Sarah Wollaston  Totnes

Will the Home Secretary join me in commending Devon and Cornwall police, who, through careful joint working, have made great strides in reducing the use of cells under section 136 over the past year? Does she agree that police forces also need to collect data on how long people are being detained in police vans? We do not want police cells to be substituted by police vans.

Theresa May  The Secretary of State for the Home Department

My hon. Friend raises an important point. Whenever we legislate, we have to consider the possible unintended consequences. Of course, the whole point of the street triage pilots and the availability of advice from mental healthcare professionals to the police is to ensure that somebody can be taken to a place of safety, not a police cell. A van is not an appropriate place to hold people, either. My hon. Friend is certainly right that we should look at the issues to make sure that we are not inadvertently creating another problem.

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