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My Lady,

Domestic Abuse Bill

I am writing, as promised, to follow up on the debate we had on your amendment 6 relating to the definition of 'personally connected' in clause 2 of the Bill at Committee stage on Monday 25 January

Amendment 6 sought to extend the definition of 'personally connected' to include guardians of a child. I can reassure you that legal guardians of children under the age of 18 are already covered in the definition of 'personally connected'. Clause 2(1)(f) provides that two people are personally connected if they each have – or there has been a time when they have each had – a parental relationship in relation to the same child. A parental relationship is defined in clause 2(2) and includes a person who has parental responsibility for a child. This term is then defined in clause 2(3) as having the same meaning as in section 3 of the Children Act 1989, which includes legal guardians of children under the age of 18.

I also promised to respond further to your amendment 14 where, as I understand it, your intention was also to ensure that the definition of 'personally connected' included people who are in a transitory relationship, or one where they have not been granted parental responsibility for a child. I can reassure you that the Bill also provides protections for children in these situations. The definition of 'personally connected' includes all intimate partners whether they live in the same household or not, so any domestic abuse perpetrated by an intimate partner would be captured, regardless of the victim and perpetrator's living arrangements. Additionally, under clause 3(2) of the Bill, any child who sees, hears, or experiences the effects of domestic abuse and is related to *either the victim or the perpetrator* is considered a victim in his or her own right. As such, if the child is related to the victim (for example the mother), the child is considered a victim in his/her own right, without needing to be related to the perpetrator as well. I hope that reassures you that the example you gave – of 'the casual or long-term partner who is not related and has not been granted parental responsibility' – is covered by the Bill as drafted.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our thanks for raising these issues at Committee stage. The Government is committed to protecting children from the

abhorrent crime of domestic abuse, and I hope that the clarifications set out in this letter will provide some further reassurance that the protections for children apply broadly, including in the situations you raised. Do please let me know if you would like to discuss any of these issues in further detail, and I look forward to continuing to work with you on these and other matters in the next stages of the Bill.

I am copying this letter to those who spoke in the debate, namely Baroness Wilcox of Newport, Baroness Altmann, Baroness Hamwee, Lord Randall of Uxbridge, Baroness Campbell of Surbiton, Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle, Baroness McIntosh of Pickering, Baroness Stroud, Lord Morris of Aberavon, Lord Marks of Henley-upon-Thames, Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, Lord Blunkett, Lord Cormack, Baroness Uddin, Baroness Finlay of Llandaff, Lord Rooker, Baroness Bertin, and Lord Paddick. I am also placing a copy in the library of the House for others to see.

With best wishes,

Parkinson of Witley Bay

LORD PARKINSON OF WHITLEY BAY

The Rt Hon the Baroness Butler-Sloss GBE
House of Lords