner Rowley said when he gave evidence. He said, "There are 20,000 individuals that are of interest to the United Kingdom in relation to extremism". Is that figure still the same? In relation to the individuals returning from fighting in Syria and Iraq with Daesh, we are told it is about 800. How many of those have come back so far?

Amber Rudd: I am not going to comment any further on the numbers that Mark Rowley gave you because we do not give a running commentary on the numbers that are under review, but that number is public. Of the 800 that we believe went out to fight in the so-called



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caliphate, we think that about half may have come back at some stage, but those are the ones who are the early adopters of going there, and they are, where necessary, kept carefully under review.

Q298 John Woodcock: On the subject of the returnees from Iraq and Syria, in May 2016 Advocate-General Lord Keen told Parliament that there had been 54 successful prosecutions at that stage, with 30 more cases ongoing. What is the current figure, please?

Amber Rudd: I am afraid I cannot give an update on that figure. I can say that any returning foreign fighter will expect to face the full force of the law.

Q299 John Woodcock: I know that is what you say. Why have Ministers repeatedly refused to update that figure? Does the public not have a right to know how many people are facing prosecution? We were told two years ago. Why are we not being told now?

Amber Rudd: I am not sure under what basis he told that information.

Q300 John Woodcock: He is a Minister of the Government. I presume he got it from—

Amber Rudd: Let me take that away to consider and come back.

Q301 John Woodcock: It would be really helpful. Is it fair to say that the Government may be reluctant to give the figure because it is too low, it is lower than you would like?

Amber Rudd: Absolutely not, no. Some of the reluctance that you may find with me to give figures in these matters is to do with security matters. I just want to reflect sometimes and take it away and see whether it is reasonable to put that information in the public domain.

Q302 John Woodcock: Understood. There is, though, a problem, is there not, of being able to gather sufficient evidence to prosecute returnees from Iraq and Syria? Ben Wallace, your Minister, has said that he is interested in the Australian scheme, the declared areas offence, where Australia has made it illegal to travel to designated terror hotspots. Is that something that you are actively considering yourself?

Amber Rudd: There is an interesting point here, which is that it is difficult, obviously, because quite often it is a battlefield to collect evidence from an area in order to be able to prosecute when people return. We have put processes in place using our various networks within international security operations, and sometimes other countries have more evidence than other countries. We try to share that to make sure that we can prosecute. It is a challenging area, but I think it is the right one to have in the current operation that we have.

Q303 John Woodcock: You are falling short of giving a specific view as to your level of openness to the Australian scheme.



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Amber Rudd: I am, I am. I would like to consider that and come back to you on that.

Q304 **John Woodcock:** Understood. The issue of precharge detention is one that was current some time ago. Previously, you have said that you will consider that as part of the forthcoming counter-terrorism Bill. Do you have anything more to say as to whether reviewing the precharge detention limit may be part of the measures that you are bringing forward?

Amber Rudd: I am going to be bringing forward the counter-terrorism Bill shortly and, if I may, I am going to wait until we actually do that to give a full answer on that question.

Q305 **John Woodcock:** Are you concerned that the limit is sometimes too low?

Amber Rudd: No. I think that the limit at the moment is working well. I know that there were concerns when we did change it, but it was widely consulted on with the police services. I feel confident that it is in the right place, but the honourable gentleman has raised it with me so I will make sure that I come back to him.

Q306 **John Woodcock:** Thank you. Neil Basu is the new head of counter-terror at the Met. Before he took up his latest role, he made clear that he thought Prevent ought to be revamped. What did he mean by that, and what is going to happen?

Amber Rudd: I think that Prevent plays a very important part in protecting young people. It is essentially a safeguarding measure. Most of the people who operate within the emergency services and police services, like Neil Basu, find it very helpful and are big supporters of Prevent to make sure that it delivers on what we set out that it does. I have not discussed with Neil Basu what he meant by that phrase, but I am confident that he supports Prevent and all it does.

Q307 **John Woodcock:** He was clear on that. You do not come at this issue from the same perspective, I am hearing from your answer. You do not come at it from a sense that it does need to be significantly revamped or changed. The Government's view is that it is continuing to work okay?

Amber Rudd: It is continuing to work. It does some fantastic work in terms of protecting young people.

Q308 **John Woodcock:** That is potentially problematic, then, if you have a new head of counter-terror who says that the system needs to be revamped.

Amber Rudd: It may mean that he thinks that we should do more of what we are doing in order to reach more people in an area where we know that there are some real challenges.

Q309 **John Woodcock:** It is pretty clear that is not what he means.

Amber Rudd: Some Prevent areas talk to me about wanting to rename it, and that is fairly well known and that may be what is being



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considered. I know that some groups prefer to call it a different badge because some people are attacking it so strongly. They feel it is not helpful. What I am really interested in are outcomes, and the outcomes from the Prevent programme are good.

Q310 John Woodcock: Thank you. I wrote to you as the constituent MP of Poppi Worthington and her mother, calling on behalf of the community for a public inquiry into the multiple failings across a number of parts of the public sector of Government surrounding her death. You undertook to write back to me once the CPS had finished in its consideration. As expected, it has said that there is still no evidence to be able to bring forward a trial, so the way is clear now for the kinds of measures that we have been urging, in particular you as Home Secretary ordering an extra level of scrutiny for Cumbria Police. Have you had a chance to consider that?

Amber Rudd: Thank you for your letter on this. This was a horrific case, I completely agree with you, and the honourable gentleman has raised this with me before and we have met about it to discuss it. The CPS, as he rightly says, is independent. It has made its view. It has considered it.

There are different things that could take place in order to have a further look at it in a way that would give him and his community satisfaction. What I would suggest is that he might come into the Home Office and have a discussion with myself or the Policing Minister to look at what those options are to see what would be the best way to take it forward.

Q311 John Woodcock: I would be very happy to do that. You have said you recognise the difficulty of the case.

Amber Rudd: I do.

Q312 John Woodcock: Do you also recognise the difficulty that the new chief constable for Cumbria Police was specifically named in the IPCC report? You have understandably said you are not going to second-guess her appointment, but do you recognise the fact that her appointment makes the need for a greater level of transparency and assurance that Cumbria Police has changed its practices all the more apparent?

Amber Rudd: I recognise that the inspection, for instance, on Cumbria Police has revealed that there has been a significant improvement, and that is the very least I would expect. I agree—because I know that the honourable gentleman speaks for his community—that there must be particular sensitivities and concerns around an appointment. I understand that, although, as he rightly says, it is not for me to comment on the appointment, which is not made by the Home Office. Perhaps if we have a further discussion about it, we can look at different ways to address this really horrific situation and concern that came out of the terrible tragedy of Poppi Worthington.

John Woodcock: Thank you, Home Secretary.



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Q313 **Naz Shah:** Good morning, Home Secretary. My first question is around domestic violence and the extraterritorial Bill powers that are coming through, the next Bill that you are consulting on, in particular in light of the Samia Shahid murder, my constituent, who was raped and murdered in Pakistan. That case is yet to be brought to trial. Is the intention for police officers to conduct investigations abroad or remotely?

Amber Rudd: I am not quite clear on the lady's question.

Naz Shah: The extraterritorial powers are being suggested in the new Domestic Abuse Bill that is coming before Parliament. As part of that, what are you thinking of doing? Are you suggesting that police officers should be conducting investigations abroad, actually travelling out, or remotely?

Amber Rudd: Domestic abuse is a consultation first, as the honourable lady is aware. She will have the opportunity, as everyone else will, to feed into that their concerns about whether we have it right or not. It is an incredibly important Bill to me to make sure that we get it right and we have a step change in the approach to domestic abuse.

In terms of murders of UK citizens abroad, it is the normal case that that takes place in the country where the incident has taken place. That is where the evidence is, and that is where usually justice needs to be done. On some occasions it is appropriate for UK police to go over and assist, and where we are invited to do so, where there is an opportunity to do so, we will do so, as long as we have the correct confirmation from the host country that there is no possibility of a death penalty.

Q314 **Naz Shah:** In line with that, will we be pursuing or reviewing the overseas security and justice assistance policy, the current one? It is often, again, in reference to the death penalty in particular that we have had officers that have pursued or gone and given evidence in cases where we have had the death penalty pursued in that country. Will there be some reviewing of the existing policy, and will we be insisting for that transparency in the new Bill?

Amber Rudd: The OSJA declarations are exactly about making sure that there is no link between any evidence that the UK may provide or any assistance, any mutual legal aid that may be requested or any policing assistance, with that and the death penalty. I complete OSJAs myself to make sure that when policing takes place abroad, we are clear that the UK will not participate in any investigation that could involve the death penalty.

Q315 **Naz Shah:** Keeping in line with investigations abroad, we have two high-profile cases, in particular, in Pakistan waiting for trial at the minute. One is the Samia Shahid murder, and I refer to my registered interest, and one is the murder of Fahad Malik, both British nationals, one in July 2016, and Fahad Malik's in September 2016. Again, nearly two years and both of them have yet to come to trial. Is there anything that you could do? I recall you were in Pakistan and had to cut that short with the



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Westminster attack last year. Is there anything you could pursue? This is clearly not acceptable for our British nationals. We are not getting the justice for the British nationals and the families out here.

Amber Rudd: When I speak to my opposite number in Pakistan, we often discuss individual cases that we need to work more closely on. We will always work closely with them to ensure that we do get justice for British families, and I will continue to raise that with them.

Q316 **Naz Shah:** That brings me on to my next question, which is around the "punish a Muslim" letter. What have you done to reassure the communities around 3 April in terms of what you have put in place?

Amber Rudd: We continue to work closely with communities to make sure that we identify hate crime of any type when it comes out and that we support organisations that combat it. In that particular one in terms of Islamophobia, I made sure that we have sufficient support out to organisations like Tell MAMA, which does such great work addressing Islamophobia.

Q317 **Naz Shah:** You can reassure us today you have done everything possible to make the communities feel safe on 3 April?

Amber Rudd: I believe so, but I do not do it on my own. I make sure that we have different initiatives out to support communities, and I speak to Sajid Javid, who leads on integration.

Q318 **Naz Shah:** I know you said previously you have been lobbying about this heavily, particularly MQM. That case had been ongoing since August and we have still not seen anything. It has been two years now and we have still not seen any progress on that, where there were deaths incited and violence was incited from our shores. What is happening with that?

Amber Rudd: We do have, as the honourable lady knows, clear legal process, which we obviously follow. That is an issue that is often raised with me by my Pakistan opposite number, and I will continue to assist where we can within the legal ramifications.

Q319 **Naz Shah:** Finally, I have written repeatedly to the Home Office questions in relation to the appointment of Sara Khan, and it has deflected and often avoided. What I have got from those questions is: in relation to the Making A Stand campaign in 2014, the Home Office did provide access and support to Breakthrough Media that the Home Office provided briefing lines for their local Prevent officers, and the Home Office sent the invitations out, as well as the Home Secretary at the time, the current Prime Minister, attending the Making A Stand campaign.

This raises real issues about the independence. Given the public frustration with this appointment, in particular in relation to the Muslim community and the letters and the signatures that you have had, and indeed your former Tory chairperson, would you agree with me and do you recognise that to achieve trust in the communities we need to be transparent?



Amber Rudd: I think that Sara Khan will be an excellent counter-extremism commissioner. We had over 50 applications for the role, extremely good candidates from a huge walk of different lives. I think that Sara Khan will do a great job. I know that she was here and gave evidence to you. I am so sorry; I thought she had been at the Select Committee. She is very well experienced in this area. She wrote an extraordinary letter when the Bethnal Green girls went off to Syria, which went viral, about encouraging young women not to consider that journey, and I think it probably did an enormous amount in terms of reaching young women who might have been thinking about it. She led a programme after that, which, yes, the Home Office put some support through, but that is exactly what the Home Office should be doing. We should be supporting initiatives that are from within the community to try to reach out within the community to other people who might be becoming radicalised.

I make absolutely no apology for the fact that we support community-led groups that will help deradicalise people and help protect people at home. In your own home city of Bradford I went to see a fantastic Prevent organisation changing lives, and I would urge the honourable lady to go and see some of the ones in her own community.

Q320 **Naz Shah:** Can I just draw to your attention, Home Secretary, the fact that Muslim Women's Network UK, which also works very closely with the Home Office, refused this kind of support, simply citing the independence factor? I would argue that Ms Khan does not have the experience, particularly in light of the figures that came out yesterday, where 45% of referrals to Prevent in particular are now right-wing extremism? Ms Khan has zero experience in that department, and that is a matter for her record.

Again, the question I asked—and you have not answered, which I would really value an answer for—is do you recognise and appreciate that to build trust with the communities that we work with, we require transparency? It is just a simple yes or no.

Amber Rudd: Transparency is an important part, but anybody involved in this area gets a lot of attacks from different sectors. That is the nature of making a stand and being brave enough, which she is, to stand up and say, "I am going to fight this in my community".

Q321 **Tim Loughton:** Good morning, Home Secretary. Can I bring you back to the subject of anti-Semitism, which was mentioned earlier? Of course, this Committee produced a very hard-hitting report back in October 2016, and you responded on behalf of the Government in December. Just picking up a few of the recommendations there, you promised that the CPS will consider the words "Zionist" or "Zio" for inclusion as part of hate crime speak; that the National Police Chiefs' Council has agreed information-sharing with the Community Security Trust, and we are looking at further arrangements there. Also, the level of prosecutions, too. The figures we produced in that report were that hate crime had



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gone up 9% between 2010 and 2015. Anti-Semitic incidents were disproportionately 29%. Can you just give us an indication of what the Home Office has done in response to those reviews and the continuing problems—that obviously have become more topical again—with anti-Semitism?

Amber Rudd: Yes. Thank you, Mr Loughton. We are bringing forward a new hate crime action plan this year. The one that I brought forward two years ago was important in terms of driving change. He refers particularly to the words that are going to be used as part of the Crown Prosecution Service. We are taking that forward. I am making sure that the training that police receive reflects the need to take hate crime seriously.

We are also making sure that we have additional protection, where needed, at places of worship. After the terrorist attack last year at Finsbury Mosque, what we did was introduce new funds that could be available for protecting mosques. We already had a Places of Worship Fund of over £8 million, but to access that people had to have had an attack. We have introduced another fund of £1 million to make sure that other places of worship, particularly mosques, can be protected where they need to be.

We already have funds, and I was able to confirm them again this year, of £13.5 million, which go to Jewish places of worship and schools. It is particularly unpleasant to see the rise of anti-Semitism. I found it chilling that we had to have a march and a protest here outside Parliament just this week. We all need to be very much aware of this and make sure that we combat it wherever we can.

Q322 **Tim Loughton:** Related to that, slightly controversially, the report, which was unanimously approved cross-party, made reference to anti-Semitism within political parties, with particular reference to the leadership of the Labour Party. Just to quote one of the observations, it said, “The Labour Leader is not directly responsible for abuse committed in his name, but we believe that his lack of consistent leadership on this issue, and his reluctance to separate anti-Semitism from other forms of racism, has created what some have referred to as a ‘safe space’ for those with vile attitudes towards Jewish people. This situation has been further exacerbated by the party’s demonstrable incompetence at dealing with members accused of anti-Semitism”. Are those concerns, do you think, still justified, more justified or less justified than when we made them back in October of 2016?

Amber Rudd: It is extraordinary to think that you made those back in December 2016 and we are just this week seeing such a demonstration of opposition to anti-Semitism, to the Labour leadership, that we saw earlier this week. It seems to me that it is just as alive an issue now as it was then.

Q323 **Tim Loughton:** Can I go to the subject of child abuse, as I always do? There was an alarming story in *The Sunday Times*, which I commented



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on, that the Met Police were failing to first investigate what I call “conventional” child abuse rather than CSE, and were failing to share information about suspected cases with other agencies, be they children’s services departments and others, which is an absolute basic finding post Climbié and everything that Herbert Laming and the legislation has pointed to since. First of all, have you seen that? Were you surprised about it? Are you doing anything about it? The police did not seem to have a very robust response to it.

Amber Rudd: Yes, I have seen it, and I was disappointed by it. What we have seen with police forces—and of course this fell out of the reports that came out recently, all the different Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary reports that came out so recently—is that there are a number of police forces where progress on vulnerability is stubborn. Overall, we saw an improvement in police forces, but with the progress on vulnerability there are about 20 police forces where it is still poor. We need to do more with them to make sure that they improve that.

So much of policing now is about vulnerability rather than what people call traditional crime, but it is just so important that they are able to engage more successfully with other agencies around them. There is some very good practice. I was up in Norfolk last week and I saw there the very good practice: the MASHes, the multi-agencies, working together. What I am going to try to do is to get the police forces to engage better with each other, to learn from each other, because there are some examples, as you will know, of extremely good work, but there are some that are just stubbornly not making improvement. I am going to be trying to push them into doing some changes.

Q324 **Tim Loughton:** You are adamant that the approach that would appear to have happened within the Met—where the welfare of the child was not put front and centre of a report of vulnerable children who were subject to abuse—was wrong and that the police will be challenged to make sure that they share their information and they investigate those potential crimes?

Amber Rudd: Yes. Of course, I do speak to the commissioner about these issues, and Sadiq Khan, as the Mayor of London, will have overall responsibility as the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Home Office has a role to play, but it is, of course, the Police and Crime Commissioners who have the overall lead on guiding the forces in direction. I do not shy away from my responsibility of making sure that I do what I can to protect vulnerable people.

Q325 **Tim Loughton:** On the subject of historic child sex abuse, the inquiry has gone rather quiet, which is probably a good thing given it was in the headlines for all the wrong reasons, and we have spoken to you about that before. There was some criticism about the way it produced its first report, which was to do with the slightly specialist subject of children who have been shipped to Australia, and that they did not hold a press conference, and in fact they were not very good at notifying victims. Can



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you tell us—notwithstanding its independence, as you and others quite rightly made clear—are you happy with the direction of that inquiry, the speed with which that inquiry is going, and the cost-effectiveness of that inquiry now?

Amber Rudd: As the honourable gentleman will know, once you set up an inquiry, you have to let it run its course. The independent inquiry into child sex abuse is now well under way. I am pleased that it is now picking up speed. It has begun proper reporting, as we have seen in that first one. I will be meeting with Alexis Jay in due course, hopefully later this year. I am mindful of its independence, but I also want to make sure that she is making progress and is getting the support that she needs. Yes, in answer to your question, I think it is now making good progress and I hope it will continue to do so.

Q326 **Tim Loughton:** If you say you are “hoping” to meet her later this year, there was an issue before as to scrutiny and oversight of the inquiry, again notwithstanding its independence, and indeed what role this Committee has in any scrutiny of an independent inquiry. Perhaps the Permanent Secretary can answer, because we also quizzed your predecessor as to what liaison there had been between the Department, him and officials and the inquiry itself, to make sure that effectively it is fulfilling the mandate for which it was set up and will not be subject to public criticism that will undermine its work. Have you had any closer dealings with it, Sir Philip?

Sir Philip Rutnam: Yes, I have. I have met Alexis Jay and the other members of the inquiry, and I have also talked in the same meeting to the senior professional staff supporting Alexis and her colleagues. As the Home Secretary has said, it is a cardinal principle that we respect the independence of this inquiry.

At the same time, of course, the inquiry is using public money, so we do have regular liaison to understand progress in spending public money, what their forecast is, for example, for this financial year, how that compares with budget, and also to understand whether there are any logistical issues in relation to which the inquiry needs support. We have that sort of liaison essentially around the use of public money and logistical support, but fundamentally absolutely understanding and respecting the principle of the independence of the inquiry, which I discussed with the chair and her colleagues.

Q327 **Tim Loughton:** You will provide regular updates to the Home Secretary on the basis that she has the power to dismiss and appoint the chair?

Sir Philip Rutnam: I have been Permanent Secretary for nearly a year now, and I have certainly not found it remotely necessary to have any such conversation. We do provide updates to Ministers, of course, on this area of the Department’s business, together with others.

Q328 **Tim Loughton:** Finally, Chair, can I ask if the Home Secretary would like to take this opportunity to express her personal support for the extension



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of equal civil partnerships to opposite-sex couples?

Amber Rudd: I am grateful for the good work that the honourable gentleman is doing and for his engagement with my Department. As he is aware, we have, of course, agreed that we must have equality in the final outcome, whatever it is, in terms of civil partnerships or other.

Q329 **Tim Loughton:** It is a yes, then?

Amber Rudd: It is what it is.

Q330 **Sarah Jones:** We know that the Met Police have had to make hundreds of millions of pounds of savings over the last few years; they have many more savings to make. Given that eight people were killed on the streets of London in a week recently, there is a violence epidemic in our city, and the Met has asked for an additional £300 million to tackle that gap in policing that they have identified, is that something you would look at considering?

Amber Rudd: May I answer that in two parts, first about funding and then about the serious violence that is taking place? In terms of the funding, I recognise the additional strain that policing across the country has found itself under, partly because of a rise in recorded crime. That can be just as important, but the fact is that because of a lot of new obligations on policing to do with modern slavery, to do with child sexual abuse, there is a considerable rise in recorded crime. That is why we have made available additional funds to the Police and Crime Commissioner to raise, if they want to, in order to get additional police to support their areas. I was pleased to see just last week that Kent announced it would be recruiting another 200 officers as a result, and I think we will be seeing more of that across the country.

There has been a rise particularly in knife attacks and in gun attacks. Overall, violent crime is continuing to reduce since 2010, but in serious violent crime there has been an increase in knife and gun crime. I convened a roundtable just about two weeks ago with Sadiq Khan, with a number of other leading Police and Crime Commissioners in this area, and we had a number of discussions about what we could do about it. Of course, part of it is resources, but it would be a mistake to think it is all about resources, particularly police resources.

I will be bringing forward a serious violence strategy, which has been informed by those sorts of conversations across the country, across the parties, with different Police and Crime Commissioners, with different police locally, and my emphasis is going to be on prevention to make sure that young people are signalled away from the sort of activity that carrying a knife can lead to. There is a lot more to be done, but I will be making immediate and active changes to try to address this problem.

Q331 **Sarah Jones:** Would it be fair to say that in that roundtable resources was the number one issue that people were asking you for?



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Amber Rudd: I think it is taken that resources are part of the solution, but, no, the issue that we were particularly discussing was about how to use resources in a way that really addresses where the crimes could be emerging. It is to do with hotspotting. I am particularly pleased that the Police Transformation Fund has funded a new project in Somerset and Avon, where they are using sophisticated data analysis to find out where the crimes could be taking place and where the people are who need to be diverted from those crimes. I hope that that will lead to a new approach in terms of data analysis and enable us to roll that out nationally, but we will wait until those results are considered.

Q332 **Sarah Jones:** The UK Statistics Authority last week said that the Prime Minister had used figures that were not entirely accurate in terms of police funding. Do you accept what it said in its letter?

Amber Rudd: I do not think that is quite what it said. What it did say is it would be more accurate to break it down in this way, and we have always broken it down that way: £450 million, of which part is the precept that is available to Police and Crime Commissioners, part is new investment that the Home Office is making, part is a rise in counter-terrorism policing.

Q333 **Sarah Jones:** It said that it could lead the public to conclude incorrectly, and do you accept that that is what happened?

Amber Rudd: What I accept is that when we use the figure of £450 million, we always follow it up with the fact that if the precept is used, this is in addition to the counter-terrorism and the additional measures being invested

Q334 **Sarah Jones:** Can I just go back to knife crime? Obviously, we have seen it go up in London, but it has gone up across the country by 21% in the last year. There was a boy in Croydon called Jermaine who was murdered last year, and his case has gone through the Old Bailey and the killers have been convicted recently. They were found to have published goading music videos online that were inciting violence and threatening stabbings, that increased and increased and increased until Jermaine was murdered. As of this morning, his killers' music videos are still online and they have tens of thousands of views, so he might be making money from it. Do you think that is acceptable?

Amber Rudd: No, I do not think it is acceptable. I do not know that particular situation, but there are situations when online companies respond better than others. I would be grateful if the honourable lady could send me the information. I want to make sure that we learn it.

Q335 **Sarah Jones:** Yes, I will, and we have reported it as well. Yes, I will do. The artist's name who then was convicted was called M-Trap 0, and 0 is the name of a gang in Croydon. That young man was a teenager himself. He was already known to the police and he had already been convicted for knife possession. I wonder whether, if there was better use of criminal behaviour orders that stopped people from being able to go online and



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being able to get the attention that they crave by putting these videos online, those videos would not have been there and whether in the end that murder might not have taken place. Do you think we could use more criminal behaviour orders to stop people being online and being able to publish videos and being able to have a presence that goads and incites the situation?

Amber Rudd: In the two minutes here explaining it to me in that way you have made a very compelling case. I would like to take a look at that. I do think there is more that we can do with social media and communications in general to young people. I launched a campaign last week about young people not taking up knives, and that was reasonably well distributed over the online media. I hope that we can look at doing more of that sort of activity.

Q336 **Sarah Jones:** Just following on from that, there is also a lot of drill music, which is very violent and aggressive, and there is a lot of evidence of prisoners putting stuff on Snapchat and others and putting their music out there from prison. You have 10, 11, 12 year-old children, who are very impressionable, obviously, listening to these artists from prison. Again, do you think we could perhaps look at access to social media in the prison community?

Amber Rudd: I think that prison governors do have certain authorities to do exactly that. I am not exactly sure what they are, but I am happy to look into it and come back to you. It is not completely my area—it is the Ministry of Justice—but I will have a look, yes.

Q337 **Sarah Jones:** County Lines is part of the picture and is a growing problem. The Mayor of London has announced a £3 million package for bringing together different police intelligence and also community organisations and voluntary organisations. What, at the national level, are you doing?

Amber Rudd: Yes. That is exactly the right thing to be doing, and that overlaps into what Mr Loughton and I were just discussing, the issue of protecting children. Most police forces are now very active and aware about the danger of County Lines, and they act accordingly.

Again, I was at a police station just recently and they set it out for me in terms of the mapping and what they were doing. It is about making sure that they work across local governments, so they have good links in with the local government support and health departments and schools. There is a lot of activity going on in the County Lines area.

There was a lot of cross-information taking place. The national College of Policing is aware of it, and it is doing more in training of police to make sure that they are aware, and there are more interventions than ever taking place on County Lines.

Q338 **Sarah Jones:** One of the issues we spoke about last time you were here was a national missing persons register. Can you tell us what progress



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has been made since you last came on the publication of that?

Amber Rudd: We are still making progress on it. I cannot yet make an announcement.

Q339 **Sarah Jones:** Do you have any idea of when it might—

Amber Rudd: I will have to come back to you.

Q340 **Sir Christopher Chope:** Can I apologise for being late, Madam Chairman? I have been at the Committee for Exiting the European Union and there has been an important vote.

Can I ask the Home Secretary how many people she thinks there are in this country who are sleepers, like the Parsons Green bomber?

Amber Rudd: The Parsons Green bomber was a young man who has just received a significant sentence, and rightly so. We have discussed just earlier the fact that the former Deputy Commissioner, Mark Rowley, said at a previous session here that there are 24,000 people that the Security Services have their eye on, as it were, to a different degree. In terms of any further information about how many others might be of interest, I am afraid I cannot comment.

Q341 **Sir Christopher Chope:** Would you like this Committee to carry out a full inquiry into how this bomber got into the country or the mistakes that were made, how he got across from Calais into the country, how he was taken into care, and then all the mistakes made with Prevent, which caused the people who were looking after him, his foster parents, to say that the Home Office was guilty of making a lot of mistakes? Would you like us, as a Committee, to look into the whole process affecting the background and how that person managed to get into this country and commit a crime that could have resulted in the deaths of more than 100 people?

Amber Rudd: No. This was potentially a terrible crime—I completely agree on the seriousness—and his sentence reflected that. I am looking into, myself, the issues to do with the border to find out what happened there. There has been a report. There had been an exchange between local council and the police about what happened in terms of information about the individual. I am particularly keen to make sure that local councils are better alerted and more aware of people who might need special care when they arrive in a foster home. There is more that could be done there.

In terms of Prevent, it is important not to think that because one person was not successfully deradicalised by Prevent the system itself is flawed. The system itself does a great job in terms of turning people away from radicalisation, but this one did get through. Of course, it will be up to the Committee to decide what inquiries it takes further.

Q342 **Sir Christopher Chope:** Do you accept that there are a lot of manifest failures in association with Prevent? Perhaps this person was never even



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asked whether he consented to go in under the Prevent course. There was a report on the radio the other morning about this, which causes a lot of concern about how effective the Prevent system is and what lessons can or should be learnt from what happened.

Amber Rudd: We all need to learn lessons from events like this—there is no question of that—but I do not think you should conclude that a system that does save hundreds of people from becoming radicalised is flawed because one person manages to dissimulate his views.

Q343 Sir Christopher Chope: This person got into our country by going from Iraq into Turkey, then in some boat across to Greece, into a European Union country, then left Greece, went by ferry to Italy, was intercepted in Italy, arrested and then released. Why did the system that we have with Dublin, which requires that anybody who is seeking asylum should do so at the first opportunity, fail? Why was this person then allowed to travel across Europe, through Italy, across France, and then go to the jungle in Calais, where he told the court when he was on trial that people were selling stories as to what would be the best stories to sell as soon as you got into the United Kingdom to fool the authorities and to facilitate claims for asylum? He made lots of attempts to get across in the back of a lorry.

In the end he succeeded, as indeed do almost all the people who are in the jungle. That is why they are attracted to the jungle, because they know jolly well that our services in detecting them are so inadequate that ultimately they will get into this country as illegals. Surely, Home Secretary, this is a really serious example of the threats to our country, which we are not succeeding in preventing because we are allowing people into this country who should not be allowed into this country.

Amber Rudd: There are tens of thousands of people who are making their way into Europe and across Europe, and many of them do want to come to the UK. Many of them settle in Germany, but there is an ongoing flow of people from the countries that the honourable gentleman has named, and many others who are trying to make their way here. Illegals arrive here. We always try to assess them, to interview them, particularly the young ones. This gentleman particularly presented as an under-18 year-old, and we would have had a certain approach to him because of that.

I believe our borders are robust and secure. We have a juxtaposed border in France, which is one of the very helpful ways of making sure that we do not receive as many illegals, anywhere near as many, as many of our European neighbours. There is always going to be more to do and more to learn and there will be from this case, but we are rigorous about searches and about protecting our borders.

Q344 Sir Christopher Chope: Your policy, which I think is very good, is saying for genuine asylum seekers, particularly if they are young ones, we should look into their cases and give them decent prospects in this country, but the system is being abused by people like the person we are



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talking about. As soon as they arrive, in the certain sense as you have described, in the back of a lorry, why don't we say, "You have been in France, you have been in Italy, you have been in Greece. These are safe countries, as is Turkey. Why didn't you apply for asylum there?" Why are we so naive?

We are using expensive taxpayers' resources to help these people, when they are putting two fingers up at us as a country, and we know that he said to various people who were meant to be looking after him that he hated the United Kingdom. There was even discovered on one of his WhatsApps the fact that he had paid money into ISIS. He was funding ISIL out of the money that he was receiving from his foster parents as pocket money. Then he used a voucher, which he got as a prize at school, in order to buy the equipment for the bomb-making. I am disappointed in a sense that you do not seem to be even more outraged about this and determined to get to the bottom of it.

Amber Rudd: I am outraged. I have just done nearly two hours in this Committee, Mr Chope, so my outrage may not show as clearly as yours does, having just arrived, but I am outraged. As I say, there is more we will do, there is more we can learn from it, but I would say that we do not return under-18s, and he did present as an under-18, so he would have had special treatment because of that.

We do return people, when we can, to a safe country of origin or safe country of transit, in order to demonstrate that Dublin does work. European countries largely support us in that. Sometimes they take the view that they receive so many themselves that the UK does not have quite the same moral high ground, shall we say, to return Dublin travellers to their countries. I am committed to making sure that we do return them where we can, but that has to be someone who is over 18, not under 18.

Q345 **Sir Christopher Chope:** On that point, by saying, "If you are under 18, you can get in anyway", if you are getting through across the Channel on the back of a lorry, and if you are under 18, nobody is going to send you back, don't you think that that gives a perverse incentive to a lot of people who are under 18, travelling in from other parts of the world to make their way to the jungle in Calais in the knowledge that once they get across, as so many of them do in the backs of lorries and so on, then they will be here and we will not be able to get rid of them?

Amber Rudd: That is why the most important part of our refugee policy is to take 20,000 vulnerable people by 2020 from the most vulnerable areas, and we take families from there. I went out myself to Lebanon just a few weeks ago to have a look. That is absolutely the message we are trying to give over: do not travel here and think you can stay here, because we will return you. Even if you come aged under 18, if we can return you when you become an adult, we will. There is no secure way of coming in that way if you are an illegal asylum seeker. The message I want to give out is that the UK is a place that will welcome the most



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vulnerable, and the most vulnerable are from the zones where the action is taking place, like Lebanon and Syria. That is why we have a substantial family refugee programme from there.

Q346 **Sir Christopher Chope:** I am not asking you to answer just now, but get your Department to look at whether it believes that there is a perverse incentive being given to under-18 ne'er-do-wells by ensuring that as soon as they get here, if they are under 18, then they are able to stay, certainly until they become of an age of majority.

Amber Rudd: I will write to the honourable gentleman.

Q347 **Chair:** Can I just ask quickly some factual questions about the Parsons Green case? The man who is convicted, did he see a counter-extremism specialist at any time?

Amber Rudd: He had some engagement with some of our counter-extremism experts. He had an immigration interview when he arrived, and it was at that point he was referred to Prevent case management, seven days after his asylum interview by Surrey social services.

Q348 **Chair:** Did he see a Prevent case manager? Did he see anybody who had expertise in counter-extremism or deradicalisation?

Amber Rudd: Sorry, I am just trying to check my notes to see what I have here. He did see somebody as part of Prevent, but for any more information on that I will have to come back to the honourable lady.

Q349 **Chair:** This is quite a significant concern because we have seen conflicting evidence on this, at one point the police saying that the police officer had met Hassan, and then one of the charities saying that meeting did not take place, the police saying that they met the staff at the hostel but not him, and the council also saying conflicting things about which agencies and staff met him.

Amber Rudd: I have heard a number of different interviews and different claims on the radio. Police and social services are conducting a review, and what I suggest is that when I get a copy of that review, I will write to the honourable lady for the Committee with some of the information that is relevant to this particular conversation.

Q350 **Chair:** Do you think, given the significance of this, it might be worth having some form of independent review, rather than the police and social services just doing their own review of how the Prevent system operated in this case?

Amber Rudd: I would rather wait until I see what their conclusions are before answering that question.

Q351 **Chair:** That might be a bit of a concern. Do you know how long they are going to take?

Amber Rudd: I do not, no.



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Q352 **Chair:** If you could let us know what the timescale might be, and if you could look further, given that with most of the serious terror attacks that we have had in this country there has been some sort of independent assessment of what happened in order to ensure that lessons are properly learnt, and given the big questions about the actual operations of the Prevent programme in this individual case, whom he met with and how and why, or why not. I think it would be quite important to have some sort of independent scrutiny of that.

Amber Rudd: Thank you.

Q353 **Chair:** Can I also ask you a couple of other follow-up questions? On Russia, in terms of the ongoing operations that you have on Russia, you did kindly reply to my letter about the further other cases that might need to be looked into and other deaths that might need to be looked into. Do you have any update on that?

Amber Rudd: No, I do not. It is as I stated in the letter. There was a lot of ongoing effort into the current investigation in Salisbury, over 200 police officers there. It is painstaking work. I have said that I will ask them to have a further look, but I have to prioritise the action that is going on there. I understand the right honourable lady's urgency, and I will come back to it, but I must prioritise the actual ongoing investigation.

Q354 **Chair:** Thank you. Can I also ask you about the tier 1 visa? Between 2008 and 2015, the tier 1 visa did not operate with the same checks on it that it has now. Therefore, it was possible for people to get a tier 1 visa without there being proper checks either by the bank or the Home Office on where that money had come from. Around 700 people came in through that tier 1 visa from Russia. Are you now doing a retrospective review of all of those 700 cases to retrospectively apply the checks on where that money came from?

Amber Rudd: The tier 1 visa was already reformed in 2015-16 and it has been reduced by about 84% since then. I have asked my officials to look at what reforms we might continue with and also to take a look at previous ones over the past few years.

Q355 **Chair:** You will be looking at the past cases, the people who came in before 2015?

Amber Rudd: Yes. I have asked to look at the cohort of previous ones to see if there is any action that needs to be taken.

Q356 **Chair:** Then a letter from the independent Statistics Authority referring to comments from the Prime Minister says, "The Prime Minister's statement and the Home Office's tweet could have led the public to conclude incorrectly that central Government are providing an additional £450 million for police spending in 2018-19. The Home Office tweet also implied that the £450 million sum is guaranteed. As the Minister for Policing's statement outlined, up to £270 million of the funding settlement will come from council tax if Police and Crime Commissioners



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and mayors choose to raise these sums. In addition, the Leader of the House of Commons stated that the £270 million that can be raised locally was on top of the overall settlement of up to £450 million. We recommend that the Home Office's head of profession for statistics speak to communication colleagues about the importance of clear public statements about public funding and ensure they understand the structure of police funding". Sir Philip, can I ask whether that has happened?

Sir Philip Rutnam: Yes, a conversation has happened, and further conversations will happen. My head of statistical profession is definitely in touch with my communications directorate, of course, to follow up.

Q357 **Chair:** Home Secretary, do you accept the contents of this letter?

Amber Rudd: I am always grateful for advice from the UK Statistics Authority.

Q358 **Chair:** You will comply with it in future?

Amber Rudd: Indeed.

Q359 **Chair:** Thank you. We have just a couple more minutes if anybody has any follow-up questions that they want to ask. Are you able, Home Secretary, to bear with us just for a couple more follow-up questions?

Amber Rudd: Of course.

Chair: Thank you for your patience.

Q360 **Naz Shah:** Thank you, Home Secretary. This next month, April, marks the 25th year since the murder of Stephen Lawrence and 20 years since we launched the Macpherson inquiry. The police forces, the national lead, John Boucher, from the Police Chiefs' Council, is leading the arm of race, religion and belief, which I am part of. One of the concerns I have come across is that the Home Office funds the College of Policing to the tune of £10.5 million, and the police forces are prioritising race, yet the College of Policing is not prioritising race.

Amber Rudd: I am so sorry. I cannot quite—

Naz Shah: The police forces, the National Chief Constables' Council, is prioritising race as a strand they need to focus on, given it is 25 years since Stephen Lawrence and 20 years since Macpherson, and we have made little progress on the issue of diverse workforce-reflective police force. The Prime Minister certainly made a commitment to that when she was in your role as Home Secretary. The concerns are: what can you do to make sure that the College of Policing is reflecting that priority of race?

Amber Rudd: I think we have made some progress. There is more to make. I met with Doreen Lawrence last week about various matters. I am very conscious of the fact that our police force needs to reflect society much more. I hosted about four months ago a roundtable of leading Police and Crime Commissioners and activists and organisations in this



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area to talk exactly about that to make sure that our police forces do reflect the societies they work for more, and I will continue to drive that forward.

I look at the numbers, and there are some police forces that are doing much better than others. By holding them accountable, I think that we will get better results.

Naz Shah: The police forces are making that a priority but the College of Policing is not.

- Q361 **John Woodcock:** Nikolai Glushkov. There is, I guess understandably, a slower and more deliberate time track on defining whether this was likely to be another assassination carried out by the Russian Federation than there was over the Salisbury attack, but how long can we expect the Met, the counter-terror police, to be doing its work before the Government comes forward with more information on that?

Amber Rudd: I cannot accelerate an investigation. It is for the police to tell me what time it will take and for them to follow the investigation to its conclusion. I do regularly meet with counter-terrorism policing and I always ask them whether they have the resources they need so they can do their job, and I will make sure they always do have them. I share the honourable gentleman's concern and want to make sure that we get all the evidence we can, but we have to let them get on with it.

- Q362 **Stuart C. McDonald:** Home Secretary, we have been approached by a consortium through correspondence, including the Refugee Council, Asylum Aid and various others, who have expressed concerns at the very lengthy delays in process in asylum claims for unaccompanied children. They acknowledge the various steps that have been taken, including the next-generation casework unit, but they say that the situation just is not improving. What tends to be happening is that the case workers are classifying the cases as not straightforward, so they are left to drift with pretty significant consequences for the children involved. Is that something you can look at, and would you look at perhaps a presumption that cases involving unaccompanied asylum-seeking children should be prioritised and generally seen within a six-month period?

Amber Rudd: I definitely want unaccompanied children seen earlier and as soon as possible. It crosses over to the questions Mr Chope was asking me, to a certain extent. We have to make sure that young people are seen where they are supported as soon as possible. If there is a report, if the honourable gentleman wants to send it to me, I will certainly take a look at it.

Stuart C. McDonald: We can forward the correspondence on to you.

Chair: Thank you. That would be helpful.

- Q363 **Stephen Doughty:** There were some quite concerning revelations on Channel 4 "Dispatches" this week regarding the organisation MEND and particularly its senior leadership: links to CAGE and other organisations,



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but also concerns about its involvement in working with Prevent groups, with police forces around the country. There seemed to be a conflict between advice that was being given from the Home Office and advice that was being given at a local level in terms of engagement with it. What is your view on MEND, and should police forces be working with it?

Amber Rudd: Individual police forces will make up their own minds. I did not see that programme but I have grave concerns about MEND.

Q364 **Chair:** Thank you, Sir Philip, Home Secretary. We are very grateful for your time and patience this morning. We look forward to any further information that you have said you will be able to send to us, and we particularly look forward to reading the inspectorate's reports this afternoon. Thank you very much.

Amber Rudd: Thank you very much.