Dear Stephen,

Thank you for your e-mail about the Communications and Data Bill. Communications data is vital for the police in their fight against crime, including serious offences such as child abuse, drug dealing and terrorism. The measures in the Bill are necessary to protect the public and investigate crime – and that is the only reason for which they should be used.

The Bill will not provide the police or any others with any new powers to intercept and read emails and phone calls. It does not weaken current safeguards or checks put in place to protect private correspondence. There are no powers to share this information with private investigators or journalists and there are serious sanctions for abusing access to personal data. It allows the police and intelligence services to access contextual information on the internet in the same way as they can currently access it via telephone records. Under no circumstances will these proposals authorise the interception and storage of the content of a communication. That will always require a warrant signed by the Secretary of State.

Best wishes,

Elizabeth Truss MP