

Kevan Jones MP

Member of Parliament for North Durham



Parliamentary Update

January 2024

Post Office Scandal

I have been campaigning for justice for sub-postmasters affected by the Post Office Horizon scandal for over ten years. I was pleased to see the massive impact that the ITV drama 'Mr Bates Vs The Post Office' had earlier this month on raising public awareness and outrage about this scandal.

The Government finally committed to ensuring that all unsafe Horizon-related convictions will be overturned. I and my colleagues on the compensation advisory board will work with the Government on the details of this. We need to speed up offers of financial redress to all those affected.

I have been calling for many years for former Post Office CEO Paula Vennells to return her CBE. We finally saw this happen this month in the wake of massive public pressure.

The increased awareness about this scandal has however brought new cases to light, including many related to software in use by the Post Office before Horizon. The Post Office knew this older software was also faulty but prosecuted people on the basis of information from it. If you or someone you know was affected, please get in touch: kevanjonesmp@parliament.uk

I will continue supporting all affected sub-postmasters until they have justice.



Animal Welfare (Livestock Exports) Bill

The Animal Welfare (Livestock Exports) Bill passed through the Commons this month. The Bill will prohibit the live export for slaughter of cattle, horses, sheep, goats, pigs and wild boar from Great Britain. This measure was previously included within the Government's Kept Animal Bill, which it dropped in May 2023.

I was disappointed by the dropping of the Kept Animals Bill and believe it to have been the wrong decision. I have long supported banning the live exports of animals and I regret it has taken so long to bring this unnecessarily cruel practice to an end. Long journeys are physically, emotionally and mentally draining for animals, and can leave them hungry, injured, dehydrated and stressed. This is why I want to see the Bill strengthened. I would also like to see the Bill be extended to include alpacas, llamas and deer.

I am pleased that the Bill had a relatively speedy journey through the Commons and it will now be considered in the House of Lords.

Rwanda Bill

The Government's Rwanda Bill passed through the Commons this month. I opposed it because I think it is part of a failing scheme that is costing £400 million, has sent no asylum seekers abroad and will only apply to less than 1% of those arriving in the UK.

I remain deeply concerned that we are seeing border security weakened while criminal gangs take hold, backlogs rise, criminal smuggler convictions drop by 30%, and returns halved. Thousands of people that the Home Office initially placed on the Rwanda removal list have been lost.

Frustratingly, the Rwanda Bill passed its Third Reading and will now be considered in the House of Lords. Instead of this failing Bill, I believe that we need stronger border security and a properly controlled and managed asylum system, so that the UK does its bit to help those fleeing persecution and conflict, and those who have no right to be here are returned.

Protecting Steel in the UK

On 23 January, MPs debated an Opposition motion on protecting the steel industry in the UK. This followed the announcement from Tata Steel that it would push ahead with plans to close both its blast furnaces in Port Talbot, with the expected loss of 3,000 jobs UK-wide.

There is a clear need to decarbonise steel production. However, I am concerned that the Government is pushing this decarbonisation of steel in the UK in a way that will result in thousands of steelworkers losing their jobs. In addition, the Government's approach would leave the UK as the first developed country in the world without the capacity to produce primary steel. Primary steel is a sovereign capability – I am therefore worried about the impact that this could have on national security.

The Opposition motion called for the Business and Trade Secretary to report to Parliament by 27 February with an assessment of the impact on the UK of the loss of primary steel production capabilities. I am pleased the motion passed.

Holocaust Memorial Day

On 27 January we marked Holocaust Memorial Day to remember the six million Jews murdered by the Nazi regime, as well as the millions of lives lost to genocidal violence in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

I signed the Holocaust Educational Trust's Book of Commitment in Parliament, and I am proud to support the work of the HET and the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust to embed understanding of the Holocaust in our education system. It is thanks to the HET that learning about the Holocaust has been a compulsory part of the national curriculum for more than three decades.



Get in touch

If you are a constituent and need help or would like to arrange an appointment, please contact me.

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