

MARY GLINDON MP

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR NORTH TYNESIDE

"I'm so proud to represent the amazing people of North Tyneside".



Offshore Asylum Processing: Nationality and Borders Bill

This Bill contains changes to current legislation that would allow asylum claims to be processed outside of the UK. I believe plans for offshore processing are unconscionable. This is just one of the reasons why I voted against the Bill at its Second Reading in the House of Commons on 20 July.

I am deeply concerned that the Government's plan appears to emulate a failed system that has been widely condemned for its human rights abuses. In 2015, a United Nations report found that Australia's offshore detention regime was systematically violating the international convention against torture. In addition, in 2020, the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court said the regime was "cruel, inhuman or degrading", and unlawful under international law.

At least 12 people are reported to have died in Australia's offshore detention camps, and the impact of offshore detention on mental health cannot be overstated. Offshoring in large accommodation centres poses particular risks to LGBT+ people seeking asylum because of their particular vulnerability.

Furthermore, the financial cost of the Australian system is astronomical and regularly more than \$1 billion a year. According to the Refugee Council of Australia, offshoring cost the Australian Government \$8.3 billion between 2014 and 2020. The annual cost per person of holding someone offshore has been estimated to be \$3.4 million per person.

The Opposition recently voted against the relevant clause of the Nationality and Borders Bill during its Public Bill Committee on 26 October. Unfortunately, the Government defeated this effort and blocked its removal from the Bill. Instead of chasing headlines about offshore processing, the Government should address ongoing failures. There is no effective deal in place with the French authorities to tackle criminal people smuggling gangs and, instead of providing properly managed safe and legal routes, the Government closed the Dubs scheme that helped unaccompanied children.

The Nationality and Borders Bill returns to the House of Commons for further consideration on 7-8 December. I can assure you I will be supporting efforts towards meaningful action to improve the asylum system, support those in need and bring criminal gangs to justice

Yours sincerely,

Mary