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Illegal Migration Bill - Safe Passage amendment raised in Committee Stage

Olivia Blake MP highlighted the vital work of PCS and Care4Calais in heartfelt contribution during first day of Committee stages.

Yesterday (27) the government's controversial Illegal Migration Bill returned to the House for the first day of its Committee stages. A sitting of the whole House permitted MPs to debate the legislation, and selected amendments, late into the evening. PCS has worked closely with Labour MP Olivia Blake to promote our joint policy paper on safe passage which resulted in amendment 'new clause 10' which received huge cross-party support. The amendment would result in the government implementing a safe passage scheme, similar to the Ukrainian system, which would end small boat crossings, instead giving refugees a safe and legal route into the UK.

In her speech during last night's debate Olivia made a vital contribution and drew on her work as Chair of the APPG on Refugees as well as her work with PCS and [Care4Calais](#). She also used her contribution to criticise the government's approach and called on them to act urgently:

"it is a moral outrage that people need to get in a blow-up boat, risking life and limb, to exercise their rights under the refugee convention to claim asylum here. We need a solution to this humanitarian crisis in the channel, but that is not what the Bill offers. Instead, it doubles down on the same failed hostile environment framework that has characterised the Government's approach to asylum and migration. It is simply not working"

She went on, calling on the government to pull back from their current approach:

"A start would be supporting and looking into the proposals of new clause 10, which builds on the proposals of the PCS union and Care4Calais, two organisations working at the frontline of the crisis. It offers a practical solution to

a humanitarian crisis in the channel by creating a safe passage visa.”

Although the amendment was not pushed to a vote it is hoped that PCS and Care4Calais will continue working with MPs throughout the Bill’s journey through the Commons and begin to build support for safe passage amendment in the House of Lords. You can [read the full transcript of the debate online](#).

PCS also supported a rally outside parliament last night (27), which was called by [Stand Up To Racism](#), to coincide with the latest stage of the Bill, and to show support for the safe passage amendment. Attended by hundreds of people from across the movement, the rally had several speakers including PCS vice president Martin Cavanagh, who spoke proudly of the work PCS members in Border Force had done in recent months to oppose the government's racist and dangerous ‘push back’ policy.

The Bill will continue its journey through the Commons this week.