Sarah Wollaston (Totnes, Conservative)

I wish to reiterate the point that has just been made about the comparison that the Minister used with domestic violence. Of course there is strong evidence that a victim will sometimes try to protect a perpetrator, but if we took the view that there should be no right to investigate because of the chance of escalating that risk, we would see many more fatalities as a result of domestic violence than we already do. The point is to protect people and to have an ultimate back-stop in extreme circumstances, not to give social workers an automatic right to use the power as some kind of bargaining chip. In the case of the tiny minority of people who are absolutely hellbent on not having any contact at all, we are talking about having a final back-stop with the protection of the courts.

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