

Rt Hon Harriet Harman QC MP
Member of Parliament for Camberwell and Peckham
Mother of the House of Commons

Parliamentary Annual Report 2021/2022

21st July 2022



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Introduction

This year has, for me, been dominated by

- the failure of the Government to tackle the dreadful cost of living pressure on my constituents,
- the chaos in government,
- the impact of Covid,
- the pressure on public services from government cuts to the council and failure to fund NHS and social care, and Transport for London properly,
- the continued shortage of affordable, decent housing,
- the cruel shambles in the Home Office and visa system
- and dysfunctionality and the culture of misogyny and discrimination in the Met Police.

I have

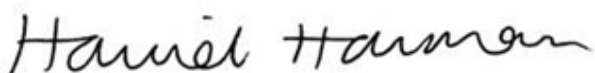
- continued, with my dedicated team, to help thousands of constituents with their problems,
- continued to spotlight the importance of human rights in my role as Chair of the Joint Committee on Human Rights
- and continued to highlight inequality and discrimination and propose change.

In the past year I have announced that I will be standing down as MP at the next election and I have lost my husband of 40 years, Jack Dromey.

I took a short period of bereavement leave after Jack's death in January and in June I was chosen by the House of Commons to chair the Privileges Committee inquiry into the whether the Prime Minister misled the House by what he said on "Partygate". That inquiry is ongoing.

I continue to work closely with

- Southwark Councillors
- Southwark MPs and other MPs including in other parties
- the Mayor and GLA
- local agencies
- Tenant and Residents' Associations and other community groups



Helping constituents with their problems

A major part of my work as MP for Camberwell and Peckham is helping constituents with a wide range of problems and there has been a dramatic increase in my casework.

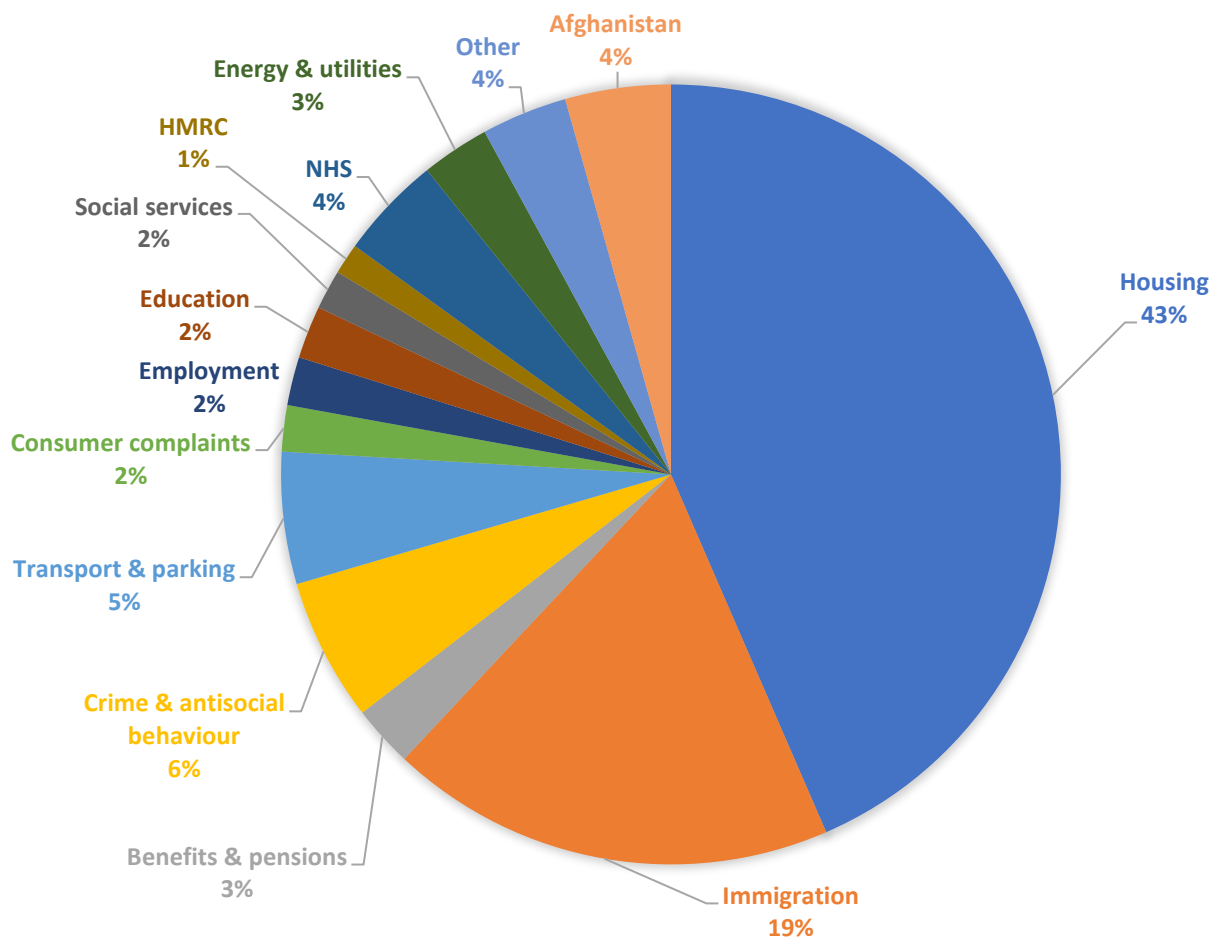
Between January 2021 and June 2022, I have, with my small but dedicated team, helped **11,098** people.

Year	Time Period	Action on	Increase
2020	January 1 st – December 31 st (12 months)	5,756	Up 45% <small>*On same 12-month period in 2019</small>
2021	January 1 st – December 31 st (12 months)	7,795	Up 35% <small>*On same 12-month period in 2020</small>
2022	January 1 st – June 30 th (6 months)	3,303	

Casework Issues

People seek my help for many different reasons including housing problems, immigration and visa problems and getting the benefits they're entitled to:

Casework issues by category July 2021 to June 2022



Often, I am able to cut through red tape, challenge an injustice and make progress for a constituent. Here are some examples of people I've helped this year:

Housing problems

- A single mother from East Dulwich wrote to me asking for help with her overcrowded housing. She had originally been housed by Southwark Council in 2003 in a studio flat and was told that this would be temporary. Yet almost two decades on, she was still living in the property, now with her four-year-old son. As a result, the flat was overcrowded with very little living space. I wrote to Southwark Council on her behalf to ask that she be rehoused in suitable alternative accommodation. Following my enquiry, Southwark Council have now rehoused my constituent in a two-bedroom council property with more facilities and sufficient space for her and her son.
- A Council tenant from Walworth contacted me after experiencing multiple housing and disrepair issues for many years. The toilet in her property had been faulty for more than 2 weeks, forcing her and her daughter to use their neighbour's toilet instead, there was dirty water trapped underneath the flooring in her bathroom omitting a foul odour, the stairs inside her property were broken and some of her windows had developed damp. She told me how her disrepair issues had been harming her family's mental health, especially given that she suffers from sickle cell disease. My constituent contacted Southwark Council about this matter but had not yet received a satisfactory response to the issues. I wrote to Southwark Council to request that they urgently undertake the necessary permanent repairs. As a result, the Council have now carried out the repairs to the faulty toilet and have arranged for the flooring, stairs and damp windows to all be inspected. I remain in contact with my constituent to ensure that they are fixed.
- A constituent contacted me on behalf of her mother, who is housebound and lives on the first floor of a sheltered housing accommodation. Her mother suffers from arthritis, blood clots and curvature of her back and struggles to get up the stairs to her property. My constituent wanted her mother to be moved from her room on the first floor to a room on the ground floor and explained that there were three rooms on the ground floor of the unit that were available for her mother to use. I wrote to Southwark Council on her behalf to ask for her mother to be moved to the ground floor of the sheltered housing accommodation and following my correspondence the daughter has confirmed to me that her mother has been successfully moved to the ground floor.
- A single mother from Camberwell requested my help with her housing situation after she and her two daughters had been evicted from their privately rented flat. When the family was first evicted, my constituent contacted Southwark Council for assistance and was provided with temporary accommodation in East London. She was understandably unhappy about being housed there as her family, her friends, her workplace and her daughters' schools are all in Camberwell. She had also recently fractured her leg, meaning that she was experiencing difficulties in moving around. She contacted Southwark Council about the unsuitability of her temporary accommodation but did not receive a satisfactory response. I wrote to Southwark Council on her behalf to ask whether her family could be moved into suitable council accommodation closer to Camberwell. The Council have agreed to move her back to Southwark as

soon as possible and I am keeping in touch with her to ensure that the new property is suitable for her and her family.

- A Council tenant in Walworth asked for my help to resolve a number of serious issues she was experiencing with her property, including a gas leak and severe damp. Her insurance company, Zurich, had previously assessed the issues and placed her in temporary accommodation so that the repairs could be carried out. This was originally expected to be for a period of only 3 months, yet after 5 months the repairs had still not been completed. I wrote to both Southwark Council and Zurich Insurance Group asking for a full report into this situation and what urgent steps both agencies were taking to resolve this issue. Both Zurich Insurance and Southwark Council apologised to my constituent for the delays and said that the outstanding repairs had now been completed. Zurich Insurance also offered my constituent compensation of £550, which she accepted. Disappointingly the signs of damp have begun to appear again in my constituent's home and so I have now made further enquiries to both Southwark Council and Zurich Insurance Group demanding action to permanently solve this issue.
- A Southwark Council tenant from Champion Hill contacted me because his toilet was broken and had to be flushed manually with buckets of water. He complained that the toilet had been like this for many years but the Council had not carried out the necessary repairs. He was very concerned because his wife was due to have major stomach surgery and as a result would no longer be able to lift buckets of water to manually flush the toilet. I wrote urgently to Southwark Council asking that they resolve this unacceptable situation, and as a result a new cistern has been installed.
- A woman from Queens Road who has caring responsibility for her son with complex disabilities asked for my help because her oven had broken several months ago, leaving her unable to cook hot food, and it had not been fixed by her landlord, Peabody Housing Association. She had originally reported the issue to Peabody but they had told her that they would not be carrying out any repairs in the next three years. I wrote to Peabody on her behalf to request that they urgently fix the fault with the oven and Peabody responded confirming that they would fit a new oven in her kitchen.
- A single mother, pregnant with her second child, asked for my help after the Council told her that she was going to be rehoused in Stratford. She wanted to stay in Southwark, to remain near her family and support network and because her son attends Ivydale Primary School. I wrote to Southwark Council as a matter of urgency to ask if they would reconsider rehousing her in Southwark before she was due to give birth. The family have now been rehoused in North Bermondsey and her son can continue to attend Ivydale Primary school.
- I was contacted by a vulnerable Peabody social tenant of Galleria Court following a period of bad weather in early July. The torrential rainfall caused terrible flooding in the basement of the block causing disruption and contamination of the water supply. She informed me that she had been without running water for several days. I urgently contacted Blocsphere, the managing agents appointed by the leaseholders, Peabody Housing, Thames Water and the buildings insurers to find out what steps were being taken to ensure the reinstatement a safe water supply to all residents in the block. Because of

important safety concerns the water had to be tested in a laboratory before it could be safely reinstated. During the water outage tenants were advised to move to hotels and that they would be reimbursed for their stay. However, the constituent who contacted me was unable to move to a hotel because it was not suitable for her needs and 5 subsequently the reimbursement offer to residents was withdrawn. I wrote again to her Housing Association, Peabody, to ensure they were providing adequate support and enough bottled water to last until the water was reinstated safely. I remained in regular contact with Blocksphere, Thames Water, local councillors and residents until the water was reinstated to the entire block.

Immigration and visa problems

- A Peckham woman contacted me because she had applied for a Spousal Visa and paid an additional fee of £800 for 'super priority' 24-hour turnaround service but over two weeks later had still not received a response. Because of this she had missed her brother's wedding in the USA in May due to her inability to fly without a valid visa. Her friend was also due to get married in the USA at the beginning of June and she was concerned that she would miss this too if the matter was not resolved. One of my caseworkers spoke to several Home Office advisors on the telephone regarding this matter and was informed that there had been a technical issue on the application. The advisor confirmed that the application had been escalated and the Home Office would contact my constituent directly. My constituent has now been issued her visa and was able to attend her friend's wedding.
- A Walworth man requested my help with his immigration affairs. He had been granted Indefinite Leave to Remain as a refugee from Egypt in 2020 but was provided with a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) that displayed the incorrect endorsement and photograph. He immediately raised the error with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) but had not received a response for over nine months. I wrote urgently to UKVI on his behalf requesting that they issue him with a correct BRP and they replied to apologise and explain that this was the result of a technical error on UKVI's new casework system. My constituent has now received his new BRP displaying the correct information.
- I was contacted by a Champion Hill man who sought my assistance with his asylum application in the UK. He is an ethnic Kurd seeking asylum from Iran because of his unfair treatment by the Iranian Government. The decision by the Home Office was delayed by almost a year. I wrote urgently to the Home Office to ask them to expedite their response. He has since been granted asylum in the UK and Leave to Remain until June 2026.
- The American wife of a constituent from Peckham asked for my help regarding her UK Spouse Visa. The couple had not received any correspondence from the Home Office for 30 working days after their Biometrics Appointment. The wife who was still in New York, USA, informed me that her husband suffers with depression and anxiety which was being made worse because of the delay and their ongoing separation. I wrote to UKVI to ask for an update on the progress of their application and received confirmation that the constituent's wife had been granted Entry Clearance as a spouse. The constituent's wife has now travelled safely from New York to the UK and she has been reunited with her husband.

- A Togolese man with Leave to Remain in the UK, who has lived in Walworth for 18 years, asked for my help with his application for a Togolese passport. I wrote to the Togolese embassy and they explained that his application had been rejected due to an error. The Togolese Embassy have now contacted him to apologise and his application for a Togolese passport is being processed.

Passport Office and DVLA delays

- A woman from Queen's Road asked for my assistance with her daughter's severely delayed passport application. When my constituent applied for her daughter's passport in early April, she was told that she would have to wait 3 weeks for the passport to arrive, but 4 weeks later, having not received her passport, she was told that the process could take up to 10 weeks. In order for her daughter to be able to travel abroad with the family on a planned trip in mid-May my constituent paid to have the application fast-tracked and was assured that she would receive an outcome on the application within 48 hours. However after 48 hours she had not received any response from Home Office. I wrote urgently to the Home Office on her behalf to ask them to provide information on the progress of her daughter's passport application and let me know when they could expect to receive the passport. Following my inquiry my constituent has now received her daughter's passport in time for them to travel.
- A woman from Walworth wrote to inform me that her father-in-law, who lives in New Zealand, had recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer and that she and her husband were trying to get to New Zealand to visit him. But her passport had expired and the UK Passport Office told her that there were no appointments available until January. I urgently wrote to the Home Office to request that they expedite her application on compassionate grounds. The passport office agreed and her application has now been fast-tracked.
- A man from Rye Lane contacted me about severe delays with his provisional driving licence application. He had applied for a provisional driving licence in November 2021 but as of April 2022 had still not received the licence. I wrote to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) requesting a report into the progress of my constituent's application and when he could expect to receive his provisional licence. Following my inquiry, the DVLA have now issued the licence to my constituent.
- A Camberwell woman had been waiting for the outcome of her medical driving licence application since March 2021 and asked for my assistance with chasing the DVLA for the result. I wrote to the DVLA requesting a report on the progress of her application and to ask when my constituent could expect to receive the outcome. As a result of my inquiry the DVLA has actioned her application and she has now received her medical driving licence.

Difficulty getting medical treatment

- I was contacted by a woman living in Bali on behalf of her adult son who lives in my constituency and had responded badly to his first dose of the Pfizer vaccine. He was therefore seeking an alternative vaccine for his second dose. The individual's mother explained that her son had raised his concerns with his GP but had been unable to make a booking for a specific alternative vaccine. I

wrote to South East London Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to request a report into the situation and ask if it would be possible for the individual to receive an alternative second dose. I received a response advising that he should consult with the Guys and St Thomas cardiology team before receiving his next Covid-19 vaccine dose. I shared this with my constituent and after a few weeks, the constituent's mother informed me that disappointingly her son had not been given an appointment. He had plans to travel to Bali to visit his mother but was now unlikely to be able to do so due to his incomplete vaccination status. Following this update, I made further enquiries to the CCG on his behalf. My constituent has now been able to access a second dose of Astra Zeneca and he has been able to travel to Bali.

- A constituent contacted me because he was having difficulty booking a COVID19 vaccination online. The NHS booking website stated their details could not be found. I wrote urgently to NHS South East London Clinical Commissioning Group who informed me that the constituent's name was spelt incorrectly on his GP surgery records and therefore the National Booking Service did not recognise his details. This error was corrected immediately and he has now received both doses of the COVID vaccination.
- An 84-year-old man from Peckham who is currently undergoing dialysis treatment for Chronic Kidney Disease at King's College Hospital, and who also has arthritis, Stage 4 bowel cancer, sleep apnoea, and has had COVID-related pneumonia, contacted me to ask for my help regarding his hospital treatment. Due to impaired mobility, my constituent relies on hospital transport for all medical appointments, but his dialysis appointments have twice been moved to Bromley, adding a significant amount of time and hassle to the procedures and negatively impacting his physical health and mental wellbeing. He was recently advised that he would be transferred permanently to Bromley for all future dialysis treatments. I wrote urgently to King's College Hospital and South East London Clinical Commissioning Group asking why my constituent was being moved and to request that they continue to treat him at King's College Hospital instead. They have since agreed to continue treating my constituent at King's College Hospital rather than moving his treatment to Bromley.

Victims of crime and anti-social behaviour

- I was previously contacted in March by a Nunhead man who informed me that a swastika had been spray-painted onto a tree outside Ivydale Primary School. I immediately contacted the Council to ask for the graffiti to be removed as soon as possible and informed the Borough Commander of Southwark and Lambeth Police. That same day the Council removed the horrible graffiti and the police confirmed that they would be investigating. In early May I was notified that offensive graffiti on Ivydale Road had reappeared. I again wrote urgently to Southwark Council and the police. The graffiti was swiftly removed by the Council again and the police have provided me with a full outline of the action they will be taking on this matter. This includes contacting local community groups and faith groups, local School Safeguarding leads and providing reassurance patrols in the following weeks.
- A man from Peckham contacted me with serious concerns about anti-social behaviour in his housing block. Non-residents would regularly enter the block and loiter on the communal stairs and my constituent would often find drug-

related paraphernalia and other unsanitary items in the communal areas. He asked for my help to get the Council to install a new secure door entry system in the housing block. I wrote to Southwark Council on his behalf and as a result they have since fixed the communal gate and approved the installation of a new door entry system for the block, on which work is due to commence soon. The Council have also liaised with the community wardens to ensure that the area is monitored and that regular patrols are carried out.

- I was contacted by a leaseholder who had been experiencing targeted abuse and harassment from a Southwark Council tenant in the flat above her for a number of years. The council tenant had been convicted of harassment but still had access to the building and the shared hallway. I wrote urgently to the Metropolitan Police and Southwark Council regarding this matter, and they have now been able to 'close' the flat and the Southwark Council tenant has been moved away.

Other cases to note

- I was contacted by the parents of a seven-year-old autistic child living in East Dulwich who were struggling to get the extra education support their child required due to his difficulties with emotional regulation and speech. The family had recently returned from Singapore to live in the UK and their son had been out of school for over 5 months. Although Southwark Council were aware of this situation and a learning plan was under consideration, the child had been rejected by 3 mainstream schools as they said they were unable to meet his needs. A school in Peckham had been recommended to the family, but the school had said that they were unable to consider the child without Council approval. I made several enquiries to the Council requesting information about what steps it was taking to ensure that my constituents' child was given a place at a suitable school as soon as possible. I received a response confirming that the child has now received a place at the school in Peckham that was able to provide him with the support he requires and he is now in school.
- A woman from Champion Hill wrote to me after struggling to renew her 60+ London Oyster photocard. The renewal process required her to set up an online Transport for London (TfL) account and despite her numerous attempts she had been unable to do so and was therefore unable to renew her photocard. She had contacted TfL on several occasions about this, providing them with copies of all relevant correspondence proving her eligibility for the photocard but she only received holding responses from TfL. I wrote to TfL on her behalf to ask what they could do to help her renew her 60+ London Oyster photocard. TfL responded to tell me that they have issued her a new 60+ London Oyster photocard, which she has now received.
- A woman contacted me to share her safety concerns after her eleven-year-old son had tripped on a tree stump by Peckham Rye Park and fallen face first onto the pavement, unfortunately knocking out his front teeth and requiring a visit to hospital. I raised this issue with Southwark Council on her behalf and requested that they remove the tree stump to prevent any further accidents. The Council have informed me that the removal of the stump has been arranged and that they are considering a personal injury claim submitted by my constituent on behalf of her son. I shared this response with my constituent,

who let me know that her son is still undergoing treatment but is recovering well.

- An East Dulwich man contacted me with safety concerns about the faulty gates at Goose Green Park. He told me that a dog was recently hit and killed by a car near the park after the faulty gate was left open and that he had real fears about what could happen if children were able to run out of the gate and into the traffic on East Dulwich Road. I wrote to Southwark Council and they have now completed all the repairs.
- A man from Camberwell contacted me earlier this year to let me know that despite having a valid parking permit he had received nine Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) from Southwark Council. I wrote to Southwark Council regarding this matter and received a response stating that the PCNs were issued in error, and the tickets have now been cancelled.
- A Peckham man contacted me because his roof was being damaged by an overgrown tree near his property. The overgrown tree had also become a focal point for fly-tipping, and the dumping of rubbish had caused an infestation of rats and other pests. The leaves and branches from the tree also regularly blocked his gutter. The constituent had previously been unsuccessful in his attempts to resolve this directly with Southwark Council. I wrote to Southwark 16 Council on his behalf requesting that they address his concerns, and they have now implemented a regular maintenance scheme for the area and have committed to remove the basal growth from around the tree.

Helping constituents get the money they are entitled to

Between July 1st 2021 and 30th June 2022 my team and I have helped get Camberwell and Peckham constituents **£60,325.80** in backdated disability benefits, written off rent arrears, heating and hot water refunds/compensation. What lies behind this sum is hardship and struggle for local people wrongly denied the money to which they are entitled.

- I was contacted by an Immigration Advisor at the Cardinal Hume Centre on behalf of a constituent. The constituent, who was born in Nigeria, was initially granted 30 months Leave to Remain in the UK in 2017 before being granted Further Leave to Remain in 2020. She is currently studying Social Policy at the University of Birmingham but had been unable to get a student loan due to her immigration status, putting her education at risk. I urgently wrote to the Student Loans Company Ltd and asked for clarity about whether my constituent was eligible to receive student finance. I received a response confirming her eligibility for a loan. Due to the error on their part, the Student Loans Company also offered my constituent an ex-gratia payment of £50 to compensate for the stress and inconvenience caused by their handling of the matter. The constituent accepted their payment and has confirmed that she now has access to a student loan and can therefore continue her studies.
- A man from the Old Kent Road area contacted me for help because he was owed a significant amount of money by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and was in rent arrears with Southwark Council as a result. In 2013 the DWP had moved him from Incapacity Benefit to Employment and Support

Allowance, but they did not include the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and Severe Disablement Allowance that he should have been receiving due to his health conditions. He contacted the DWP about their error, but whilst they made a partial payment of his underpaid PIP they did not pay him any of his Severe Disablement Allowance. I made urgent enquiries to the DWP on his behalf to get them to rectify this issue. The DWP reviewed his original claim and have now made an arrears payment to my constituent of £21,174.00, and paid money to Southwark Council to cover his rent arrears. I continue to make further enquiries on my constituent's behalf to find out why the original error occurred.

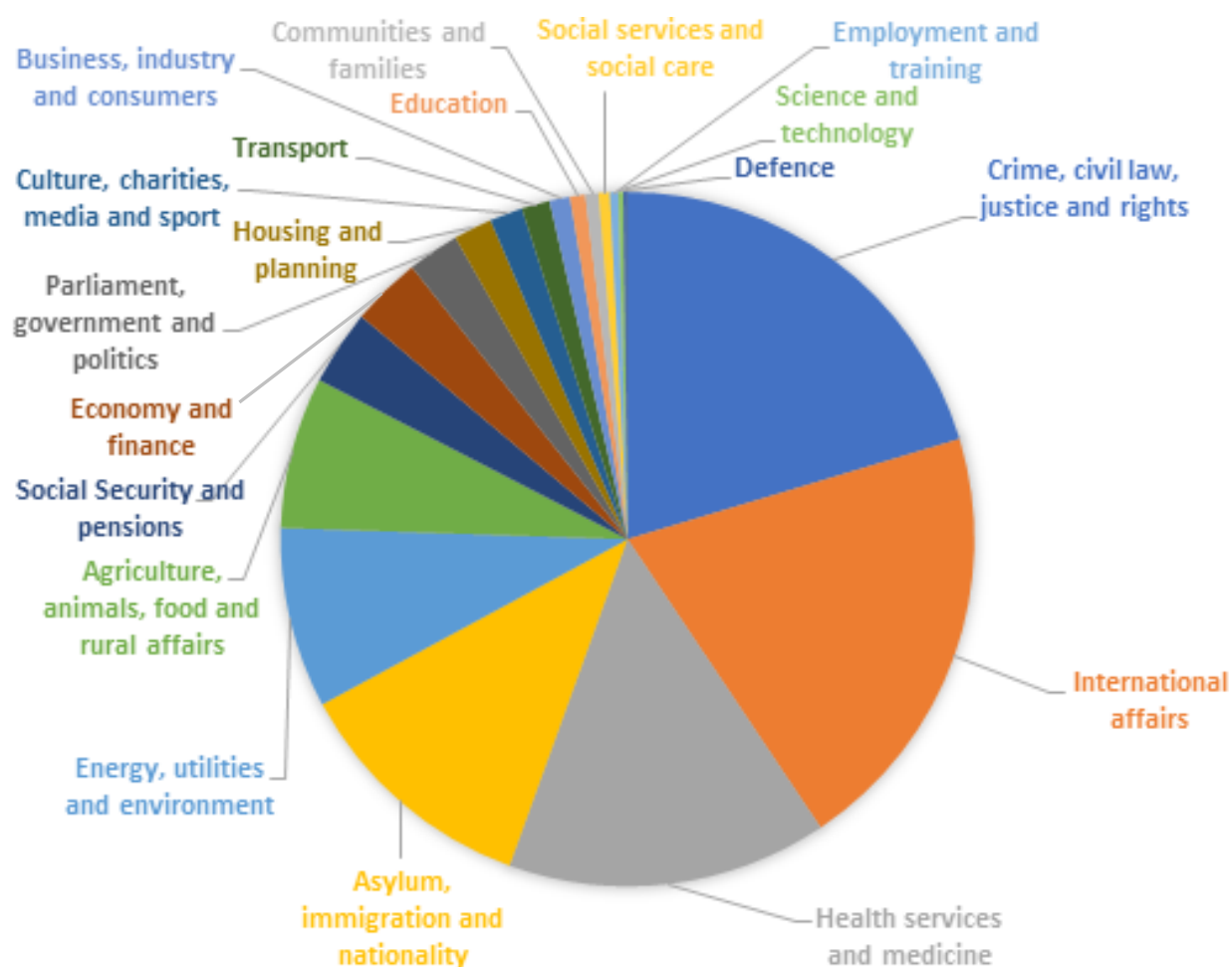
- A single mother of four children from Queens Road asked me for help because her Child Tax Credits had been incorrectly suspended by HMRC since April, making her £300 per week worse off. HMRC had requested evidence to support her Child Tax Credits claim, including utility bills, and whilst she was able to provide bank statements and council tax bills she was unable to provide gas or electricity bills as she does not receive hard copy letters for them. I wrote to HMRC on her behalf and asked them to urgently deal with the problem. HMRC have since reinstated her Child Tax Credits as a result.
- A woman from Rye Lane emailed me for help with a compensation claim she was pursuing with Southwark Council after repairs were carried out in her property by a council contractor in a way which resulted in significant damage to her property and belongings. The Council claim handler concluded that a payment of £100 should be made but my constituent felt this did not come close to fully reflecting the damage, stress and inconvenience that she had been caused. I wrote to Southwark Council on her behalf to ask them to reconsider her claim and they made a revised offer of £1000 as a result, which my constituent has accepted.
- A Walworth man who discovered he had been overpaying tax for the last four years contacted me to ask for assistance in claiming back his overpayments from HMRC. He had previously submitted the necessary documentation and was informed that he would receive a repayment but seven months later he had still not received it. I wrote to HMRC on his behalf requesting that they provide an update about when the repayment would be made. As a result, HMRC have now issued a BACS repayment for £23,402.95 including £84.15 interest.
- A woman from Peckham contacted me because she had been the victim of a phishing scam and had lost £3,476.76. She was struggling to resolve her concerns with the Police and Lloyds Bank and she asked for my help. Lloyds Bank told her that because she had willingly provided her information to the scammer, she would be ineligible for a refund. I wrote to Chief Superintendent Wingrove, Police Borough Commander for Southwark and Lambeth to make him aware of her situation and to Lloyds Banking Group to ask them to provide an immediate refund. The bank responded to confirm that they would refund the stolen amount and pay compensation for the poor customer service.

Representations from constituents in Camberwell and Peckham

The letters and emails I have received from constituents over the past year cover a wide range of issues. In 2021 I received **12,786** policy enquiries, up **5%** on 2020.

Year	Time Period	Received	Increase
2019	January 1 st – December 31 st	10,925	Up 18% <small>*On same 12-month period in 2018</small>
2020	January 1 st – December 31 st	12,231	Up 12% <small>*On same 12-month period in 2019</small>
2021	January 1 st – December 31 st	12,786	Up 5% <small>*On same 12-month period in 2020</small>
2022	January 1 st – June 30 th (6 months)	4,720	

Policy representations by category July 2021 to June 2022



Camberwell and Peckham matters

Huge congratulations to all of Camberwell and Peckham's sporting heroes during last summer's Olympics and European Championships but a special mention for:



Harriet Harman @HarrietHarman · Jul 14
We are all so proud of you, Jadon Sancho!

Cllr Kieron Williams @kieronjwilliams · Jul 14

Delighted to announce our intention to give @England star, national hero & former Camberwell resident Jadon Sancho Freedom of the @lb_southwark

Here he is in his 2011 Team Southwark strip! 🏆

What a journey he's been on since 🙌🙌🙌🙌🙌

@Sanchooo10 #eng #ThreeLions



Harriet Harman @HarrietHarman · Aug 6

Huge congrats to @ImaniLara ! Peckham is winning the Olympics!!



Imani-Lara Lansiquot @ImaniLara · Aug 6

Little me from Peckham. 🇬🇧🏆🌟



4 7 113



Harriet Harman @HarrietHarman · Jul 30

Huge congratulations! Whole of UK bursting with pride! Especially Peckham!



Kye Whyte @kye969 · Jul 30

History was made today @bethanyshriever is @olympics champ and I am a silver medalist. We're history makers 🙌🏆 @ Tokyo Japan
[instagram.com/p/CR8KIVe9rE/...](https://www.instagram.com/p/CR8KIVe9rE/)



Michael Faraday School – Burnett News Club awards

Huge congratulations to pupils and teachers at Michael Faraday School who in July won the Burnett News Club 'School of the Year' award and for the 3 brilliant 'Outstanding Students of the Year' awards. Well done and thank you for inviting me to your ceremony!

The problems for people who own high rise flats are going from bad to worse because of the cladding debacle.

southlondonpress LONDON WEEKLY NEWS & Mercury
Est. 1865 SERVING THE SOUTH LONDON COMMUNITY FOR OVER 150 YEARS

Published 18th August 2021

The problems for people who own high rise flats are going from bad to worse because of the cladding debacle. Grenfell was a disaster because of unsafe cladding and so

obviously it was right for all high-rise buildings to be checked and dangerous cladding replaced.

But years later the problems are far from solved and many local people have had their lives put on hold as they are unable to move out of their flats because they can't sell them as they can't get the certificate that is required to show that their cladding is safe.

There aren't enough technical experts to do the assessments so there's a long waiting list for certification. Without the certification, buyers can't go ahead with a purchase as banks and mortgage companies won't lend.

If people need to move it is hugely problematic to be stuck. They might need to move because they are taking up a new job, or because they've had another child and are overcrowded or for many other reasons.

But they are in limbo without any idea of when they'll be able to sell their flat and when they'll be able to move.

Then there's the problem for those where the cladding replacement has been done and the costs amounting to thousands of pounds are passed on to the leaseholders who are just not in a position to pay.

Getting on to the property ladder for a first-time buyer involves a big financial stretch for most people. They just don't have thousands of pounds left over to pay a hefty bill which they could not possibly have expected at the time of the purchase.

The costs for leaseholders have increased in multiple other ways.

Blocks awaiting cladding replacement often use fire wardens to patrol the building on a 24/7 "waking watch". Often that is demanded by the building's insurers. But that is another unanticipated expense.

And the costs of insurance shoot up as insurance companies insist on higher premiums and vast "excess" payments before they'll agree to insure blocks with cladding issues.

If you buy a new car and then there's a fault, you can be confident that the manufacturer will take it back and either repair it, give you a refund or a new one.

You, as the purchaser, don't have to foot the bill. Yet when it comes to faulty cladding the cost falls not on the developer or the freehold owner but on the leaseholder who has done nothing to contribute to the problem and who is the last person who's caused it.



London Cladding Action Group @LondonCAG · Aug 18
Thank you @HarrietHarman MP Camberwell & Peckham

If there's a market failure, the last resort to sort it out is the Government. And so far, despite early promises which raised leaseholders' hopes, they have failed to deal with it [#endourcladdingscandal](#)



In My View: Harriet Harman, MP for Camberwell and Peckham
Grenfell was a disaster because of unsafe cladding and so obviously it was right for all high rise buildings to be checked and dangerous ...
londonnewsonline.co.uk

This, in economic parlance, is "market failure". The situation is penalising innocent leaseholders and causing massive problems and unfairness.

If there's a market failure, the last resort to sort it out is the Government. And so far, despite early promises which raised leaseholders' hopes, they have failed to deal with it.

They must do so urgently. It's gone on far too long and for many, including in Camberwell and Peckham, that dream of owning their first home has turned into a nightmare.



Visit to Theatre Peckham

On 22nd September I visited Theatre Peckham. We are very fortunate to have a thriving arts community in Peckham, not the least of which is Theatre Peckham. I visited and congratulated the theatre management team on their new productions and their ongoing work with local young people.

Visit to Westminster House Youth Club

Westminster House Youth Club in Nunhead provides activities and offers homework support for young people aged 8-18. The Youth Club plays a vital role within the community. On 27th September I visited and was able to meet a group of young people taking a food hygiene safety course when I visited. I was also very interested to hear about their trip to see *Get Up, Stand Up! The Bob Marley Musical!*



What we need to do to sort out our health services

Published 30th September 2021

The COVID-19 vaccine means the pandemic is coming under control. But it is far from over and the government has serious work to do now, and in the months and years to come to sort out our health services, writes Harriet Harman...

In lockdown, we all clapped for the NHS, yet nurses are underpaid and overworked. They must increase recruitment by a major programme of grants for those undertaking nurse training. We need them and shouldn't deter good people by making them pay for their own training. Many experienced nurses are burnt out and considering leaving. Senior nurses are invaluable and we must keep them by better pay, filling vacancies so they are not overworked and proper professional recognition.

Our care services need a complete overhaul. Many end up in residential care because they can't get the support they need at home. Carer visits of fifteen minutes are a travesty. A good service of carers, well respected and well paid, is needed to help

people at home with the basics of getting up and dressed, bathing, cleaning, food shopping and preparation, sorting out medication and providing companionship.

There has, rightly, been a focus on mental health during COVID. Children unable to socialise or go to school, people unable to go to work, families separated, relatives dying, have all taken their toll on mental health.

We are fortunate to have the Maudsley's outstanding services but the truth is that even before the pandemic there were long waiting times for those of all ages, whether as outpatients or in hospital. There is agreement that mental health services must no longer be the poor relation of health care. Yet that remains the case and it must change.

King's is a pioneering hospital in so many ways and cares for many people whose health is worsened by low income and poor housing. But the waiting lists for treatment have risen and people have to spend hours in Accident and Emergency before they are seen. There are over 63,000 people on the waiting list for King's of which nearly a quarter have been waiting longer than the 18 weeks target. The dedicated team at King's do their best but they need more resources, and certainly not cutbacks. COVID has made this worse but there was a problem even before then.

The NHS needs more funds, but the government are wrong to raise the money by NIC increases which hit the lowest paid, including those working in the NHS and in care homes.

Poor health in Southwark compared to other areas will be worsened by our lower vaccination rate. High vaccination rates mean fewer people get the virus and if they do, have milder symptoms and fewer long-term effects. Of those adults offered vaccination 82 per cent across the UK have taken the jab. But in Southwark barely more than half have been vaccinated, only 58 per cent, lower even than the London average. We need the Clinical Commissioning Group, which leads on vaccination, to redouble their efforts, with government backing, to ensure we level up the Southwark vaccination rate. Low vaccination rates in our area mean more infection circulating, more people at risk of serious illness and death, more hospital admissions and more long-term illness.

For good health we need not only good health services, with people able to quickly see their GP in person, but also people being able to lead healthy lives. You can't do that if you're struggling to make ends meet. So tackling income inequality is vital. But there's no chance of that with the Conservatives. That will have to wait for a Labour government.

COVID Civic Awards recipients 2021

I was pleased to attend Southwark Cathedral on 4th October to add my congratulations to all those who received COVID Civic Awards for outstanding contributions to the local community during the terrible time of COVID.

Camberwell and Peckham recipients of awards were:

- Andrew Burnett, founder of Nunhead Knocks, a local community group that galvanised volunteers into action to support people in Nunhead and Peckham.

- The stark disparities in maternal health between black and white women
- the number of forced adoptions that occurred in the 1950s, 60 and 70s
- the treatment of women in prison
- the unacceptable low levels of prosecutions for rape
- the level of impunity for men who commit violence against women
- strategies to combat violence against women
- the need for changes to the law to outlaw street harassment and kerb crawling
- the new trend of men who kill their partners during sex and avoid murder charges, and
- the need for improved police vetting procedures.

I took questions on a range of issues and members shared many of their own experiences of harassment and feeling unsafe.



Speaking at Southwark Pensioners' Parliament

Every year Southwark Pensioners' Centre hold a Pensioners' Parliament. This was the first one held since the pandemic and took place at William Booth College on 18th October. Helen Hayes MP and I joined them. I spoke and answered

questions on a whole range of issues including difficulties getting an appointment to see the GP, long waits in Kings A&E, the threat of rising heating costs and food prices, the breaking of the "triple lock" protection of

pensioners' income and the shortage of staff for health and social care. I reported on my casework on behalf of pensioners in my constituency and congratulated the Southwark Pensioners Centre on being awarded the Civic Award for their work for pensioners during the pandemic.



Harriet Harman
@HarrietHarman

All important work with the community in the constituency today. Meeting pensioners @SwarkPensioners @helenhayes_ @SuecharlieSmith



Harriet Harman · Nov 3

Parliament & democracy matter @SJSCPrimary. Good luck with School Council elections 🍀 Thanks for ur excellent questions & 4 inviting me to visit #UKPW @UKParliament #MoTH



Visiting St Johns & St Clements Primary School during Parliament Week

1-7 November was Parliament Week, during which young people across the country take part in activities to learn more about the UK Parliament.

On 3rd November I visited St Johns & St Clements Primary School in Peckham to hear from the students about their upcoming school council elections and

to talk to them about how democracy works, my role as MP and the work that I do in the local constituency.

Remembrance Day 2021

On 8th November as Mother of the House of Commons I attended the opening of the Speaker's inaugural Constituency Garden of Remembrance. I placed a Remembrance stake on behalf of Camberwell and Peckham, in memory of all those who have fallen for this country.



On Sunday 14th I attended the Southwark Borough Remembrance Sunday service at Walworth Square and I, alongside the Mayor of Southwark Barrie Hargrove, laid a wreath at the war memorial. Special thanks go to all those who organised this year's ceremony and to Alberti Brass and the London Syrian Trio for the beautiful music that made the ceremony so moving.



Harriet Harman @HarrietHarman · Dec 1

Families need to be near child in hospital as essential part of recovery. Thanks to staff & supporters of Ronald McDonald House @KingsCollegeNHS #Camberwell who make that possible! And best wishes for Xmas 🎄 @RMHCUK



Visiting Ronald McDonald House Camberwell

It's very hard for parents of babies and young children who are being treated for serious conditions in hospital but who are far from home. Ronald McDonald House Camberwell provides a 'home from home' for families with a child at King's College Hospital. On 1st December I visited Ronald McDonald House to meet the families staying there and help them decorate their Christmas tree, including a House of Commons

decoration! My thanks go to all the staff at Ronald McDonald House.

Christmas visit to Camberwell Royal Mail delivery office

On 8th December I visited the Camberwell Royal Mail delivery office to talk to employees about how they were serving the local community at Christmas. Their work distributing Covid testing kits in particular was hugely important as we fought the spread of the virus. Throughout the pandemic Royal Mail serviced hundreds of thousands of test kits on behalf of the NHS, playing a vital role in the national response to the crisis. I thanked them for their work and wished them all a happy Christmas.



Harriet Harman @HarrietHarman · Dec 8

Busy Camberwell @RoyalMail delivery office. Experienced & committed team. Thank you and happy Xmas! 🎄 @CWUnews





Harriet Harman [@HarrietHarman](#) · Dec 8

No 'them and us' attitude from DWP staff at Peckham Jobcentre.
Impressive care and support from [@DWP](#) team. Thank you!



... Visiting Peckham Jobcentre

On December 8th I visited the Peckham jobcentre to hear from the DWP staff and to wish them a happy Christmas.

The Jobcentre staff work tirelessly to support people back into work and this has been particularly important in the last two years. The pandemic has caused a major increase in unemployment in Camberwell and Peckham. There are currently 5,955

people claiming unemployment-related benefits, 42% more than before the first lockdown in March 2020. Camberwell and Peckham has a higher claimant rate than the national average and young people are particularly affected. Claimants have been hit by the Government's decision to cut the £20 uplift to Universal Credit, making families claiming Universal Credit up to £1,000 a year worse off.

Demanding answers about the discovery of the body of Ms Sheila Seleoane at Lords Court



I was deeply concerned by the discovery of the body of Ms Sheila Seleoane in Flat 16, Lord's Court on 18th February and it's particularly worrying that her body was found so long after questions were first raised by residents in Lords Court. It is terrible that a woman could have died in her flat and been left there for so long, possibly as long as 2 years. There are major questions for both Peabody Trust and the police. The issue of landlords not listening to their tenants is the big takeout from this. Either Peabody didn't have proper systems or their staff weren't sufficiently caring and attentive.

I visited Lords Court on Wednesday 23rd February and talked to some of the residents who were home. I was accompanied by Cllr Sunil Chopra, then Councillor for Nunhead and Queen's Road Ward, Cllr Stephanie Cryan, then Cabinet Member for Council Homes and Homelessness, and Cllr Evelyn Akoto, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing.

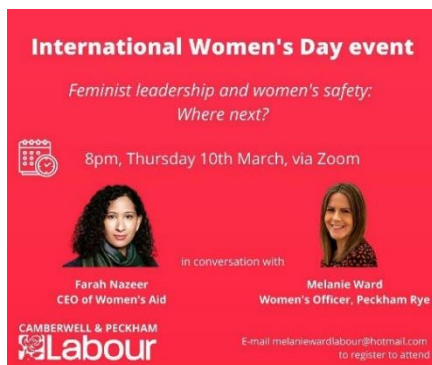
I have been in contact with the chair of Peabody Trust, Lord Bob Kerslake, and Peabody's Chief Operating Officer, Ashling Fox. Peabody initially commissioned a report by Altair which was due to report in April 2022 but they have now stated that they cannot release their report until after the coroner's inquest.

I wrote to the Borough Commander of the Metropolitan police, Colin Wingrove, about the police's involvement and in particular why officers who attended Ms Seleoane's property in October 2020 reported that they had "spoken to the resident and that she is safe and well" despite the fact that she was almost certainly deceased at that point. I asked for a review into this and whether the Met believes their officers were right to decline to enter the flat on their two visits to Lords Court in October. The conduct of

the officers was not found to reach the threshold for getting the Independent Office for Police Conduct involved "given the likelihood that the resident was deceased before the calls to the police". But this seems to imply that it doesn't matter that the police didn't do their job properly because Ms Seleokane was already dead. I was informed that officers' actions would be subject to a local review to identify any learning, but whilst a review did take place they have been unable to disclose anything further until after the inquest.

I have also been in contact with Southwark Council and the Department of Work and Pensions to help build a full picture of this tragic situation.

The inquest into Ms Seleokane's death was listed for 21st July at 13:30 with just one witness from Peabody Trust due to give evidence. I believe that the coroner should hear from other witnesses, particularly the neighbours, not just from Peabody Housing. I proposed to the coroner a number of potential witnesses.



International Women's Day event with Peckham Rye Labour branch on feminist leadership

On Thursday 10th March Peckham Rye branch held an International Women's Day event. I joined Farah Nazeer, CEO of Women's Aid to discuss the issues facing women. We talked about the importance of amplifying women's demands. Today's unreasonable demands are tomorrow's conventional wisdom!

Launch of Southwark Labour Manifesto

On 12th March I spoke at the Southwark Labour Conference launching the 2022 Southwark Labour Manifesto for the upcoming local elections. Congratulations to Southwark Labour on a bold and inspiring manifesto for the May 5th Council elections and for gaining 3 Councillors at those elections. There was wide consultation before the manifesto was drawn up and it includes:

- building 11,000 new council homes
- guaranteeing education, employment or training for every 18 year old



- providing more affordable childcare including two new community nurseries
- making swimming and gyms free for all residents
- delivering a quality kitchen and bathroom for every council tenant



Such impressive, innovative leadership from @MayorofLondon on hidden problem of child/parent violence. 🙌 to all involved esp parents at launch of research @peckhamlevels @MerrillDarren



Launch of research on child/parent domestic violence with Mayor of London Sadiq Khan at Peckham Levels

On 12th April I attended the launch by the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan of research carried out by London's Violence Reduction Unit into child-to-parent violence, to better understand and tackle the causes of violence. The research found that at least 40% of all child-to-parent violence goes unreported. This is something that needs to

change. All Londoners should feel confident raising concerns so families can receive the support they need. You can read the research [here](#).

Ukraine

Published 3rd May 2022



Every day now the news from Ukraine gets worse.

Millions of Ukrainians have fled. The death toll of soldiers and civilians is mounting. Ukrainian cities are being reduced to rubble. Putin has shelled a town right near the Polish border and there seems no end in sight.

As President Zelenski spoke to us in the House of Commons last week, you couldn't help but marvel at the extraordinary resistance that the Ukrainians have shown. When Putin first invaded, many expected that when the Russian tanks rolled over the border Ukraine would fall within hours if not days. It is a true David and Goliath situation yet Ukrainians have shown they are prepared to resist and more than 2 weeks later the Russians have still not been able to take the capital Kiev. Our Government have been right to make it absolutely clear that we deplore the Russian invasion. Ukraine is a sovereign nation and has the right to self-government. And the UK has been right, too, to say that we stand strongly with NATO as the centrepiece of our defence.

As the official opposition we are backing the Government and are showing Putin that the UK is united against this invasion, as is the EU. But as the opposition we have a duty to scrutinise the Government's response and spell out where they should be doing more.

There are 3 areas where they are falling short.

Firstly, the Government should be tougher on clamping down on the wealthy Russian oligarchs who use London as the centre to launder their billions. This is not money that they've earned from hard work or innovation. They've got rich by creaming off the national assets that were privatised when the Soviet Union fell. That money should be in the hands of the Russian people not a few super rich oligarchs. And they use this wealth to prop up Putin so we should freeze those assets immediately.

Secondly we should be doing much more to play our part in helping those who are fleeing from Ukraine. Mostly women and children, they don't want to be leaving their homes but they have no choice. Poland has already taken in more than a million of these refugees but so far our government has let in fewer than 1,000.

And thirdly, the Government should be helping with the impact of the Ukrainian invasion on the cost of living crisis here in the UK. Even before the invasion, families here were struggling with increased costs, particularly with food and energy bills. Russia is a big producer of gas and Ukraine a big producer of food. With supplies interrupted, petrol, energy and food bills are all soaring and the Government must step in to protect those on low incomes who simply can't find the extra money for these rising bills.

We are lucky to be safe here in the UK. But we can't turn away from the people who are suffering in Ukraine and ignore the effect that it's having on people's living standards here. And we must recognise that Putin's actions are a threat to all democracies. We must not do anything that will escalate the crisis but we certainly can and should do more to isolate Putin and act in solidarity with Ukraine.



The Cost of Living Crisis

Published May 2022

"The cost of living crisis" is not just a political phrase but something that is hitting people really hard. And the worrying thing is that, without government action, the worst is yet to come.

There are many elements squeezing people's finances but the major problems are energy costs, food prices, petrol prices and general inflation which is seeing all prices increase.

Heating, hot water and gas or electric for cooking is not a luxury, it's a necessity. So with energy prices going up by 52% in February, people are finding that what would normally be a manageable bill is blowing a hole in their finances. This leaves people less money for food which, in turn is soaring in price. At 9% inflation is at its highest level in 40 years. And that means less money for everything at a time when just about all costs are going through the roof.

The price increases on fuel have come from the worldwide increase in prices which have been driven even higher by the need to impose sanctions on Russian and stop using their gas supply. The increase in food costs have been driven by the rise in the costs of production, particularly energy and the loss of production from Ukraine.

While it's not the Government's fault that prices have risen, it is their responsibility to protect people from it.

Russia's dreadful invasion of Ukraine has caused a spike in energy costs and it hits hardest at those who, as a result of this government's policies, were already only just managing.

The Government had cut £20 from weekly benefit payments. They should immediately reverse that cut in the face of the price increases. The Government trumpet the low unemployment levels but the grim reality is that for many people even having a job

and working hard does not enable them to pay the bill, especially with the increase in National Insurance that the Government has imposed. They should reverse that immediately. It was shocking to hear government minister Rachel Maclean patronisingly lecture people to get a better job or work longer hours as if it's their own fault that they can't make ends meet.

The Government says that economic growth will sort the situation out. But there are 2 problems with this. Firstly, thanks to the Government's failures in economic policy, the economy is shrinking, not growing, and is even teetering on the edge of recession. And secondly, even if the economy bucks the trend and starts to grow, it will come too late. People who are struggling need help right now.

Labour has urged the Government to give help with bills to everyone but extra help to those on lowest incomes. They could do that immediately by putting a windfall levy on the windfall profits of the energy companies, whose profits have soared because of the price increases. It's obscene that their profits are soaring while people struggle to pay the bills. They can afford to pay a windfall levy, as the energy companies themselves are now acknowledging. The Government should do it now.

The fundamental problem is that thanks to the Government's unfair policies, there are too many people who just can't withstand these massive price increases. We need immediate action to help them but for the future we need to get rid of this government and have instead a Labour government who will give everyone a fair chance for a decent standard of living.

Redevelopment of Sceaux Gardens

On 21st June I visited Sceaux Gardens and met with the Chair of the Tenant and Residents' Association, Mike Edge, to hear about the concerns of residents regarding the redevelopment of the estate and the fire safety works on Marie Curie block.

As with all redevelopments, there are two imperatives. One is fairness to the tenants and residents – both those who have moved and those

who have yet to move. The other is the need for finality so that the development can start and proceed to conclusion. Despite it being announced in May 2021, fire safety work on Marie Curie has still not started, and there is no clear timeframe for when the work will take place. I will be writing to the Council to ask whether they have a timeline for the works, and whether they have considered a bespoke independent arbitration process to ensure fairness to residents.

My thanks to Mike for meeting with me and taking me around the estate, and for speaking up for residents.



Opposing cuts to Camberwell and Peckham bus routes

On 1st June, Transport for London (TfL) launched a consultation on proposed changes to bus routes in London. In Camberwell and Peckham they plan to cut the 12, 45 and 78 routes and change the routes of the 59, 148, 171 and 388. Across London of the proposed bus routes to be cut 25% were scheduled for Southwark.

I am strongly against these proposals. It would mean fewer buses, longer waits at bus stops and needing to change more often. I don't think TfL has taken account of the problems this will cause for people in the local communities that rely on those buses, particularly women and girls, those with disabilities, the elderly, and those on low incomes.

I have written to Sadiq Khan, the Mayor of London, asking for information about what proposals TfL considered which would have avoided discriminating against those who already face disadvantages, and you can read my letter [here](#).



Harriet Harman
@HarrietHarman

Cuts to bus routes hit hardest those who can least afford it. My, @helenhayes_ and @coyleneil's letter to Transport Sec @grantschapps protesting Govt failure to fund @TfL. This is not levelling up. 🙄



Harriet Harman
@HarrietHarman · Jun 1

25% of proposed bus cuts are in @lb_southwark. Tube-less Camb & P'ham needs more transport links. Not less! @MayorofLondon @SouthwarkLabour @transportgovuk @grantschapps twitter.com/diamondgeezzer/...



These cuts are a direct result of the Government's refusal to fund TfL sufficiently following its substantial loss of income during the pandemic. Along with Helen Hayes MP and Neil Coyle MP, I wrote to the Secretary of State for Transport, Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP, demanding that he stop holding our constituents to ransom and properly fund TfL to avoid these cuts having to go ahead. You can read my letter [here](#).



Harriet Harman
@HarrietHarman

London bus cuts hit poorest communities hardest & take £ out of drivers' pay. @TfL put these awful cuts where they will do least damage. Sign petition change.org/p/save-southwark...

I attended a meeting with TfL and other London MPs and pressed TfL on their process for deciding where these cuts would take place. I don't think that TfL have looked at the impact they will have on local communities and have focused only on where the buses are most frequent, not where the areas of greatest need are. I urged them to start again from a perspective of social equality, rather than transport, to ensure that the cuts don't hit hardest those who can least afford it.

On 29th June I attended a meeting with Unite representatives from across London to hear directly



5:13 PM · Jun 29, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

from them about how these cuts will affect their livelihoods and the communities they serve.

On 15th July I visited Camberwell Bus Garage along with the Leader of Southwark Council Cllr Kieron Williams and Neil Coyle MP, MP for Southwark and Old Bermondsey, to hear more about how these awful cuts will affect the livelihoods and professions of those working at the garage.



I will be submitting a response to the TfL consultation. I have contacted Tenant and Residents' Associations along the routes affected to get their views so that I can include them in my response to the consultation. I encourage everyone who is affected by these proposed changes to submit a response to the consultation, which you can do [here](#), and sign Southwark Labour's petition [here](#).



TfL have tough choices to make – but they shouldn't make life tougher for those who can least afford it

Published 4th July 2022

The Government is not giving Transport for London (TfL) enough funds to run the transport system that London needs. So TfL have worked out that they have to cut 4% from their budget for buses. They've published proposals that they have put out for [consultation](#) and I will be strongly objecting to them on behalf of people of Camberwell and Peckham.

They plan to withdraw the 12, 45 and 78 routes and change the routes of the 59, 148, 171 and 388. It would mean fewer buses, longer waits at bus stops and needing to change more often.

25% of the London Bus cuts they are proposing fall in Southwark, just one London borough out of 32 served by TfL. And people here need the buses. Most people don't have cars or can't afford the petrol to drive to work. We don't have a tube in Camberwell and Peckham for people to use as an alternative. And though many people here, especially young people, cycle, jumping on a bike is not possible for a mum with a couple of kids, a frail elderly person or a wheelchair user.

The cuts will mean people having to change buses or "more interchanges" as TfL put it. For an elderly person who can do one journey might not be able to do two. For a young woman or girl on her own waiting at a bus stop in the dark could make them feel unsafe. For a disabled person, getting on a crowded bus might feel impossible.

TfL don't want to make these cuts. They know we need more buses, not fewer. But in view of the fact they feel forced to cut, they should make those cuts in a way which is least harmful to those who will be worst hit. I've spoken to TfL and I'm working with Southwark's two other MPs Helen Hayes and Neil Coyle on this. I've said to TfL that they should completely redo their planned cuts. They should start with a map showing the greatest concentrations of low income and make sure the cuts avoid those areas.

TfL acknowledge in their "impact statement" that any cuts to buses hit hardest at the elderly, women and girls, those with disabilities and those on low incomes. So it makes no sense that they plan to hit Southwark so hard.

Please get in touch with me to give me your views about the buses in your area that you use so I can include what you say in my strong protests to TfL. You can email me at harriet.harman.mp@parliament.uk.

TfL have tough choices to make. But they shouldn't make life tougher for those who can least afford it.

Campaigning, locally and nationally, against race discrimination and for equality



Footballers are as entitled to have political view as anyone else

Published 4 August 2021

*'Our team didn't win, but showed great promise for the future and conducted themselves in a way that set an outstanding example to young people'
People across Southwark have had particular reason to be caught up in two massive sporting events this summer, writes Camberwell and Peckham MP Harriet Harman...*

Last month, the nation was gripped watching the Euros and we all felt such pride as England's young side fought their way to the final. Our team didn't win, but showed great promise for the future and conducted themselves in a way that set an outstanding example to young people.

The players braved controversy when they 'took the knee' before matches to protest racial inequality. They were doing it as a team. Both those black players who had been subjected to racial abuse on and off the pitch and their white teammates who – though not having been subjected to it themselves – deplored racism directed at any of the players and wanted to show solidarity with those who had.

It was deplorable that some of the England fans booed their team's taking the knee and I, along with many other politicians, loudly denounced the booing. Some people took to social media to condemn the taking of the knee, complaining it was 'political'. Footballers are no less entitled than anyone else to have political views and to express their opinions in whatever way they want. This is a democracy and people have freedom of speech and thought. Democratic politics is how this country is run and should be celebrated not swept under the carpet.

But it was particularly objectionable that some people chose to complain that footballers were protesting about racism. This country is still not equal. Black people are still subjected to discrimination and it is right to protest about this. It completely proved the England team's point when some people took to social media to pour vile



racist abuse on the young black England players. The racist social media posts proved the point that the protests were, sadly, very much necessary.

There was an outpouring of support for the young black England footballers and I was delighted that Southwark Council decided to celebrate and support Jadon Sancho, who was born in Camberwell and played for Southwark at youth level, awarding him the highest municipal honour of Freedom of the London Borough of Southwark.

The spotlight fell again on Southwark's sporting talent with the stunning performance of Kye Whyte from Peckham in the Men's BMX racing event winning a Silver medal in the Tokyo Olympics. This is a relatively new sport for the Olympics and it has rightly astonished people. You have to see the videos of Kye Whyte racing to appreciate the incredible strength, courage and skill that it involves. His medal is a testament to his years of dedication to training and of the unstinting support for him by his parents. Kye is still only 21-years-old but he's shown professionalism and persistence that mean that he's assured of success for the future not only in his sport but in whatever path he chooses. He was fortunate to have exceptional parents prepared to sacrifice whatever it took to support his training and competing.



Harriet Harman ✓ @HarrietHarman · Jul 30

Huge congratulations! Whole of UK bursting with pride! Especially Peckham!



Kye Whyte ✓ @kye969 · Jul 30

History was made today @bethanyshriever is @olympics champ and I am a silver medalist. We're history makers 🏆🏅 @ Tokyo Japan [instagram.com/p/CR8KIVe9rE/...](https://www.instagram.com/p/CR8KIVe9rE/)

Kye's triumph is not only a cause for celebration but also puts the spotlight on how much more the government should do to ensure that local youngsters can enjoy and excel in sports without the family having to sacrifice. Too many youngsters don't get the chance to participate and compete. Kye's medal is a strong reminder that sports opportunities should be there in every locality for talented young people.



House of Commons
House of Lords
Joint Committee on Human Rights

Black people, racism and human rights

Eleventh Report of Session 2019–21

Report, together with formal minutes relating to the report

Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed 4 November 2020

Ordered by the House of Lords to be printed 4 November 2020

JHC 359
HL Paper 145
Published on 11 November 2020
by authority of the House of Commons and the House of Lords

Pushing the Metropolitan Police to do more to earn the trust of black people

In 2020 the Joint Committee on Human Rights, which I Chair, commissioned polling on black people's lack of trust in the police which can be viewed [here](#), and found that 85% of black people did not feel that they would be treated the same as a white person. In a briefing for London MPs with Sophie Linden, Deputy Mayor for Police and Crime on 26th October which I attended, I pressed the Deputy Mayor on this and asked whether she was doing any specific polling to chart the Metropolitan Police's progress towards gaining the trust of the black community, emphasising the importance of black-led polling in order to understand the situation and annual measurements and targets to drive progress. The Deputy Mayor agreed that this was important and promised to report back to me on this

issue. I continue to press the Mayor's office to improve the Metropolitan Police performance for the black community.

October is Black History Month.

Published 29th October 2021



The reason this is important is that the past contribution of black people to our history in the UK is all but overlooked.

I strongly support what Black History Month does, particularly in our schools.

This is necessary for children and young people from immigrant families and for those whose families have always lived here.

Our history is made by all the people here whether they have been here for generations or are newly arrived.

I want to use this year's black history month to celebrate the current contribution of black people of Southwark.

Our democracy can only command confidence if all are represented.

We are fortunate in Southwark to have black councillors, rooted in and speaking up for their communities.

Evelyn Akoto is one of the councillors for Old Kent Road ward. Her family came from Ghana and at the age of 6 brought her to live on the Aylesbury Estate where she grew up.

She now leads for Southwark council's cabinet on the issues of health and wellbeing. Johnson Situ was born in King's College Hospital to a family who came from Nigeria and was brought up on what was the North Peckham Estate.

He is one of the councillors for Peckham and works in City Hall in a senior role as right hand man for the Mayor of London.

I want us to celebrate all our black councillors in Camberwell and Peckham and acknowledge how important they are in our democracy: Peter Babudu, Dora Dixon-Fyle, Jason Ochere, Victoria Olisa, Sandra Rhule, Michael Situ, Cleo Soanes.

Parliament needs to be representative of all communities as that's the whole point of democracy. So our House of Commons benefits greatly from the contribution of my neighbouring MP Florence Eshalomi who speaks with an authoritative voice for her community in Vauxhall.

Black people from Southwark have played a leading role in our arts and sporting achievements.

John Boyega who's famous worldwide for his part in Star Wars learnt to love acting at Theatre Peckham.

Our achievements at this year's European Championship put the spotlight on a new generation of young black footballers who offer such promise for the future.

Southwark has honoured Jadon Sancho who was born here and started his career here.

Doreen Lawrence, another resident of South-east London has responded to the tragic murder of her son Stephen by driving a root and branch reform to challenge racism in the Met.

She's now in the House of Lords and brings her unique voice and experience to our Parliament.

Too many black people who shaped our past have been forgotten.

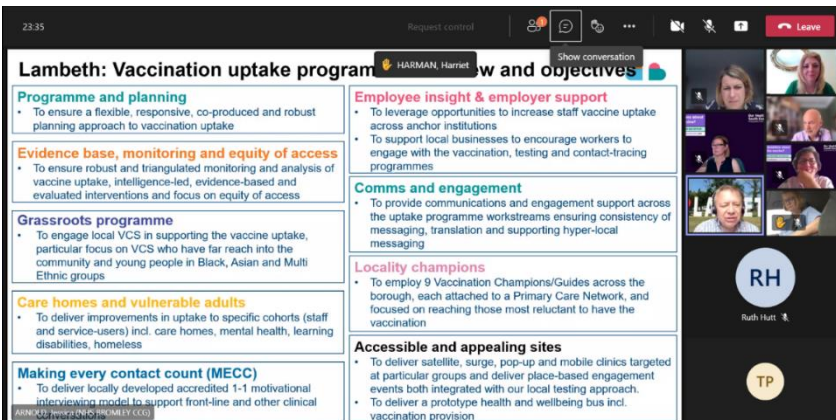
I want to celebrate the black people who are shaping our present.

These are just a very few of them.

As well as removing the statues of those who grew rich by exploiting and abusing black slaves, perhaps we should be asking why there are virtually no statues of black people who've played leading roles in making our country the great place it is today.

Concern about Southwark lagging behind in health outcomes and vaccination levels

Over the past year I have remained concerned about the lower vaccination levels in Southwark compared to the national rate and that this is exacerbating existing health inequalities.



I regularly challenged the South East London Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to address this at meetings with other Southeast London MPs and the CCG. I continue to ensure that every effort is made to improve health outcomes in Camberwell and Peckham, with a particular focus on marginalised communities,

including closing the outstanding vaccine gap.

Women's Rights in Healthcare: opening remarks to the Leigh Day Solicitors annual conference on 7th October

I gave the opening remarks at the fourth annual conference on women's rights in healthcare, hosted by the law firm Leigh Day. As October is black history month, I focused on the dreadful



“78% of black women do not believe their health is equally protected compared to white people, and there is currently no plan in the NHS to acknowledge that and to deal with that” @HarrietHarman #WRH2021

... disparities in maternal healthcare between black and white women. 78% of black women do not believe their health is equally protected, and this isn't surprising when they are 5 times more likely to die in childbirth than white women. Yet there is currently no plan within the

NHS to end this disparity. I have called on the NHS to set a target to end this inequality and to track its progress towards this every year.

Celebrating Black London – Southwark Labour event

On 15th November, I was pleased to join Councillor Jasmine Ali, Councillor Evelyn Akoto and other Councillors and members at a Southwark Labour event to explore the history of black people in London and discuss what more we can do to end systemic racism.



Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP @BellRibeiroAddy · May 27

The pandemic's unequal impact has been a reminder that racism is still a matter of life and death.

I've coordinated this cross-party letter on behalf of @femho2022, urging the Chair of the Government's Covid Inquiry to put racial health inequalities front & centre #COVID19



You and 9 others

16

34

73



Pressing the COVID-19 Inquiry to focus on the issues facing BAME communities and BAME health and social care workers

In May I signed a letter coordinated by my colleague, Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP, to Baroness Hallett the Chair of the COVID-19 Inquiry requesting that the terms of reference for the Inquiry are focused on the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on BAME communities and BAME health and social care workers.

The letter in full:

Dear Baroness Hallett,

We are writing on behalf of the Federation of Ethnic Minority Healthcare Organisations (FEMHO), a group of individuals, organisations and networks in the health and care sectors who have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As you know, the COVID-19 pandemic had a disproportionate impact on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities in terms of adverse health outcomes, but also in relation to BAME health and social care workers. These are issues FEMHO are uniquely well placed to provide insight into during the COVID-19 Inquiry.

It is encouraging to see that, although broad, the scope of the terms of reference for the Inquiry provide space to examine the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on BAME communities. However, we believe that this should be more focused and would like to ask that the scope of the final terms of reference provides for a thorough examination of the issues affecting BAME communities and BAME health and social care workers.

We would like to further request that FEMHO are given the status of Care Provider so that they may actively participate in the Inquiry, across the various themes in its investigation, to ensure that the issues facing BAME communities and health and social care workers are properly addressed. This will also enable FEMHO to provide suitable recommendations for the future that will seek to address the racial disparities that have been prevalent during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We hope you will consider this request and look forward to your response.

Afghanistan crisis

In August 2021 the US withdrawal from Afghanistan caused a crisis for thousands of Afghans facing the prospect of the return to power of the Taliban.

In response to the crisis:

- I helped 74 constituents on behalf of 501 friends or relatives who were stuck in Afghanistan and desperately needed to come to the UK. I raised their cases with Government Ministers to ensure everything possible was done to help them evacuate.
- I liaised with the Leader of the Council Cllr Kieron Williams and Deputy Leader Cllr Jasmine Ali about calling a meeting to reach out to the Afghan community in Southwark and draw up and issue a pledge of support for and welcome for future Afghan refugees.
- I initiated a cross party letter signed by 175 women Westminster MPs expressing support for Afghan women MPs who are facing a terrible fate in the face of the Taliban takeover.
- Parliament was recalled on 18th August and I spoke in the debate urging the Government to evacuate UK citizens and those who've helped us in Afghanistan, praised the work of our armed forces, urged a generous refugee resettlement scheme and told the Government that to help women and girls they need to talk directly to the women rather than just the male leaders.
- I received 602 emails from constituents concerned about the situation and expressing support for Afghan refugees.
- I challenged the Foreign Secretary in Parliament on the concerning cap on numbers in the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme of 5,000.



Harriet Harman ✓ @HarrietHarman · Aug 20

My parliamentary and casework team have, this week, shown so much commitment, professionalism and dedication in response to the appalling developments in Afghanistan. I'm proud of their work and grateful to them.

House of Commons recalled on Wednesday 18 August to debate the situation in Afghanistan

The Speaker of the House of Commons granted a request from the Government to recall the House of Commons on Wednesday 18 August. I attended and spoke in this important debate in the House of Commons.

*Ms Harriet Harman
(Camberwell and Peckham) (Lab)*

'I strongly agree with what was said by the Leader of the Opposition and by the right hon. Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May), who speaks with the experience of having served as Prime Minister. I particularly agree with what she said about the threat of terrorism and the need fully to reinstate our aid budget, the issues for NATO and the proud legacy of our troops.

We have all looked on in horror as the events in Afghanistan have unfolded. I join everyone who is urging the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary to do everything they can to help UK nationals, including my constituents, who are stranded and in hiding in Kabul, desperately needing to get back home to the UK. We urgently need to evacuate those who worked with us, who thereby feel that they are vulnerable and to whom we have a moral obligation.

The Government are setting up a refugee resettlement programme. I urge them to make a realistic and generous assessment of the scale of the need and to work with all local authorities that want to play their part in giving a warm welcome to those who are fleeing. The Government also need to work, of course, with NATO countries and more widely on an international resettlement programme.

We need to think about those who cannot or do not want to leave, particularly women and girls. When the Taliban were last in control, there were literally no girls in school. Now—at least, up until the Taliban took over again—40% of schoolchildren are girls; over the last 20 years, there has been a whole generation of girls who have been educated, and a whole cohort of young women who have been able to work and want to continue to do so.

When the Taliban were last in control, there were no women in public life—no women to speak up for other women. Women were silenced. Now there are 69 women Afghan MPs. Indeed, three years ago, one of them—Elay Ershad—came to this Chamber to speak from the Front Bench while participating in our Women MPs of the World conference and was welcomed by the former Prime Minister to No. 10 Downing Street.

The President has fled but Elay is staying in Kabul with her daughters, in solidarity, she says, with her people. What courage. The Afghan army has retreated, but so many Afghan women are standing their ground. All those women politicians and activists are determined not to let the progress of the last two decades be crushed. They now face great jeopardy.

I know that the whole House, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary will express publicly our solidarity with and admiration for Afghan women MPs, who, as

 **Harriet Harman** 
@HarrietHarman

PM @10DowningStreet & Foreign Sec @DominicRaab must do all poss to rescue UK nationals, incl my Camb & Peck constituents, stranded in Kabul. UK has moral obligation to evacuate those who worked with/for us & generous refugee resettlement . My speech in [#Afghanistancrisis](#) debate 📌



2:12 PM · Aug 18, 2021 · Twitter Web App

parliamentary pioneers—having stepped forward into public life to make a reality of democracy for that half of the population of Afghanistan who are women and girls—are now, in the face of such an uncertain future, determined to protect and defend those rights.

As to what we can do, I would say: do not just listen to the male leaders about what we need to do for women. I say to the Foreign Secretary, do not just speak to the men; pick up the phone to those women Afghan MPs, ask them what we can do to support women and girls in Afghanistan, and then do it'.

Southwark will always stand ready to play our part in resettling those who need sanctuary

17th August 2021

A statement on Afghanistan



The distressing situation in Afghanistan demands a compassionate and urgent response from national and local government alike. With around 80,000 Afghans in the UK - many of whom are British citizens and a large proportion of whom live in London boroughs - we have a duty to offer safe access for refugees and asylum seekers fleeing the brutality of the Taliban.

We have particular concern for women and girls facing cruel repression and discrimination, and for all those Afghans who have supported the British civil and military authorities in their country in various ways. With more than three million people in Afghanistan displaced we must all do our share to minimise the scale of the unfolding catastrophe.

The London Borough of Southwark has a long and proud history of supporting people fleeing persecution overseas. We have already committed to participation in the Afghan Local Employed Staff Relocation Scheme and participated in resettling families through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. We support the call from Labour local government leaders for the national government urgently to implement a national refugee resettlement programme with target numbers from Afghanistan.

We are urgently seeking further dialogue with local Afghan community leaders to help direct the appropriate support to refugees.

Southwark will always stand ready to play our part in resettling those who need sanctuary.

Cllr Kieron Williams
Leader
Southwark Council

Cllr Jasmine Ali
Deputy Leader
Southwark Council

Cllr Alice Macdonald
Cabinet Member for
Equalities

Neil Coyle MP
Bermondsey &
Old Southwark

Harriet Harman QC MP
Camberwell &
Peckham

Helen Hayes MP
Dulwich & West
Norwood



Southwark Afghan Community meeting

On the 25 August I attended an important meeting with our local Afghan community and local refugee organisations, Helen Hayes MP, Cllr Alice Macdonald, Cabinet Member for Equalities, Neighbourhoods and Leisure and Cllr Jasmine Ali, Deputy Leader of Southwark Council to hear from them about what support they need and to discuss how best to help the Afghan community at this incredibly

distressing time. Thanks to St Giles Church for hosting.

The Government must increase the 5,000 Afghanistan Resettlement Scheme cap – My question to the Foreign Secretary – 6 September 2021

Ms Harriet Harman

I thank the Foreign Secretary for his statement. May I ask him about the number of requests the Government have already had in respect of Afghan citizens who do not qualify for the ARAP scheme as they did not work directly for us, but who want and need to flee here from Afghanistan and have already asked? I know that the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme is not yet open, but he must already know how many have, through Members of this House or other organisations, already asked to come here because of the Taliban. Can he tell us how many have done so? How will the Government decide who is going to get into the 5,000 cap? The criteria for the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme are yet to be announced, but we know that it is for those who are highly vulnerable to the Taliban because of what they have done in support of the values we and the previous regime were committed to, in particular, women and girls, equality, democracy and human rights. There are bound to be so many more than 5,000, so how will the Government in practice decide between those who will be the lucky 5,000 and be allowed to come here, and those who, although meeting the criteria, will, because of the 5,000 cap, be refused and face a terrible fate at the hands of the Taliban? The reality is that the unless the Government increase the 5,000 cap, the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme is going to end up as a lottery of life and death.



Harriet Harman
@HarrietHarman

Gov don't even know how many Afghans have asked to come to UK under scheme for those threatened by Taliban. Govt must up the 5,000 cap. If not, Afghan Resettlement Scheme will be lottery of life and death. My challenge to Foreign Sec in parl. 🗣️



Dominic Raab

I know how passionate the right hon. and learned Lady is about this issue and how assiduous she has been on it. It is difficult to give a precise number of the applications



Harriet Harman
@HarrietHarman

Re the number of people who want to come to UK under forthcoming Afghan Resettlement Scheme the PM and Foreign Sec could tell us how many have already applied. I'm guessing way more than the 5,000 cap. Not so much Operation Warm Welcome. More like Operation Cruel Exclusion!



Paul Waugh
@paulwaugh · 21h

Here's @BorisJohnson's response when asked why he did not have a clearer idea of the number of people yet to be evacuated from Afghanistan. I say 'response', because to call it an 'answer' would be misleading. It's a non-sequitured masterclass in obfuscation:

"When you look at the numbers that we've helped both in terms of the eligible persons, the EP group repatriation and assistance programme – we've got the numbers we thought were eligible.

"So, your question is a really good one but the answer is – and we care for them very much, we're thinking about everything we can to help – but the extent of the support that has already happened, was really amazing."

demand alone—of course we would not do so—but by taking action and showing leadership, we will help to corral and cajole other countries to follow suit. That is how we will have a comprehensive and effective response to the Afghanistan situation.

and claims, not least because there is some duplication in the multiple emails and correspondence we have had. She is right to say—frankly, this would be true even if we doubled or tripled the quota—that the number of people who flee Afghanistan is going to outstrip what the UK would be able to take alone. That means that we need to look very carefully at the criteria, as the Home Secretary and I are doing across Government, to make sure that we prioritise the most vulnerable and those with a particular link to the UK, as well as co-ordinating with the United Nations. Further details will be set out by the Home Secretary.

As I mentioned earlier, the UK is doing our bit, alongside the aid we are providing, including to support third countries that take refugees. The UK will not be able to deal with the



Harriet Harman
@HarrietHarman

And yet the cap for this year for Afghan citizens (aside from those directly employed by UK) is 5,000. I fear is going to be not a 'warm welcome' but a "cruel exclusion"



Guardian news · @guardiannews · Aug 30
MPs trying to rescue more than 7,000 people trapped in Afghanistan
[theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/a...](https://theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/aug-30/mps-trying-to-rescue-more-than-7000-people-trapped-in-afghanistan)

PoliticsHome



The Taliban want to silence women – we must amplify their voices

Published 24 August 2021

The Taliban say they will allow girls to be educated, women to work and be in politics, but there is doubt as whether they can or will keep that promise. The very least we can do is ask these women what help and support they need. As the August 31st deadline for ending evacuations out of Kabul airport draws near, the many thousands of those seeking to flee the Taliban regime grow ever more desperate. The Afghan community in Camberwell and Peckham are telling me of the dreadful jeopardy faced by their relatives in Kabul and Jalalabad. Many have worked directly for the UK army or our embassy and feel vulnerable as a result. Others are being specifically targeted by the Taliban for their role in Afghan politics or security. They, and their entire families, are being told quite explicitly by the Taliban "we know who you are, we know what you've done and where you live". Many have already fled their homes to go into hiding elsewhere in Kabul and then have to work out how to get safely to the airport. They need to show proof of how what they've done in the former regime or for the UK makes them a target for the Taliban but it is the Taliban themselves who are managing the roads leading to the airport and looking at documents.

In the searing heat and chaos, our military personnel, diplomatic staff and UK border teams are doing heroic work. They are caring for the thousands who are fleeing to or are in the airport and checking to make sure that they are safe from a threatened IS

attack and also that we don't give refuge in the UK to those who want to come here in order to carry out terror attacks. They are giving out thousands of meals, litres of water, baby food, snacks and nappies. At the same time having to identify the tiny minority who are on our "watch list" as intending to do us terrible harm.

But of course, most will be staying in Afghanistan either because they can't, don't feel able to flee or because they don't want to. Amongst the most vulnerable are women and girls. Under the previous Taliban regime 20 years ago there were no girls in school. Up till they took over again last week, 40% of Afghan schoolchildren were girls. A whole generation of girls have been educated and a whole cohort of young women have gone out to work. Under the previous Taliban regime there were no women in public life. But up until the Taliban takeover there were 69 women Afghan MPs. It is women and girls who benefited most from the ending of the previous Taliban regime and they who have most to fear from the new Taliban rule.

Our armed forces will shortly be leaving but our concern for Afghans and especially for the women and girls must remain.

Last week in an unprecedented move, 175 women MPs from every party in the House wrote to Elay Ershad who, as an MP attended our Women MPs of the World Conference in 2018, to express to her our solidarity.

The Taliban are saying they will allow girls to be educated, women to work and be in politics but there is doubt as whether they can or will keep that promise. The very least we can do is keep in touch directly with those women and ask them what help and support they need. Everyone has acknowledged that women are in the greatest jeopardy and it's important to listen to what they have to say. The tradition is for men in government to talk to male community and governmental leaders abroad.

Our government should talk directly to the women, about everything at every stage. And they should appoint a cabinet minister to liaise with Afghan women leaders to give their situation a proper focus.

Elay Ershad MP

Elay Ershad MP is a high-profile activist on women's rights and was previously a spokesperson for Ashraf Ghani in 2014 and a Gender Advisor to the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Education. In 2018 she attended and spoke at the Women MPs of the World conference I organised in Parliament, hosted by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. You can read the report from the conference [here](#).

I know Elay personally from when she attended and spoke at the Women MPs of the World conference in London and was in contact with her after the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan on the 15 August.

An extract from Elay Ershad's contribution to the Women MPs of the World Conference in 2018 from the Despatch Box in the House of Commons is below:

'When I was a kid, my father, my brothers and my uncles were killed by the Government. We were raised by my mother - I have four sisters.

We had a tough time, but our mother kept sending us to school...

Before I came here, I asked all my constituents on Facebook what I should say, and what I should share with the UK and all these Members of Parliament.

All of them had just one request.

Everyone is talking about equal rights but we as Afghans cannot even dream of them. We Afghans cannot even think about equal rights; we just think about security, and our young generation that are being killed, day by day and every day. That is why I am going to share my constituents' request.

 **Harriet Harman** @HarrietHarman · Aug 18
The Prime Minister @BorisJohnson @10DowningStreet should put you, @PennyMordaunt, as cabinet minister in charge of liaising with and listening to what women Afghan MPs want and leading in govt to make sure it's done.

 **Penny Mordaunt** @PennyMordaunt · Aug 18
Thank you @HarrietHarman for speaking today for women and girls, including Elay Ershad. Pleased we are working across the @HouseofCommons to support these heroic women leaders. Their fate will tell the world what Afghanistan's future will be. #Afghanishta #AfghanWomen twitter.com/HarrietHarman/...



14 18 73



Elay Ershad @ElayErshad · Aug 18

Replying to @HarrietHarman @bonisones2 and 2 others

Honorable Harriet Harman, let me thank you for the touching and strong speech today, I felt honored and delighted

175 women MPs from all parties in Parliament unite to sign letter to 69 Afghan women MPs

On the 18th August I coordinated a letter from 175 women MPs from every party in the House of Commons to Elay Ershad and the 69 Afghan women MPs in Afghanistan. For the first time women in Westminster united to speak with one voice across party lines in order to send their support for women MPs in Afghanistan.



BBC Politics @BBCPolitics · Aug 19

"We've got to be listening to the women themselves rather than have Dominic Raab and the PM simply talking to other male leaders"

Labour's Harriet Harman calls on the government to appoint a minister responsible for liaising with women in Afghanistan

bbc.in/37Ws7JT



Harriet Harman @HarrietHarman

Listen to Afghan women! Afghan woman former MP @ElayErshad on @bbc5live requests PM @BorisJohnson & Foreign Sec @DominicRaab:
*press Taliban to keep promise to protect girls education & let women continue to work
*through UN support the many refugees in Kabul needing food/shelter

11:12 AM · Aug 19, 2021 · Twitter Web App

My letter in full:

RT. HON. HARRIET HARMAN Q.C. M.P.
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR CAMBERWELL AND PECKHAM
MOTHER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Ms Elay Ershad MP

18 August 2021

Dear Elay,

Re: Westminster women MPs pledge support for Afghan women MPs

You inspired us when, as a woman MP from Afghanistan, you joined us in the Chamber of the House of Commons in the UK Parliament in 2018 and spoke of your hopes of freedom and security for the people you represented.

We are dismayed at the situation that now faces you and in particular women in Afghanistan and send you our admiration for your commitment to democracy, to women's rights and above all for your remarkable courage as a woman politician in staying in Kabul, resolute in the face of the Taliban takeover.

As women MPs in the UK Parliament we want you to know that we are looking out for you and we stand in solidarity with you and with all women politicians in Afghanistan who have stepped forward to be in public life and who, in particular, speak out for women and bring the representation of women into politics.

Best wishes,

Rt Hon Harriet Harman QC MP

Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP

Rt Hon Theresa May MP

Rt Hon Diane Abbott MP
Debbie Abrahams MP
Nickie Aiken MP
Rushanara Ali MP
Rosena Allin-Khan MP
Fleur Anderson MP
Caroline Ansell MP
Tonia Antoniazzi MP
Sarah Atherton MP

Victoria Atkins MP
Siobhan Baillie MP
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Mhairi Black MP
Kirsty Blackman MP
Olivia Blake MP

Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP
Deidre Brock MP
Lyn Brown MP
Fiona Bruce MP
Felicity Buchan MP
Karen Buck MP
Dawn Butler MP
Lisa Cameron MP
Maria Caulfield MP

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Laura Trott MP
Liz Twist MP
Rt Hon Valerie Vaz MP
Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP
Beth Winter MP
Rt Hon Dame Rosie Winterton MP

Fighting for women's rights locally and nationally

Close the Loopholes to Protect Rape Victims

Published 7th July 2021



'In practice, as the Victim's Commissioner has said, rape has been decriminalised'

Last year 342 rapes in Southwark were reported to the police. It is a horrific crime. But the government has acknowledged, and even apologised, for its woeful failure to ensure justice for victims of rape, writes Harriet Harman.



Harriet Harman @HarrietHarman · Jun 21

Look at charging rate of rape compared w/ other crimes. 🚨 Problem is not women's lack of confidence as @MaxHillQC said on @BBCWomensHour, it's the criminal justice system. Until DPP understands, this will not be sorted.
bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m0...

...

If you report a drug offence there is a 20.9 per cent chance of someone being charged. But for rape allegations, only 1.4 per cent end up with the suspect being charged.

Report:Charging

- Drug offences: 20.9%
- Robbery offences: 7.8%
- Violence against the person: 6.9%
- Criminal damage and arson: 5.5%
- Rape: 1.4%

In practice, as the Victim's Commissioner has said, rape has been "decriminalised". The government has promised to try and sort out this problem which, though always bad, has got worse since the Conservatives took power in 2010.

And while there are many changes that need to be made, there's one improvement the government should make right away.

For decades it's been recognised that the criminal justice process is an ordeal for a rape victim.

Many victims feel shame and embarrassment to report a sexual experience. It's awful for a victim who's been raped by a stranger in an attack, for example in a park, to endure his defence that she consented to sex with someone she'd never met before. And defendants will habitually claim that she consented, dragging her sexual history into court.

They want to make her abandon the prosecution rather than face all her previous sexual activity being spoken about in court.

They seek to tarnish her reputation with the jury claiming, for example, that she'd previously committed adultery and therefore must be the sort of person who would have agreed to sex with the defendant.

It's been acknowledged since the 1990s that it's wrong for him to try and prove she consented to sex with him because she'd had sex with other men before.

Yet research shows that this is exactly what happens in a third of all rape trials. In one recent case the complainant was distraught to hear the defence, without warning, give evidence that she'd previously had an abortion.

Her parents who'd come to court to support her had no idea about the abortion till her medical records were read out.

The law prohibits the naming of complainants of sex offences. That is a longstanding rule which had to be brought in because otherwise complainants were not prepared to go to court because of the fear of their "dirty linen being washed in public".

But while that rule could be relied on to protect complainants when it was a matter of experienced journalists reporting cases, it doesn't work in the same way in this era of social media.

Anything said in court, and heard by people sitting in the public gallery, can instantly go out on social media.

The anonymity of Twitter users means it is effectively impossible to police the right to anonymity of rape complainants. So, what happens in court is more important than ever.

With the backing of MPs from all parties I've proposed a way to tighten the law to make it work in the way parliament has always intended.

The defendant will still get a fair trial but the complainant's right to privacy will be protected. The government says it agrees that there's a problem but has referred it for consideration by the Law Commission which might take years to report.

This has been a problem for years. We don't want many more to go by before we get justice for rape victims.

The government can and must close this loophole now.

Pressing for greater rights at work for families with sick children

You can't leave a young child on their own when they're sick. But there's no right to take time off work, let alone sick pay. Mumsnet, in partnership with me, carried out a survey in September asking parents' views on whether Statutory Sick Pay should be extended to cover parents when a child of nursery or primary school age is off school sick. Over 1,000 parents responded to the survey.

88% of parents reported having taken time off work to care for a sick child, of whom:

- 39% had taken annual leave,
- 29% had taken unpaid leave,
- 10% had reduced their hours or dropped work, and
- 2% had left their job.

More than half of working class parents (52%) reported taking unpaid leave to look



The image shows a screenshot of a tweet from Harriet Harman (@HarrietHarman) and a graphic for a Mumsnet survey. The tweet discusses the need for sick pay and leave for parents of sick children, mentioning the forthcoming Employment Bill and tagging @MumsnetTowers, @Ed_Miliband, and @carolinenokes. The Mumsnet graphic, dated Oct 7, reports that 88% of parents take time off work to care for sick children, with 39% using holiday leave and 29% taking unpaid leave. It also states that 9 in 10 parents support extending paid sick leave to include sick dependent children, with a link to the survey results. The graphic features a photo of a child being given medicine and the text '90% support the extension of paid sick leave to include when primary school aged children are sick'.

Harriet Harman
@HarrietHarman

Long overdue for sick pay & leave for parents who have to take time off for sick child. Let's use forthcoming Employment Bill to make this change
[@MumsnetTowers](#) [@Ed_Miliband](#) [@carolinenokes](#)

Mumsnet @MumsnetTowers · Oct 7
NEW: A Mumsnet survey with @HarrietHarman reveals 88% of parents take time off work to care for sick children, 39% using up holiday leave and 29% taking unpaid leave.
9 in 10 parents support extending paid sick leave to include sick dependent children: [tiny.mn/3mtD5NJ](#)
[Show this thread](#)

Parents use annual leave or take unpaid leave to care for sick children
90% support the extension of paid sick leave to include when primary school aged children are sick

after sick children. They were twice as likely to take unpaid leave as middle class parents. Women and the self-employed were most affected by the need to take time off work to care for sick children.

90% of parents said they would support extending Statutory Sick Pay for this purpose. The Government's promised Employment Bill is our chance to insist that the Government implement this change.



Demanding a proper police response to violence against women

On 17th September Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary published a highly critical [report](#) listing wholesale failings in the police response to violence against women and girls. I challenged the Government to implement the full findings of the report in an Urgent Question in the House of Commons on

the 22nd September. My contribution:

I thank the Minister for her response and welcome her to her new role and wish her well in it. I will support her in her work, but we need a greater sense of urgency. In just the last few days, there have been more horrific killings of women. In Sheffield, 35-year-old Terri Harris was killed together with three children, John Paul Bennett, Lacey Bennet and Connie Gent. In Greenwich, primary school teacher Sabina Nessa was only 28 years old.

Her Majesty's inspectorate of police, Zoë Billingham, rightly describes this as an "epidemic" of male violence against women, and the extent of the impunity of men for this violence is shown by the killer of Sophie Moss saying that it was just "rough sex gone wrong" and literally getting away without a murder charge.

All credit to the Government for commissioning this report. Will they now implement its recommendations in full? We have a woman Home Secretary, and I believe that women in leading positions have a special duty to deliver for other women. Although she will meet the inevitable institutional objections and traditional resistance to change, she will, if she does this, have 100% support from this side of the House and, indeed, 100% support from her own side. It is not often we can say this, but this is something that the whole House wants.

You can watch my contribution and see the Minister's response [here](#).

Tackling sexual misconduct in the Metropolitan Police

The full horror of how Wayne Couzens used his warrant card, handcuffs and police powers to kidnap and kill Sarah Everard on 4th March was made public at the sentencing hearing on 30th September where Couzens was sentenced to a whole-life prison term. Women should be able to trust the police, not fear them.

I wrote to the Home Secretary Priti Patel MP and then-Commissioner Dame Cressida Dick calling for the changes that need to be made to rebuild women's trust and I called for the Commissioner to resign so that those changes can be taken forward by someone who recognizes the problem and is committed to change.

You can see my letters [here](#).



lucy manning @lucymanning · Sep 30

The chair of Parliament's Human Rts Cttee @HarrietHarman calls on Met boss Cressida Dick to resign. Says "women should be able to trust the police not fear them." Says changes are needed that Dame Cressida can't lead. "I ask you to resign to enable these changes."

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Cressida Dick has failed the women of this country and must resign

Published Friday 1st October 2021



Red Box
@timesredbox

Women should be able to trust the police, not fear them. But every woman in London will have seen the chilling video pictures of a police officer using his power of arrest and his handcuffs to [abduct Sarah Everard](#) in order to then rape and murder her. Cressida Dick, the Met commissioner, says the police have been "rocked" by this. But women's confidence has been rocked to the point of collapse.

We need action to enable women to [trust the police](#). And it's obvious what that action is. We need an overhaul of the vetting procedure for new police recruits. We need a training programme for serving officers which makes them look at their own attitudes and spot warning signs amongst their colleagues.

An allegation of violence [against a woman by an officer](#) should mean immediate suspension followed by an investigation, not by their own colleagues but by a different force.

Covering up for a colleague should warrant immediate dismissal. There need to be checks when an officer moves from one force to another. These are changes which need immediate and determined implementation, led by a Metropolitan commissioner determined to make change.

That's why it cannot be led by the current commissioner. She described the officer who killed Sarah Everard's as just "the occasional bad'un". It was on her watch that he transferred from Kent police without the allegations against him there being checked. It was on her watch too that he committed indecent assault which [his Met colleagues](#) then failed to report.

Even after all that, she could have taken action as soon as she discovered that the man admitting to Sarah's murder was [a serving police officer](#). She could have then acted on the complaints she had received from the Centre for Women's Justice or

implemented the proposals of the Police Inspectorate. But she has done nothing. No one can have confidence that she will drive through the change we urgently need.

Priti Patel has said she's been asking questions of the Met Commissioner but it's not questions we need from the Home Secretary, it's action. She should have announced the implementation of the police inspectorate report which identified serious systemic failings of the police to protect women and girls and bring offenders to justice.

Everyone is grief-stricken for Sarah Everard's family and we hope that the "whole-life" sentence, which means he'll never be released, will give them some solace. But we need to face up to the fact that this should never have happened and do what we can to make sure it doesn't happen again. That means a Home Secretary determined to drive change in the police and introduce tough new laws and [a new Met Commissioner](#).

Demanding action from the Government to tackle sexual misconduct in the police

I brought the issue of sexual misconduct in the police to the attention of Parliament with an Urgent Question on 20th October. I challenged the Home Office to act on the failings of the police to deal with sexual misconduct in the force. My contribution:



Wayne Couzens used his Metropolitan police warrant card, his Metropolitan police handcuffs and his police powers to kidnap and kill Sarah Everard. Since the full horror of this was made public at the sentencing hearing, there has been an outpouring about the failure of the police to deal with misogyny and sexism within the force.

Women need to be able to trust the police, not fear them. That means that we need to be certain that allegations of sexism and misogyny result in immediate suspension—not just removal from the frontline but immediate suspension from the police—that findings of sexual misconduct lead to instant dismissal, that vetting and training is sorted urgently, and that if you are in a WhatsApp group that deals in sexual violence and misogyny you should not be in the police. The official inquiries that the Minister mentioned are under way are welcome, but even before those inquiries report, these basic issues should be tackled now.

We need firm leadership from the police—from the top of the police—in recognising that big change is needed, and a determination not to stand in the way of that change but to make it happen. I know the Home Secretary agrees with us on that. I do not believe that will happen under the current Metropolitan police commissioner, who should, I believe, step down so that this vital change can happen and happen now.

You can watch my contribution and the Minister's response [here](#).

Stopping men avoiding murder charges when they kill their partners during sex

For a number of years there has been a growing problem of men seeking to evade responsibility for killing their partners by saying that it was "rough sex gone wrong". One of the latest examples was Sam Pybus who killed Sophie Moss in February 2021 by strangling her and then saying it was what she wanted. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) dropped the murder charge, and on his conviction for manslaughter he received only four years and eight months in jail for the killing.

I wrote to the Director of Public Prosecutions Max Hill QC to bring to his attention cases in which the CPS accepted the "rough sex gone wrong" defence in domestic homicide. In each case the offender intended the acts which caused her death but in each case he faced not a charge of murder but only manslaughter.

My letter in full:

14 July 2021

Dear Max,

Re: "Rough sex gone wrong" defence

I'm writing to you about 2 recent cases in which the CPS accepted the "rough sex gone wrong" defence in domestic homicide.

In each case the offender intended the acts which caused her death. In each case he faced not a charge of murder but only manslaughter.

In the case of R -v - Warren Martin Coulton (sentenced 5 May 2021 at Mold Crown Court), Claire Wright was killed by his putting a sock in her mouth and tying her hands behind her back. She was a 38 year old much loved mother of 2 children. The Judge said to the offender "true it is that you and Claire Wright were both keen on restraint and bondage." Claire was dead and was unable to speak at the trial and say whether that was actually the case. And in any event she clearly did not consent to being killed.

The other case is R - v - Sam Pybus (plea entered 9 July 2021 at Teesside Crown Court). Pybus killed Sophie Moss aged 33 by strangling her. The prosecution accepted his plea of guilty of manslaughter on the basis that she consented to "hand pressure that she and Sam Pybus were engaging in and she had done so previously." She, of course, was not there to give evidence as to whether she did, on that occasion or indeed previously, freely give her consent.

My concern is that we are in a situation where any man can kill his partner and then claim that she consented. It was not his fault that she died. It was hers because they were doing sex the way she wanted. The fact that he had inflicted similar injuries on her previously is used by the defence to prove that she consented when of course it proves nothing of the sort. Now the patterns of behaviour and coercion in domestic violence cases are widely understood. The fact that it has been done before does not prove that it was consensual either on the occasion that was fatal or previously.



Harriet Harman @HarrietHarman · Jul 9

"Yes, I killed her but it was what she wanted". Defence of "rough sex gone wrong" & once again prosecution drop murder charge. I'm writing to DPP. Why Man pleads guilty to killing lover by choking her to death | Daily Mail Online



[dailymail.co.uk](https://www.dailymail.co.uk)

Man pleads guilty to killing lover by choking her to death
Sam Pybus, 31, admitted killing Sophie Moss, 33, who was found in a critical condition following an incident at a property in Darlington in ...

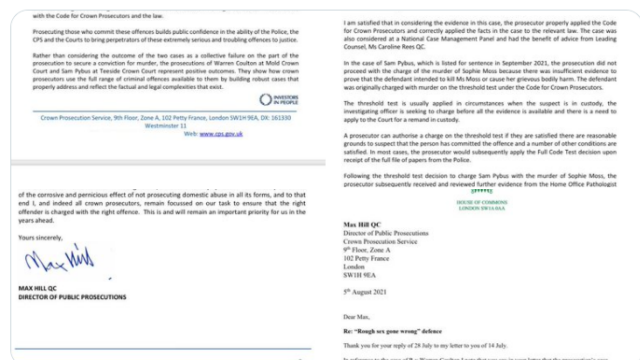
Hearing the judge blithely rule that she was "keen on restraint and bondage" is awful. The Judge cannot know because she cannot tell him.

The paradox is that this is a sinister use, by the defendant against the victim, of the culture of acknowledgment of women's sexual empowerment. In decades past it would have been impossible to put the argument that she loved sex which resulted in injuries. Now with women asserting their right to their sexual identity, that is regarded as a perfectly reasonable proposition. And "Fifty Shades of Grey" reinforces that notion. So the irony is that something which is part of women's liberation from the idea that women are just permissive, passive sexual objects and that men are the sexual beings, is used to justify homicide, the ultimate domestic violence.



Harriet Harman
@HarrietHarman

Letter from @MaxHillQC & my response to him re "rough sex gone wrong" defence. Clear evidence that defence is still used despite law changes. I look forward to meeting with @MaxHillQC @Laura_Farris to discuss further how to end use of this defence for good.



But even accepting that it was consensual, which I don't think it's possible to do when she's unable to give evidence because she's dead, there is in my view a problem with intent. It is clear in these cases that he did intend the actions which killed her. Warren Coulton did intend to put the sock in her mouth which interrupted her breathing and did intend to tie her hands behind her back which prevented her saving herself. Sam Pybus did intend to put his hands round her neck and interrupt her breathing. That is the point at which intention should be judged, not whether he intended to kill her or cause her serious harm. When she dies it is because he has taken the risk of doing something which might, and did, kill her. It is not acceptable for him to be able to turn round and say that he didn't

mean her to die. She did die and he should take the responsibility for that, not shift it onto her by way of asserting her enjoyment of rough sex.

There are a number of serious problems with this:

- it is the ultimate victim blaming*
- he shifts responsibility for his actions to her*
- any man can kill his partner and say afterwards that it's what she wanted*
- it lets men who commit domestic homicide get away with murder.*

You and I have discussed this in the past and you have argued that everything is as it should be. I would ask you to:

- review the prosecution decisions in these two cases and inform me whether you think they were the right decisions*
- let me know whether, in the light of these two cases, you are concerned at this growing culture of victim blaming*
- let me know whether you are content with how the interpretation of intent is being used by men to evade responsibility for murder.*

If you share any of my concerns would you join me in backing a reference to the Law Commission of this specific issue?

Parliament clearly intended to end the "rough sex gone wrong" defence with section 71 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 yet the problem, as is evident in these two cases, remains and is getting worse.

We cannot sleepwalk into a situation where, if the victim is their sexual partner, men literally get away with murder.

Yours sincerely,

Harriet Harman QC MP



On 8th September I further wrote to the Attorney General Suella Braverman MP to ask her to refer his sentence to the Court of Appeal as Unduly Lenient. She confirmed to me that she had referred it. The hearing was on 12th November. Disappointingly the Court of Appeal did not increase his sentence.



Harriet Harman
@HarrietHarman

As Sam Pybus becomes the latest "rough sex" killer to escape murder charge, @Laura_Farris & I complain to DPP about @CPSUK dropping murder charges @centreWJ @Wecantconsentto @VeraBaird

On 11th October I further challenged the Director of Public Prosecutions Max Hill QC in person at a meeting with Laura Farris MP about the failure of the CPS to ensure that men who kill their partners during sex face murder charges rather than evade responsibility by claiming it was rough sex gone wrong. I am not convinced that the CPS is taking the action needed on this. I am continuing to work with other MPs and women's organisations to tackle this problem and end this culture of excuses.

In November I also met with Laura Farris MP, Claire Waxman the London Victims' Commissioner, Helen Wistrich from the Centre for



Women's Justice and Fiona Mackenzie and Louise Perry from We Can't Consent to This, to decide what next steps we will take to end the growing trend of men getting away without a murder charge.

We agreed that a change to the law is needed. I proposed and drafted a new offence of "Sex Murder" that would ensure that any person who killed their partner during sex and intended the action that led to their death would receive a mandatory life sentence. I tabled an amendment to create this new offence to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill in the House of Lords and it was debated on 22nd November. Unfortunately there was no vote but I continue working to achieve the law change necessary to ensure victims of sex murder receive justice.



Harriet Harman
@HarrietHarman · Nov 2

Thanks @Laura_Farris for convening very productive meeting on getting justice for women victims of sex murder with @Wecantconsentto @HWistrich @centreWJ @LDNVictimsComm P.s. Thanks @fionamacmac & @Louise_m_perry for bringing lovely babies!



Ending male harassment of women and girls in the street

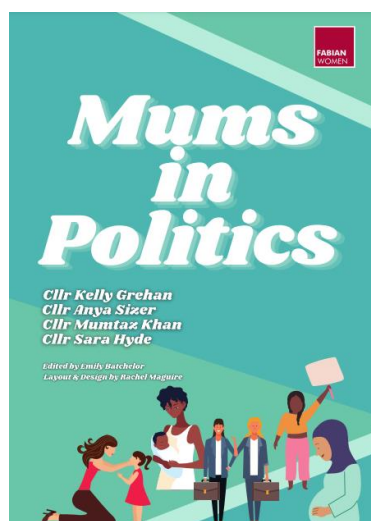
Following the horrific murders of Bibaa Henry and Nicole Smallman, Sarah Everard, and Sabina Nessa in the past year there was an outpouring from women all around the country protesting about violence against women and girls and in particular male threats and harassment in the street. In March 2021 I tabled New Clauses to the Government's Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill that would have made street harassment and kerb-crawling a crime. The Government rejected my proposed New Clauses but I continue to build support for them and press for them to be made into law.

The Northern Echo wrote about my campaign in October, and you can read the article on this [here](#).

We need more mothers in politics

When Parliament doesn't look like those it represents it is not surprising that people might doubt whether politicians understand their lives. Good public policy is made by people who understand the issue, and that understanding comes from experience. That is why it is essential that we have more mums in politics and more mums "in the room" when key decisions are taken that affect their lives.

I wrote the foreword to the Fabian Women's Network booklet *Mums in Politics* that was launched at last year's Labour Party Conference in September. It contains personal stories about what it is like being a mum in politics at all levels. You can read the full booklet [here](#).



My foreword:

The misery of miscarriage, the roller coaster of IVF, the struggle with breastfeeding, the unpredictability of the "due date", the commitment to your work, the challenge of childcare - all these are the daily experience of millions of mums in Britain today. And that is why we need to have, in politics, women who have personal experience of motherhood. Government and council policies have a big impact on mothers, whether it's housing or policing, childcare or maternity services. Yet our decision-making remains male-dominated. Too often there are still no women "in the room" when key decisions are made or the women who are there are not listened to by the male hierarchy. Public policy doesn't work properly if it's made by

people who don't truly understand the issue. So, mums-to-be and mums of children of all ages are necessary for our politics. We are not doing mums a favour by including them in politics, their participation is a democratic imperative.

The legitimacy of our democracy is always being tested. People understandably forever doubt whether politicians understand their lives. Our democracy needs mums in politics so that women in the country raising their children can see that in their



councils and in their parliament there are women who truly do understand their lives because they share their experiences.

The underrepresentation of mums in politics is not evidence of mums not wanting to be in politics or not being able to. It's the result of the persistent discrimination that writes off a mother as too busy or too distracted to be able to do her work properly. The same judgment is never applied to fathers. We'll know we've ended that discrimination and got properly representative politics when the number of mums in politics reflects the number of mums in the country. And when men take equal responsibility for caring for children, and older relatives, the lives of all women including women in politics will be dramatically transformed.

We've made huge progress in ensuring that mothers are in there sharing power and decision-making. But we still have a long way to go.

Interview with Politics Home for International Women's Day 2022

Published 8th March

The Harriet Harman interview: "There are some things only women MPs can do"

As a feminist, minister, leader and Mother of the House, Harriet Harman's 40 years in Parliament have seen her fight relentlessly for change for women. In her first print interview since the sudden death of her husband Jack Dromey, the Labour MP for Camberwell and Peckham outlines her plans to take her work global, and tells Kate Proctor how she is adjusting to a 'new reality' without her partner of five decades.

"There are some things only women MPs can do, and without women, they will not be done," Harriet Harman says serenely from behind her round office table overlooking Parliament Square. Reaching for a photograph of Filipina senator Risa Hontiveros, she shows off an image of the politician touching the baby-bump of a female campaigner fighting for better maternity rights.

"Look at those women – smiles all around," she says, intimating that a male politician in the Philippines, or indeed any country, may not have been able to have the same interaction.

Harman believes that globally women must take the lead on tackling issues that affect them as a gender, such as violence against women – because otherwise who will? "They have to lead the drive for maternity rights," she continues. "They have to lead the drive for economic equality for women.

"A lot of them face massive difficulties from their own families, from their community, from the establishment, but they're absolutely determined... But they don't have the global networks that men do".



Sounding as passionate as ever about her life's work - the championing of women in Parliament politics and society - Harman, 71, is about to start focusing on feminism from an international perspective. She will be taking testimony from 50 female politicians from around the world - Australia, Nepal, Ireland, Jamaica to name a few - in order to delve into their experiences in their own parliaments. She wants to hear their struggles, battles, tactics for female representation, and hopes the resulting research will form the basis of a book. This is a sizeable project to undertake as she prepares to stand down as an MP at the next general election, but she sounds fired up to get it completed. Already, she says she can see incredible similarities, between countries thousands of miles apart. Whether it's a 25-year-old politician from Jamaica or a woman with 30 years' experience in the Maldives, she says it is clear there is a "universality of our agenda".

"If women left to their own devices, in every country in the world, come up with the same issues, we can't all be wrong," she adds triumphantly. "Actually we're all right."

Harman is focused and thoughtful when we meet in her office in Portcullis House, a wonderful, light space with impressive views over Parliament. Close by is the office of former prime minister Theresa May; the pair sparred for years as leader and shadow leader of the Commons, gaining a grudging respect for each other. Over Harman's chair lies a green sash emblazoned with the slogan "100 years of women voting," and in the corner is a wooden plaque from female politicians from Cameroon who attended her pre-pandemic Women MPs of The World Conference held in Parliament. She is also wearing green today, saying she wanted to wear something a little brighter than she has recently...

A few weeks ago, Harman suffered a catastrophic personal tragedy with the sudden death of her husband and partner of 47 years, Jack Dromey, a celebrated trade unionist and latterly the Labour MP for Birmingham Erdington. His passing on 7 January from heart failure sent shockwaves through Westminster; warm tributes were paid from across the House. Harman says it was heart-warming to see the sheer volume of tributes, which came as a comfort to their three grown-up children. We will return to this later in the interview.

Looking through the window, and across to Parliament, I ask what still frustrates her about how women's rights are dealt with generally, and the working conditions for women MPs in this country.

Bluntly, everything takes too long, and women are still told to "watch their tone", she responds.

The introduction of proxy voting in 2020, for example, came after a decades-long campaign. She hits out at the "passive resistance" of male politicians who need to go further than merely saying they agree with a policy change. Their inaction can be a barrier, she believes.

Mainly, though, it's a question of speed. "I want the time to be concertinaed between when you make the argument, win the argument, nobody will disagree with the argument and you end up with change," she says.

She is angry at how former health secretary Matt Hancock told shadow minister Rosena Allin-Khan to consider her tone in the Commons in 2020. New Health



Secretary Sajid Javid has also told Allin-Khan she has misjudged the "tone of the House".

It's illuminating, because underneath, that is really [saying] 'you shouldn't be speaking at all, please speak only with our permission.

"This is men telling women how women should speak. It's illuminating, because underneath, that is really [saying] 'you shouldn't be speaking at all, please speak only with our permission,'" she says.

Harman is thankful however that in 2022 violence against women and girls is now an absolute priority. And that male MPs can utter words like "menopause" and "periods" in the Chamber without embarrassment, making it easier to discuss women's health.

The current debate about trans rights was foreseen, she claims, when as women and equalities minister she co-authored the landmark

Equalities Act back in 2010, alongside then-solicitor general, Vera Baird.

"All those discussions about discrimination against trans women and men and the interaction with single-sex services were all envisaged," she said.

Equalities is about achieving a balance, she says, and this can be hugely challenging. "For example because of the idea of protection of freedom of religion, religions are allowed to discriminate on grounds of sex. You're not forced to have a woman in all religions, with equal access [as] men."

She regrets that the row around women and trans rights has taken a "toxic" turn. A current flash point is concern over discrimination against trans women on the grounds of sex in specific settings such as a domestic violence refuges or rape crisis centres.

Harman says the Equality Act ensures there is no blanket ban on trans women accessing services, but there are circumstances in which single sex-services may exclude some individuals, and she thinks this is right.

"The fundamentals of the Gender Recognition Act (2004), and the Equality Act (2010), remain sound – that you should protect trans people from discrimination, and transphobia, but you should also have exceptions, which are able to be used but on a narrow basis, not on a blanket basis."

Harman says Scotland, which is moving faster than England over what the exact process for gender recognition should be, will provide helpful context to some of the debate, and she also anticipates court cases over access to single-sex services.

Turning to the departure of first female Metropolitan Police Commissioner Cressida Dick, who resigned in February after a perceived inability to reform the culture of the force, Harman says she simply wasn't the right person to lead change.

Dick had "shown herself to be someone who was defending the organisation, even including defending the indefensible", Harman adds.

"Given the circumstances, it would be very disappointing if the new appointment doesn't mark a major step forward."

Harman talks about her late husband with affection. The many mourners at his funeral included former prime ministers Gordon Brown and Tony Blair, with the latter giving a Bible reading. Particularly striking was the outpouring of sorrow and respect from Conservatives. Pensions minister Guy Opperman said he was bereft at Dromey's death, writing: "It was an honour to know him, and we are poorer for his loss."

Harman says: "I knew what good relations he had with everybody because it was sometimes quite hard to get home after a vote, because we were walking along a corridor, and Jack would have to have about 20 conversations with people!"

"It was really heart-warming to see how incredibly supportive and nice people were, and very comforting for the children to see that."

As well as a huge number of successful trade union campaigns, Dromey was a champion of women in the workplace throughout his life – and this started at home, she says. When Harman was elected at the 1982 Peckham by-election, she was pregnant with her first child, Harry, and the pair went on to have another son, Joe, and a daughter, Amy, within her first five years in office. With his constant support and encouragement, she became a secretary of state and deputy leader of the Labour Party, later serving as acting leader between the departure of Ed Miliband and election of Jeremy Corbyn.



"It was really heart-warming to see how incredibly supportive and nice people were, and very comforting for the children to see that."

She says Dromey used to give a "two-fold strong message" to the children. It was "what a great mother you've got" and "what marvellous things she's doing at work". "Even when there wasn't much evidence of either to reinforce that – there was always an upbeat message!" she says.

"It must be very difficult to be a woman MP if you feel you've not got the support of your own children. If your children don't feel it's a good thing then you are bound to have doubts as to whether to carry on doing it, but the propaganda at home was full on. All the time," she says smiling.

"It helped them think it was as things should be."

Harman says she regrets that she cannot discuss with Dromey the political events of the last few weeks, and misses the constant political conversations they had, dating back to the 1970s.

"You know, Jack and I politically had kind of grown up together. So, I want to be discussing Ukraine with him. There's a whole load of things which have happened since he's died that I can't discuss with him anymore.

"Everything else that happened until the day he died... I know what he thought about, and we discussed them over the years, but there will be new things where he's not around to be discussing them with me."

As we leave her office to head to Parliament's terrace she points out that the office next door to hers was Dromey's. The lights are off and his name plate has been removed. It's incredibly sad and must be difficult to walk past every day.

On life now without her partner, Harman says she still doesn't recognise her "new reality". She says several times during our discussion that she is now a woman without a man, but that she is not alone. With three children and five grandchildren, and a lifetime in the Labour Party, she is surrounded by people.

"My mum lived til she was 100, so I might have another 30 years. So I've got to be advancing into this new scenario.

"The other thing is that when I first got together with Jack, it was in a context of society's view that you had to have a man and if you didn't... that was a disaster. And if you were a widow, that was terrible, because you didn't have a man and your life was over.

"I'm now emerging as a woman without a man into a very different context. We don't buy that argument anymore that women's lives are worthless because they're not with a man. It's not easy but I shall try and walk the talk."

Interviewing Women MPs from other countries

In 2018 I held a conference for Women MPs of the World in the chamber of the House of Commons. While parliaments around the world are still male-dominated there are now women MPs in every parliament in the world. Despite very different contexts, our objectives for progressive change for women in our respective countries are so similar. Out of that 2018 conference arose an idea for a new project interviewing women MPs from Parliaments all over the world.



Over the past year I have been interviewing these women to hear from them about why they decided to enter politics, how they got there and what they hope to achieve.

So far I've interviewed:

- Australia: Tanya Plibersek MP



- Barbados: Santia Bradshaw MP
- Somalia: Fawzia Yusuf H Adam MP
- Nepal: Asha Kumari MP
- Jamaica: Tamika Davis MP
- Sierra Leone: Hajaratu Faith Samura MP
- The Bahamas: Patricia Ann Deveaux MP,
- Nigeria: Betty Apiafi MP
- Mauritius: Teenah Jutton MP
- Saudi Arabia: Dr Aliaa Al Dahlawi MP
- Malaysia: Fuziah Salleh MP
- Canada: Ruby Sahota MP
- Mexico: Cynthia Lopez Castro MP
- New Zealand: Jan Logie MP
- Indonesia: Luluk Nur Hamidah MP
- Germany: Beate Walter-Rosenheimer MP
- The Maldives: Rozaina Adam MP



And I will be conducting more interviews in the coming months.



Supporting the Call to Action to end rape and sexual violence in Tigray

Extreme sexual violence has been rampant in the armed conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia. According to the UN over 26,000 survivors are waiting for services for their injuries.

On 7th March I attended an event hosted by Helen Hayes MP in the House of Commons and heard powerful testimony of the sexual violence in the conflict from Filsan Ahmed, former Minister of Women, Children and Youth of Ethiopia, and Lucy Kassa, an Ethiopian journalist. I strongly support their Call to Action to end these horrific crimes.

Speaking at International Women's Day event hosted by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Women in Parliament

The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Women in Parliament aims to achieve 50% women in Parliament. I spoke at their International Women's Day 2022 event. There was a large turnout and alongside the Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons, Dame Eleanor Laing MP, I spoke about my experience arriving in the House of Commons as one of only 3% women MPs. Parliament is now 35% women and women are a 'critical mass', but we still have further to go. The problem is not women not stepping forward to be MPs, but the men standing in their way.



Met Police found to have acted illegally in banning Sarah Everard vigil

On 11th March 2022 the Met Police were found to have acted unlawfully by banning the vigil for Sarah Everard on Clapham Common on 13th March 2021. At the time of



Harriet Harman
@HarrietHarman

Cmon @metpoliceuk now agree a way for this vigil to happen safely. Many women want to show their concern. Including women met police officers!

Reclaim These Streets @ReclaimTS · Mar 12, 2021

We have an update from our High Court case earlier today, please see the statement attached. #ReclaimTheseStreets
[Show this thread](#)



For Immediate Release
Date: 12th March 2021

#ReclaimTheseStreets judgment now in: ruling confirms law does not prevent protest in all circumstances

Reclaim These Streets, the volunteer collective planning to hold a socially-distanced vigil on Clapham Common on Saturday 13th March, challenged the Metropolitan Police in the High Court today.

Reclaim These Streets' argument centred around challenging the Metropolitan Police's interpretation of coronavirus legislation, when taken together with the Human Rights Act, stating that the force's understanding of the law is wrong.

A spokesperson for Reclaim These Streets said:

"We were always aware of the challenges of organising a Covid-secure vigil, but safety has been the top priority from the beginning. We proactively reached out to the relevant authorities to ensure that the event could take place safely and legally and we are delighted that Justice Hargate has recognised this and found this to be true. This is vindication for all those women who have been devastated by the death of Sarah Everard, who simply want to come together to share their grief and solidarity. The Metropolitan Police did not engage with us and said that any kind of protest would be illegal.

"We are pleased that the Judge spelled out in a detailed ruling that the law does not prevent the police from permitting and facilitating protest in all circumstances. The law is now clear that it is up to the police to conduct a proportionality assessment and the circumstances of each case. The judge has made clear that the police must make their own decision about whether the protest can go ahead and that must include a proportionality balancing exercise.

"Because of this ruling, protest during the Coronavirus pandemic is now potentially lawful in England, as police are now able take into account the fact that our protest has public health and



Harriet Harman
@HarrietHarman

Met mishandled vigil plan from the outset. They should have reached agreement. Terrible scenes in Clapham. I don't want to see any of these women in court.

Keir Starmer @Keir_Starmer · Mar 13, 2021

The scenes in Clapham this evening are deeply disturbing. Women came together to mourn Sarah Everard - they should have been able to do so peacefully.

I share their anger and upset at how this has been handled. This was not the way to police this protest.

the vigil in phone calls with senior officers I privately urged the Met to let the vigil go ahead and to reach agreement with Reclaim These Streets on how it should be organised so as to protect public health and comply with Covid restrictions. I also urged the Met publicly to negotiate so there could be a safe and peaceful protest. But they did not listen, refused to negotiate an agreement and simply banned it. And the Government were no help, having pushed through restrictions on demonstrations which were unclear. Because of the strength of feeling about Sarah Everard's murder, women gathered anyway. The police breaking up the demonstration caused dismay and many women were arrested. This is just another example of the Met Police:

- not listening to women and
- breaching the rights of demonstrators.

I urged then that none of the women should be prosecuted. Any outstanding prosecutions against those women should now be dropped immediately.



Harriet Harman @HarrietHarman · Mar 14, 2021

Beyond belief that @metpoliceuk Commissioner refusing to meet or talk to @ReclaimTS! They are reflecting fear & concerns of millions of women & girls. Ignoring them will not make them go away. They want change! And we're going to ensure they get it! twitter.com/reclaimts/stat...

Women's Safety and the Met Police

Published March 2022

ESTABLISHED 1865

southlondonpress

LONDON WEEKLY NEWS & Mercury

Cressida Dick, The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, the most senior police officer in the UK has announced that she is standing down early.

Clearly she had lost the confidence of the Mayor Sadiq Khan and her position had become untenable.

The next commissioner, who'll be appointed by the Home Secretary, in consultation with the London Mayor, will need to do a much better job. And will need to rapidly turn the Met into a force that all Londoners can have confidence in.

And that means ridding the Met of misogyny, racism and homophobia and ensuring that the only officers in the force are those who, like the majority of officers, want to do a good job serving the public.

It was a disappointment for me to see the first woman Met Commissioner's term of office end under a cloud. But for some time it was evident to me that she'd have to go. She was popular with her officers but I don't think she was prepared to use her leadership to insist on necessary change even where it would have been resisted by some officers.

When it became clear that the man who abducted and murdered Sarah Everard was a police officer, Wayne Couzens, she said that the force had "an occasional wrong'un". But it was clear that it was not just "one bad apple" but that there was a wider problem of misogyny. Couzens was in a WhatsApp group with other officers which was sharing lurid and misogynist messages. There were other officers on a WhatsApp group who shared the tragic pictures of the murdered bodies of sisters Nicole Smallman and Bibaa Henry. There were officers at Charing Cross police station who shared misogynist, homophobic and racist tweets. A black officer in Croydon recorded shameful "banter" in the canteen.

It's clear that the Met's screening and monitoring woefully fails even to identify let alone root out men who are totally unfit to be police officers who let Londoners down and bring shame on all the decent Met officers.

In her defence, Dick complained that the police disciplinary procedures, which are laid down by Parliament, protect officers who ought to be dismissed. But she never once told us London MPs that this was a problem or asked us to change those procedures, which we would readily have done.

The Met, under Dick's leadership, refused to allow the vigil to remember Sarah Everard to go ahead on Clapham Common. My proposals that the Met should negotiate to allow a small, socially-distanced vigil to go ahead were ignored and the result was thousands of women came to the vigil anyway and many were arrested.

And even this week the Met leadership have once again shown their ineptness. They should have negotiated with the protesters who occupied the Russian oligarch's central London mansion to protest about Putin's invasion of Ukraine and to urge support for refugees and they should have arranged the terms on which they'd leave the property. Instead the police smashed their way in and arrested the demonstrators.

The Met cannot just be a representative sample of Londoners. They have to be better than that. Unlike ordinary Londoners, they have the power to arrest and detain. We must be completely confident that they will use those powers honestly and in a way which contains not a hint of racism, misogyny or bigotry. There needs to be a complete overhaul of vetting and monitoring of officers. The processes for disciplining and dismissing officers need to be reformed.

Cressida Dick either didn't see the need to do this or didn't know how to. The next Met Commissioner must set about it as his or her first task.

Urging the Prime Minister to protect rights of rape survivors

On 17th June I, along with almost 100 other Labour women MPs, signed a letter to the Prime Minister regarding changes to rules on evidence for rape trials.

The rate of prosecution for rape is already low, and the conviction rate is even lower. Changing rules to include counselling notes in disclosure at trial will stop women from seeking support following rape, and will disincentivise women from reporting rape to the police.

The Government must stop these changes coming into effect.

The letter in full:

At Prime Minister's Questions on Wednesday, Sarah Champion asked you about the Attorney General's proposed changes affecting the rights of survivors of rape and sexual assault to seek counselling while their attackers are awaiting trial. You appeared unaware of these changes, but sincere in your desire to look into the concerns raised, so we wanted as a group to write to you to explain the issue and ask you to intervene before these changes take effect next month.

As you may be aware, it has been the legal precedent since 2004 – established by R v Alibhai – that third-party information in criminal cases need only be disclosed by the prosecuting authorities where it would actively damage their case and help the defence's.

This test is particularly important in cases of rape and sexual assault, where that third party information could include notes from therapy or counselling sessions, which survivors of those crimes have sought to help them deal with the trauma they have faced.

For tens of thousands of survivors of rape and sexual assault, that counselling is a crucial step on the road to recovery, and one which they should feel confident about seeking, especially during the increasingly long delays many are having to endure waiting for their day in court.

However, new guidance published by the Attorney General advises that the Alibhai precedent does "not set a binding standard for what the test [for disclosure] should be", and that all third-party information must be disclosed if it is deemed 'relevant' to the case at hand.

If these changes go ahead, it risks opening the door for the disclosure of almost all notes from pre-trial counselling sessions received by survivors of rape and sexual assault. And sadly, the history of such trials in our country has told us what will happen next.

The deeply personal, private information from those counselling sessions will not just be exposed for the world to see, but be used to try and intimidate, humiliate and discredit women and girls who are simply trying to bring the men who raped or assaulted them to justice.

That prospect will cause many survivors to avoid seeking therapy, and make it more likely that cases will collapse when the prolonged stress of waiting for trials becomes too much. As Sarah said to you on Wednesday, it will force many women to choose between therapy and justice.



Emily Thornberry
@EmilyThornberry

I am one of almost 100 Labour women MPs who have written to Boris Johnson today urging him to block new rules which threaten the rights of rape survivors to seek counselling before their attackers go on trial. No survivor should ever have to choose between therapy and justice.



11:16 AM · Jun 17, 2022 · Twitter Web App

757 Retweets 39 Quote Tweets 2,799 Likes

It is no wonder that the Victims' Commissioner has criticised the Attorney General's proposals, and that the new guidance has been condemned by a broad range of campaigners and experts on violence against women and girls, as well as by survivors themselves.

At a time when incidents of violence against women and girls are the highest on record, when the charge rate in rape cases has dropped to a historic low of 1.3 percent, and when rape survivors are typically having to wait more than 1,000 days to have their cases completed in court, it cannot be right to make it harder for rape survivors to access therapy.

We therefore urge you to intervene and instruct the Attorney General to reconsider this dangerous and ill-considered guidance before it comes into effect on the 25th July.

In Parliament

Shared experiences of being women MPs: my joint interview with new Labour MP Kim Leadbeater

In July we welcomed Kim Leadbeater as the new Labour MP for Batley and Spen. She is the sister of Jo Cox who represented the constituency until she was murdered in 2016. Kim is a remarkable woman and is going to be an outstanding MP and I did an interview with her that you can read [here](#).



Harriet Harman @HarrietHarman · Oct 22
Just voted for the Stop Fire & Rehire Bill to go forward @BarryGardiner
#StopFireandRehire



1 19 183

Ending Fire and Rehire

The aggressive use of Fire and Rehire as a negotiating tactic is causing workers unimaginable financial and mental pressure, with many losing up to a third of their yearly salary. It is even a tactic used by household brands, many of which made record profits during the pandemic. On Friday October 22nd I voted along with my Labour colleagues for Barry Gardiner MP's Private Members Bill to end Fire and Rehire. But the Government voted against providing greater security for workers, blocking the progress of the Bill.

The use of this appalling practice will continue to spread so long as the Government refuses to ban it. I will continue to support all

efforts to reform employment law to end the practice of Fire and Rehire.

RIP Sir David Amess MP

There was shock and dismay that Sir David Amess, an MP for nearly 40 years, was stabbed to death in his constituency advice surgery in Leigh-on-Sea on Friday 15th October. This was the second murder of an MP in just 5 years. We need to





continue to engage with our constituents but we need to ensure we can do that in a way that is safe. The death of an MP cannot just be a price we pay for democracy.

Sir David was one of the most dedicated but also the most affable of MPs. He looked beyond party differences to work with so many of us on a multitude of issues of common concern. His commitment to his constituency, his commitment to Parliament and his belief that he could and did make a difference was exemplary.

I Don't Want to Retreat Behind Bullet Proof Glass



Published 1st November, 2021

Just last week I went to a pensioners meeting in Camberwell and met with tenants representatives in Walworth. As always, I was visible publicly and had no security. I want to be able to continue to do that.

When longstanding Southend MP Sir David Amess was murdered at his advice surgery it was a tragedy for his wife and family. But it was also an attack on our democracy.

The only reason he was attacked was because he was an elected member of the House of Commons and he was killed when he was doing his job.

The shock for us was compounded by the fact that this was the second MP to be murdered in their constituency in the last five years. In 2016 Jo Cox, the new MP for Batley and Spen in Yorkshire was shot.

It is a distinct and important feature of our democracy that MPs do not swish about in armoured cars. We walk about our constituency, we take public transport.

MPs who come on visits from other countries are astonished about how accessible we are. But it's part of our pact with our voters, that they will vote for us but when we go up to Parliament we will stay in contact with them. This is important not just for local people, who need to know that we are listening to them and understand their concerns. But it's important to us MPs too, to hear first hand what's going on and see for ourselves.

Just last week I went to a pensioners meeting in Camberwell and met with tenants representatives in Walworth. As always, I was visible publicly and had no security. I want to be able to continue to do that and don't want to retreat behind bullet proof glass.

But we can't just say that we'll carry on as if nothing has happened. It cannot be an occupational hazard for an MP that you might get killed. We cannot say that two murdered MPs is just a price worth paying for our democracy.

We need to ensure that MPs are as safe as we can possibly be. After Jo Cox's murder MPs were given more security in our homes. And protection in and around the House of Commons was massively upgraded. But the problem of how we go about our work mingling with our constituents in a safe way has not been solved.

The problem is not just advice surgeries, it's community meetings and walkabouts. The question of how we ensure we can continue to do all this safely cannot be left to the police, or to Government, though they need to play their part. It's a matter for Parliament itself. That's why I've proposed that we have a Speaker's Conference. This is a rarely used mechanism which allows the Speaker to bring the political parties together and include the Government and agencies to consider and then make proposals for change.

This is a serious issue which needs detailed consideration and sensible action. We must neither have a knee-jerk overreaction or just carry on with business as usual. Last time I proposed a Speaker's Conference after Jo Cox's murder it was blocked by the Government. I hope this time they agree.

Ultimately it's for each and every one of us as MPs to decide how we do our work. But it would really assist if we could have a well-considered set of proposals from a Speaker's Conference which we could all put into effect.

My letter to the House of Commons Speaker about MPs Safety



In light of the killing of Sir David Amess I wrote to the Speaker of the House of Commons, outlining my proposal for a Speaker's Conference as the necessary response to threats of violence to MPs.

A Speaker's Conference would have heard from all MPs, including those who – though willing to share privately their very real fears for their safety – were unwilling to speak up about it publicly. This would have enabled Parliament to develop meaningful, cross-party proposals to be taken forwards to help guarantee our safety and to enable us to continue working and meeting with

all of our constituents. Unfortunately, the Speaker did not decide to hold a Speaker's Conference on this issue.

You can read my letter [here](#).

Ending the imprisonment of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe

On 27th October I visited Richard Ratcliffe, the husband of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe who was campaigning for her release from prison in Iran. I showed my support for him in his hunger strike and my strong condemnation of the Iranian authorities' imprisonment of Nazanin and all dual British-Iranian nationals.

Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe had been in detention since September 2016 until her release in March 2022 and I strongly supported her husband Richard in his campaign



to free her and the pressure he put on the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to obtain her release. I visited him on the fourth day of his hunger strike last year, which you can see [here](#). I also visited him in 2019 when he was on hunger strike outside the Iranian Embassy, which you can see [here](#).

Upholding standards in public life

On 3rd November the House of Commons held a vote on whether to uphold Owen Paterson's suspension as an MP after he breached lobbying rules, and whether to change the disciplinary procedure for MPs. This was nothing more than an attempt by the Government to interfere in a standards case where the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards had ruled that he had broken Parliament's rules and this had been endorsed by the Parliamentary Committee on Standards. The Government narrowly won the vote, but less than 24 hours later in the face of overwhelming pressure from Labour and public opinion it performed a U-turn and put forward a resolution to rescind the original vote.

I spoke in the debate on Owen Paterson. You can watch my speech [here](#). It is vital that MPs uphold the highest standards. If not, fragile trust in our democracy will be lost and it will take a long time to restore the reputation of the House of Commons. I voted against the Government motion and I will continue to support efforts to strengthen the rules that govern MPs.

My contribution in the chamber:

I am regretful at rising to speak in this debate. Although we have political adversaries in the House, we are also all colleagues who work together in the same place. I have the utmost sympathy for the family tragedy that hit the right hon. Member for North Shropshire (Mr Paterson) and the greatest admiration for how he then took up the campaign for the prevention of suicide to help others. In the more than 20 years that we have been in the House together, he has shown me nothing but kindness and courtesy.



It is very much because we as MPs know and understand each other that the House recognised that we needed a complaints system that involved a strong measure of independence. We all recognise that the public want, and are entitled to, the highest standards from their elected representatives, and we are proud to claim that that is the case. We all recognise that the people who elect us want us to act in their interest and in the public interest, and that they want no

conflict of interest to blur the issue of our private financial interest with our role as MPs.



Trust in our democracy is all important, but it is fragile. The reputation of the House is easily damaged and, when damaged, hard to restore, as we discovered not only in the lobbying scandal, but in the expenses scandal. How we deal with this issue will reflect on the House as a whole and on each of us individually. I hope that Members on both sides are clear that this is House business, not Government business, and therefore the vote should not be whipped, much though the Whips will try.

We made these rules on lobbying; we need to enforce them. No one foisted the process on us; we initiated it and decided it. Where there are criticisms about the rules that we decided on, changes can be proposed, but as the right hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr Carmichael) said, they must have an all-party basis to go forward with integrity. That is the way we should do things.

What we must not do is make the rules and then decide to set them aside when we have misgivings about the outcome. I will oppose the amendment and support the motion, and I urge right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the House to do the same.

Securing visa- and permit-free work and travel in the EU for the UK's world class musicians

Our world class music sector depends both financially and culturally on touring in the EU. On 18th November I led a debate in Parliament on the obstacles facing UK musicians attempting to tour in the EU since Brexit. MPs from all parties and all parts of the UK attended my debate and spoke passionately about the need for a resolution, encouraging the new DCMS Minister to take this opportunity to deliver for musicians. I told the Minister that she should go in person to each EU country to both get a feel for the practical barriers to touring, and to talk directly to European counterparts in order to sort out these problems.

The UK music sector was worth £5.8bn before Covid and yet 11 months after the UK and the EU signed the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, the situation remains a "no deal" for the sector. In comparison to free movement, UK musicians looking to tour or work abroad in the EU now face:

- 27 different work permit regimes
- 27 different visa regimes
- 27 different requirements for proof of the work that's going to be undertaken.
- Hours spent on forms, providing bank statements, downloading hotel reservations
- Days spent travelling to and sitting in consulates
- Weeks spent waiting for HMRC to process A1 forms that need to be provided to employers in Europe.



That is before mentioning the cabotage rules that have hampered the British haulage industry and prevented a lorry from making more than 3 laden stops before having to return to the UK, as well as the requirement for carnets and CITES certificates for the transportation of instruments.



Harriet Harman ✓
@HarrietHarman

Thanks @DJWarburton & MPs from all parties & all parts of UK in yesterday's debate re UK musicians touring in EU. No point Minister @JuliaLopezMP sitting in @DCMS while @DavidGHFrost does nothing. She must go to all EU countries to sort.
parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/ac...

10:38 AM · Nov 19, 2021 · Twitter Web App

... The result is that the successful, vibrant model of touring abroad is no longer viable for UK musicians, particularly those at the start of their careers. But this situation not only affects musicians' economic viability it also impoverishes the UK culturally. Our music sector needs the cultural creativity that they get from working in Europe, and without it we will all be worse off.

The Government can and must fix this situation. I continue to work with colleagues across the House to demand the Government act to secure the future of our world class music sector. You can see the debate in full [here](#).

Attending the Commonwealth Day Flag Raising Ceremony

Monday 15th March was Commonwealth Day. Commonwealth Day is an annual celebration observed by people all over the Commonwealth, a voluntary association of 54 countries home to 2.4 billion people. I was pleased to be able to celebrate the day by attending the Flag Raising Ceremony in the Houses of Parliament. I was able to talk to MPs including from Sierra Leone and Pakistan, and the Nigerian High Commissioner at the reception.



Stamping out misogyny in the Houses of Parliament

On 24th April the Mail on Sunday published an article based on claims by Conservative MPs that the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party Angela Rayner MP was trying to distract the Prime Minister during PMQs through a "'Basic Instinct' ploy". It was yet another example of the misogyny that is rife in Westminster.



This was followed by the revelation that Neil Parish, the former Conservative MP for Tiverton and Honiton, had watched porn while sitting in a debate in the House of Commons. This marked a new low for the House of Commons. I called for him to resign immediately rather than wait for an investigation process. He eventually resigned on 30th April.

It's not all men in the House of Commons who are doing it, but all women have experienced misogyny. There's always been a male impunity for misogyny and now we're calling time on it. I have called for the Committee on Standards to

make misogynist, racist and homophobic language a specific breach of the MPs' code of conduct. This would then allow an inquiry by the Standards Commissioner, resulting in a suspension of an MP where appropriate.

New Role: Chair of the Committee of Privileges

On 14th June I was chosen by the House of Commons to chair of the Committee of Privileges, a parliamentary committee that investigates MPs' conduct in the House of Commons.

In order to conduct the investigation into whether or not the Prime Minister knowingly misled the House in his statements regarding the parties in Downing Street I have stepped out of my role as chair of the Joint Committee on Human Rights until this inquiry by the Committee of Privileges has concluded.



NEW:

Former acting leader of the Labour Party, Harriet Harman MP, is to head the committee that will decide if Boris Johnson intentionally misled Parliament over partygate.

3:01 PM · May 26, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone



Chairing Parliament's Joint Committee on Human Rights



I have been chair of Parliament's Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR) since 5th March 2020. The Committee includes MPs and members of the House of Lords and undertakes inquiries into human rights issues as well as legislative scrutiny of Government Bills. With expert legal counsel, and cross-party support, the committee drafts amendments to legislation to ensure it complies with the UK's human rights commitments.

Scrutinising new laws

Nationality and Borders Act 2022

The Nationality and Borders Act raised major concerns about the human rights of refugees fleeing violence and seeking asylum.

All countries have to play their part to provide sanctuary for those fleeing persecution. The UK has a lower percentage of refugees arriving than many other countries but must still provide safe routes to all. There are no safe legal routes if the cap on refugees is 5,000 and you are the 5,001st.

The JCHR held four evidence sessions on the Act, which makes arriving in the UK without permission a criminal offence, allows for dangerous "pushback" at sea for migrants in unsafe boats and paves the way for the Government to create offshore processing centres.

We heard evidence about how the Government has overseen an asylum process that takes years, fails to protect vulnerable asylum seekers, and how the increased caseload and under-resourcing of immigration officials has led to mental health concerns for those working in the system.



Harriet Harman [@HarrietHarman](#) · 38m

Replying to [@HarrietHarman](#)

"A refugee cannot get a visa to claim asylum. The Bill is a wholesale attack in the non-penalisation provision in the Refugee Convention." [@sonalinalkqo](#) tells [@HumanRightsCtte](#) [#NationalityBordersBill](#)



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4



Harriet Harman [@HarrietHarman](#) · 38m

[@DanGhez](#) says it is quite rare for liberal democracies to criminalise asylum in this way. Australia has never considered criminalising it in this way. [@HumanRightsCtte](#)



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Harriet Harman [@HarrietHarman](#) · 38m

"In Australian context, no matter how strict and punitive the measures that have been introduced on people after they arrive, these have not correlated with a reduction in the overall numbers" [@danghez](#) tells [@HumanRightsCtte](#) [#NationalityBordersBill](#)



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The Committee found that the Bill breaches the UK's human rights obligations, by allowing the Border Force to "pushback" unseaworthy vessels and automatically criminalising any refugees who arrive in the UK via non-official routes. It was also clear that the Government's Nationality and Borders Act will only increase the bureaucracy of the system and the difficulty of the application process for vulnerable people who arrive here fleeing persecution.

We drafted amendments to the Bill, which I tabled, that would have changed this and made the Bill

human rights-compliant. I urged the Minister to accept my amendments but he refused and the Government voted against my proposed changes that would have guaranteed that pushbacks would not be used in a way which endangered lives at sea. You can read more about the JCHR's work on the Bill [here](#). I will continue to oppose this Bill and support calls for a compassionate, functioning asylum system.

My speech in full:

I rise to speak to amendments

96 to 100 and 102, which stand in my name and those of other hon. Members. They arise from the legislative scrutiny of the Bill by the Joint Committee on Human Rights.

I remind hon. Members that the Joint Committee is a cross-party Committee with half its members from the House of Commons and half from the House of Lords. We undertake legislative scrutiny of all Bills for their human rights implications. We have taken evidence on the Bill from many people—including the Minister, for whose evidence we are grateful—and we are advised by our own legal experts.

In our report, which we published on 1 December, we concluded that the proposed new measures to criminalise those who enter the UK without a visa or without leave will breach human rights law and the refugee convention; our amendment 102 would deal with that. We also concluded that there should be no immunity from prosecution if criminal offences are committed by border officials, particularly where they lead to loss of life; our amendment 100 would deal with that. I hope that the Government will accept both amendments.

Our amendments 96 to 99 would deal with the major issues relating to pushbacks. The Bill provides greater powers for Border Force to "board, divert and detain" vessels. The Government acknowledge that crossings are perilous; this debate takes place in the shadow of the 27 people who drowned in the channel. The Minister was clear in his evidence to the Joint Committee that he does not want Government action to be the cause of yet more lives lost. Of course not.



Our amendment 97 would circumscribe the new powers to ensure that they could not be used against unseaworthy vessels such as dinghies. Our amendment 98 would ensure that they could not

"be used in a manner...that could endanger life at sea."

Our amendment 96 would ensure that they could be used only in a way that complies with international maritime law, which the Government say they want to comply with. The

Minister said in evidence to us that that is the Government's intention and that they would make that intention clear in operational directions—but if the power is in the Bill, so should the protections be.

Given the Government's intention, what reason could they possibly have to oppose the amendments? The Government have a big majority and can whip to vote them down, but the amendments have been tabled by a cross-party Committee of both Houses, they have been expertly drafted by our legal counsel, and they represent what the Government say is their intention.

The Minister is new and enthusiastic in his role. He was very forthcoming in his evidence to our Committee, and he and I have spoken about the subject privately, for which I am grateful. I offer him a bit of advice: not to be the Minister who votes our amendments down just because he can, not to be the Minister who makes his Back Benchers vote against ensuring that lives are not endangered—that is not the right thing for him to do—and not to be the Minister who gives new powers to Border Force that cost lives at sea.

Our amendments allow for the new powers, but make them compliant with international law and make them safe. The Government have no reason to oppose the amendments, so I hope that the Minister will say to his colleagues and his civil servants that he wants to reflect on them because he does not want to stand in the way of putting the Government's intentions on the face of the Bill. If the Government do oppose the amendments, we will seek to press amendment 98 to a Division, but I hope that that will not be necessary.

The JCHR has published four reports on the Nationality and Borders Act, which you can read here:

- [Part 1 – Nationality](#)
- [Parts 1, 2 and 4 – Asylum, Home Office Decision-Making, Age Assessments, and Deprivation of Citizenship Orders](#)
- [Part 3 – Immigration offences and enforcement](#)
- [Part 5 – Modern slavery](#)

You can read more about our legislative scrutiny of this Act [here](#).



Harriet Harman @HarrietHarman · Dec 7

The @HumanRightsCtte, a x-party cttee of MPs and Lords, reported that the #NationalityandBordersBill breaches human rights. My amends would guarantee lives of migrants are not endangered by Gov actions. I hope Minister @VotePursglove will accept them. My speech in parl ⚡ 1/2



Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022

The JCHR conducted legislative scrutiny of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act in 2021 and found that the provisions would curb non-violent protest in a way that is inconsistent with human rights.

The right to protest is a fundamental Human Right, protected by Articles 10 and 11 of the Human Rights Act, and as Chair of the JCHR I have frequently spoken about the importance of protest.

We already have the Public Order Act 1986, along with other existing powers, to police protests, and these strike a careful balance between the legitimate right to peacefully protest and the need to keep order. The right to protest is extremely precious and one of our proudest democratic traditions. It is only right that our laws do not, and should never, seek to shield those in power from public criticism and public protest.

I tabled several amendments that would have removed various parts of the Bill relating to protest, and would have enshrined the right to protest in law. Disappointingly the Government did not accept my amendments and they were not passed.



Harriet Harman
@HarrietHarman

Police Bill wrongly restricts protest but fails to strengthen law to stop predatory men harassing women and girls in the street & fails to protect rape victims' prev sex history being dragged into court.
[bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m0...](https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m0...)

10:44 AM · Jul 6, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

[View Tweet analytics](#)

154 Retweets 5 Quote Tweets 359 Likes

The JCHR also looked at the measures in the Act that create a new criminal offence of "residing on land without consent in or with a vehicle". Under the proposals, families living on unauthorised encampments could be imprisoned for up to three months, be fined up to £2,500, or both. It is clear that these measures are targeted at Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. This discrimination could breach the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.

The JCHR found that while the rights of landowners can be impacted by unauthorised encampments, there is a significant risk that the Bill could have a disproportionate impact on the human rights of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

I tabled further amendments on this issue that would have removed the provisions in the Bill relating to unauthorised encampments and would have introduced a legal duty for local authorities to provide sites for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community. Disappointingly, the Government did not accept these either.

The JCHR has published four reports on the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act, which you can read here:

- [Children of mothers in prison and the right to family life: The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill](#)
- [Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, Part 3 \(Public Order\)](#)
- [Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill \(Part 4\): The criminalisation of unauthorised encampments](#)
- [Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill \(Parts 7 and 8\): Sentencing and Remand of Children and Young People](#)

You can read more about our legislative scrutiny of this Act [here](#).

Bill of Rights

On 8th December the JCHR questioned the new Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for the Ministry of Justice Dominic Raab.

I challenged him about his previous comments on human rights and about calling feminists “the most obnoxious bigots”. I interrogated him about his plans to reform the Human Rights Act. He committed that the UK will remain a party to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). On 14th December the Government

published its consultation on proposals to reform the Human Rights Act. I welcome the commitment to the ECHR but am concerned about what impact the Government’s reforms might have on people’s ability to enforce their human rights under the Convention. I raised this with the Justice Secretary in the Commons on Tuesday, and you can see my question to him [here](#). The JCHR will scrutinise the Government’s proposals carefully and report in full in due course.



Harriet Harman [@HarrietHarman](#) · Dec 14

Important that Justice Secretary [@DominicRaab](#) has reaffirmed Govt commitment to European Convention on Human Rights but he must not make it harder for people to enforce those rights. [@HumanRightsCtte](#) will scrutinise and report. My intervention in Parlt. today 📢



Harriet Harman Retweeted



Harriet Harman [@HarrietHarman](#) · Apr 13

Replacing Human Rights Act will weaken protections, say peers and MPs | Human Rights Act | The Guardian



theguardian.com

Replacing Human Rights Act will weaken protections, say peers and M...
Joint committee on human rights says plans contravene principle that human rights are universal

enforcement of other rights. At present, freedom of expression is protected and given proper balance with other rights that are also important.

The Government’s case that human rights legislation is in serious need of reform is not proven. There is nothing in their plans that would serve to strengthen the protections we currently have and there is much that would weaken them. The Government is purporting to solve non-existent problems and offering solutions that would only cause confusion and detriment to those who need their rights protecting.

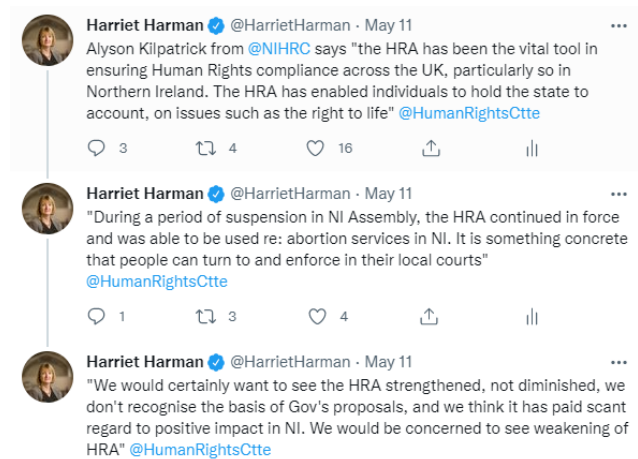
If the Government wanted to strengthen human rights they would improve how they are respected in general, improve education so that everyone knows their rights and improve access to the courts for those needing to enforce them.

You can read the JCHR's report [here](#).

The JCHR continued its inquiry into the Human Rights Act reform on Wednesday 11th May, when it took evidence from witnesses including the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Scottish Human Rights Commission on the impact of reforms on the devolved administrations. You can watch the session [here](#).

Public Order Bill

On 17th June the Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR) published our report into the Government's Public Order Bill.



The committee found that the Government is creating a hostile environment for peaceful protest in this country and that the legislation would have a "chilling effect" on the right to protest.

Noisy protests are the exercises of the lungs of a healthy democracy. The right to protest is a fundamental right for all. Protests should not be treated as an inconvenience by those in power and this Bill is very concerning. You can read the committee's report [here](#).

Inquiries

Protecting Human Rights in Care Settings

On 21st September the Joint Committee on Human Rights announced its new inquiry into human rights in care settings. During this inquiry we have received heart-rending evidence from relatives and patients that indiscriminate restrictions on visiting in care homes remain in place and families are still being prevented from visiting their loved ones.

On 5th November I wrote to the Minister responsible for care homes, and the Care Quality Commission (CQC), urging them to start accurately monitoring whether care homes allow visits from family and friends, do more to enforce Government guidelines, and revisit the Committee's draft legislation that would put the right to visits on a statutory footing. You can read the letters [here](#).

I also wrote further about the complete failure of the Government and the CQC to guard the rights of those in care homes in an article in the Daily Express, which you can read [here](#).



The Joint Committee on Human Rights held further evidence sessions as part of its inquiry into protecting human rights in care settings. On 23rd February, the Committee held a session focusing on capacity, mental health, and human rights concerns for people with dementia, with learning disabilities and autism, hearing from representatives of Royal Mencap Society, Alzheimer's Society, and several academic experts.

On 9th March, the Committee heard from representatives of care providers. The first panel focused on the issue of personal autonomy and enforcement of human rights and

examined how care users and relatives are involved in deciding their care and treatment, particularly for individuals who may lack capacity to make decisions. It also investigated current mechanisms for seeking redress when human rights have been breached, including the role of the Care Quality Commission. The second panel heard about care providers' approach to respecting the human rights of those under their care.

I wrote to the Prime Minister about ongoing visiting restrictions in care homes, asking him to ensure that the Government monitors care home compliance with the visiting guidance, and to ask again that he put that visiting guidance on a statutory footing. You can read my letter and the response from the Prime Minister [here](#).

On 18th May the Joint Committee on Human Rights took evidence from the care minister, Gillian Keegan MP. The session was an opportunity for the Committee to question the minister on a range of issues relating to human rights in care settings. This included the use of Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation notices, poor use of treatment escalation plans, over-medication, and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards.



The committee also questioned the Minister about what she was doing to guarantee visiting rights for the families of care home residents and ensure that there is no repeat of the blanket bans implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic. Family visits are not optional, they are absolutely essential for the quality of life of people in care homes.

You can watch the session [here](#) and you can read more about the committee's inquiry into human rights in care settings [here](#).

The right to family life: adoption of children of unmarried women 1949-1976

The right to family life is one of the most fundamental of human rights protected by the European Convention on Human Rights. There could hardly be a more dreadful breach of those rights than forcibly taking a newborn baby from its mother. And yet for thousands of women in the 1950s, '60s and '70s, that is precisely what happened.



Harriet Harman @HarrietHarman · Mar 16

"This is 53 years later and here I am, a wreck, because of what happened to me and my daughter. I built a wall around myself, and it was only when my daughter found me 22 years ago, that that wall collapsed around me" Judy Baker tells @HumanRightsCtte

2 13



Harriet Harman @HarrietHarman · Mar 16

"It's been an enormous battle to regain my sense of self. To recognise that I deserve to have compassion for myself. To recognise that I am not and never was a bad person. To recognise that my motherhood should have been honoured and wasn't" Judy Baker says to @HumanRightsCtte

11

... In September the JCHR launched its inquiry into the experiences of those who were affected by adoption in that period. You can read the article I wrote on this issue in Politics Home [here](#).

... On 15th December the Committee held the first evidence session of its inquiry into the adoptions of children of unmarried women in the 1950s, '60s and '70s. We heard from three academic experts.

The Committee was told how pervasive, coercive and cruel adoptions in that period were and how so many pregnant unmarried women were made to believe they were the causes of a 'problem' that had to be fixed. There was nothing approaching consent in the way we would understand it today. You can watch the full session [here](#).



Harriet Harman @HarrietHarman · 18h

"It was so awful for lots of us who were in Mother & Baby homes. And what was the crime we committed? That we were pregnant without being married" @AnnKeen11 tells @HumanRightsCtte about the experience of unmarried mothers in the 1950s, 60s & 70s

On Wednesday 16th March the JCHR heard heart-rending evidence from mothers and children affected by historic adoption practices between 1949 and 1976. The Committee heard about the trauma and suffering that those adoption practices caused, how they were made to feel like they had digressed and that they deserved their pain, and how the mothers never willingly gave up their babies. You can watch the full session [here](#).

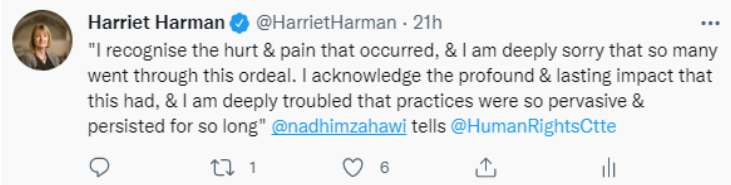
As part of the inquiry, on 27th April I hosted a roundtable to hear from mothers whose babies were taken away for adoption in the 1950s, 60s and early 70s, from the people who were adopted and from others with experience of adoption in that period, such as adoptive parents and social workers. The discussion was conducted in part in small groups, to allow individuals to describe their own experiences.

On Wednesday 25th May the Joint Committee on Human Rights took evidence from the then-Secretary of State for Education, Nadhim Zahawi MP, who was responsible for adoption.





This was an opportunity for the Government to respond directly to our inquiry and the evidence we have received so far. The Secretary of State acknowledged that none of the mothers were given a choice to keep their babies and he recognised the hurt and pain that occurred because of it. He expressed regret for what happened and said he was sorry that the mothers and their children had gone through such an ordeal.

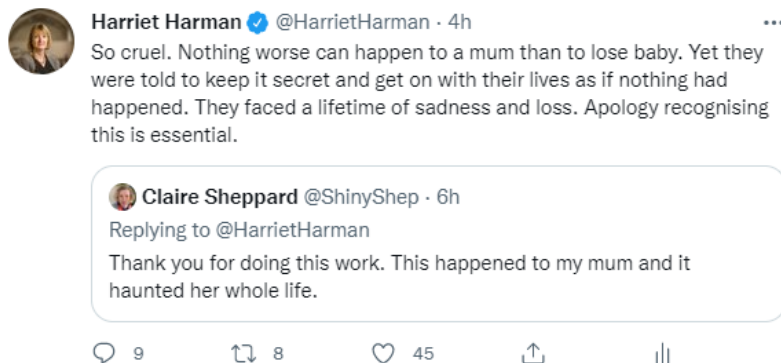


You can watch the session [here](#).

These adoptions would never happen now and should not have happened then. The mothers did

nothing wrong but were themselves wronged. The JCHR acknowledges the grave wrong done to these mothers and their children. It is time for the Government to do the same and issue the apology they seek. For decades they have been vilified. Now they need to be vindicated.

The Committee published its report on 15th July, and you can read it in full [here](#).



The UK-Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership and Human Rights

In July, the Government signed an agreement with Rwanda to send asylum seekers who have arrived in the UK illegally to have their asylum claims processed in Rwanda. Claimants would not be allowed to return to the UK and would receive asylum support in Rwanda and either settlement in Rwanda or return to their country of origin. The JCHR launched an inquiry into this policy.

Following the Government's announcement of the policy I wrote to the Home Secretary requesting answers to the many concerns that we have about the Government's policy breaching human rights law. The Committee also held an oral evidence session on this issue on 8th June where we heard evidence from:



- Stephanie Harrison QC, Barrister at Garden Court Chambers
- Colin Yeo, Barrister at Garden Court Chambers and
- Dr Hazel Cameron, CEO of Pearl International Insights,

about the Government's plan to send refugees to Rwanda.



The policy is draconian and risks vulnerable refugee women and children being deported to Rwanda. It could even be applied to asylum seekers who have arrived legally.

Every person has a right to seek asylum in another country, as enshrined in Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of human rights. The planned deportation flight was cancelled earlier this month but I remain concerned that the Government will continue with their plans in future. The committee will be writing a letter to the Government about this policy in due

course, and you can read more about the inquiry [here](#).

You can watch our evidence session [here](#).

You can read my letter below and read about the committee's work [here](#). You can read the Home Secretary's response [here](#).

Dear Home Secretary,

I am writing with questions regarding the Government's "Asylum Partnership Arrangement" with Rwanda, which will provide a mechanism for the relocation of refugees from the UK to Rwanda for the purpose of processing their asylum claims and settling or removing them thereafter.

The Government's legal obligations

Under the Refugee Convention, it is unlawful for the UK to expel or return a refugee to a country where his or her life or freedom would be threatened on the grounds of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. According to the UN High Commissioner on Refugees, "in order to give effect to their obligations under the 1951 Convention, States are required to grant individuals seeking asylum access to their territory and to fair and efficient asylum procedures." The obligations under the Refugee Convention are binding upon the UK as a matter of international law and must be implemented in good faith.

The removal of a refugee to a third country would violate the UK's obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) if there is a real risk that the refugee will face harm amounting to a violation of the right to life, torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, forced labour or slavery, or a flagrant violation of the right to a fair trial or the right to liberty, or any other Convention right. Article 14 prohibits discrimination in the enjoyment of other Convention rights, and may be

engaged by any policies that apply different standards or outcomes to different categories of asylum seeker. We therefore have questions regarding the removal of refugees to Rwanda.

Human rights analysis

We note that there has been no detailed human rights analysis published on this partnership arrangement by the Government although the Memorandum of Understanding does require Rwanda to comply with the Refugee Convention and international rights standards. We also note that the Government has expressed concerns about Rwanda's "continued restrictions to civil and political rights and media freedom" and urged Rwanda to conduct "transparent, credible and independent investigations into allegations of extrajudicial killings, deaths in custody, enforced disappearances and torture, and bring perpetrators to justice".

Please can you provide us with a human rights analysis which should address the following questions:

- How does a policy by which asylum seekers, who have made their way to the UK, are sent to Rwanda without having their claim considered amount to implementation of the Refugee Convention in good faith?*
- On what basis have you determined that Rwanda is a safe place for refugees, including for LGBTI refugees? In particular, is there a risk of torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (Article 3)? Do you consider that Rwanda's refusal to cooperate with the UN Sub-Committee on the Prevention of Torture indicates any problems with adequately assessing this risk?*
- How have you determined that removal of refugees to Rwanda will not risk "flagrant" violations of Convention rights other than Article 3?*
- How will you individually assess refugees to identify whether they will be safe once removed to Rwanda?*
- Which refugees will be relocated to Rwanda under this arrangement and which will remain in the UK? How does this differential treatment accord with the Government's obligations to ensure that treatment is neither directly nor indirectly discriminatory?*
- If Rwanda were to breach its obligations under the Memorandum of Understanding, particularly in relation to violations of human rights, what would be the consequences? What recourse would be available to individuals who have suffered a violation of the rights guaranteed under this agreement?*
- Can you confirm that the policy will not apply to children and how you will determine whether an applicant is or is not a child for the purpose? Can you be sure that the policy meets the UK's obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child?*
- What safeguards are in place to ensure that Rwanda will conduct a fair and efficient assessment of asylum applications with appropriate safeguards such as free legal representation?*

Given the Asylum Partnership Arrangement has taken immediate effect, we would be grateful for a response to these questions by Wednesday 18th May 2022.

Yours sincerely,

Harriet Harman

Standing down as your Member of Parliament at the next election

On Tuesday 7th December I announced that I will not stand to be the Member of Parliament for Camberwell and Peckham at the next election. It has been a great honour to represent Camberwell and Peckham for almost 40 years, and I will continue to do so until my final day as MP. Thank you to all those who have sent kind messages since my announcement.

7 Prime Ministers



1982 – 2021...

#MOTH

8 Labour Party Leaders



1982 – 2021...

#MOTH

6 House of Commons Speakers



1982 – 2021..

#MOTH

10 General Elections

9 June 1983	11 June 1987	9 April 1992	1 May 1997	7 June 2001
5 May 2005	6 May 2010	7 May 2015	8 June 2017	12 Dec 2019

1982 – 2021...

#MOTH

No of times spoken in the House of Commons

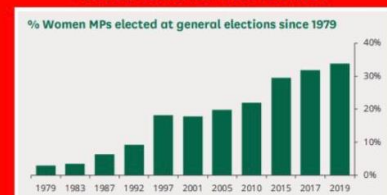
9,850



Nov 1982 – Nov 2021

#MOTH

% Women MPs elected at general elections since 1979



1982 – 2021..

#MOTH

'Mother of the House of Commons'

As longest-ever continuously serving female MP in the House of Commons, I was announced as "Mother of the House" by Prime Minister Theresa May on 13 June 2017.



1982 – 2021... #MOTH

Since 1982...

3 children
&
5 grandchildren



1982 – 2021 #MOTH

Then..



Now..



& until the next General Election

1982 – 2021.. #MOTH



Harriet Harman @HarrietHarman · Dec 7

After nearly 40 years in Parliament I won't be standing again at the next election. It's been a great honour to be an MP and to represent Camberwell & Peckham since 1982. I will do that with complete commitment and enthusiasm up until the last day! My email to C & P Lab members 🙋

...

Harriet Harman: a legacy of feminist leadership

"Trailblazer", "Glass ceiling smasher", "Inspiration" are just some of the descriptions of her being shared by Labour colleagues



Dear Member of Camberwell and Peckham Labour Party,

I'm writing

- *to let you know that I will not be seeking to be stand again as Labour's candidate for Camberwell and Peckham at the next General Election*
- *to thank you sincerely for having me as your MP since 1982*
- *to pledge to work energetically right up till the next General Election and*
- *to reaffirm my enduring commitment to, and belief in, our Labour Party.*

The Labour Party is now asking CLPs to choose their candidates so that we can step up our effort to win the next General Election. I'll be notifying Party HQ that I will not be seeking reselection. I feel I can leave the House of Commons now confident that Labour is gaining strength under the leadership of Keir Starmer and the new team he has appointed.

It has been an overwhelming honour to be Member of Parliament representing and working for the people of Camberwell and Peckham for nearly 40 years. It has been a complete privilege to work with local party members and our local Labour Councillors.

I'm proud to have, alongside you, played my part in getting Labour into government from 1997, and being a minister in that government. We doubled investment in schools, tripled investment in the NHS, brought in the National Minimum Wage, the right to civil partnership, established a network of Sure Start Children's centres, passed the Equality Act and so much more. Our priority must be to strive to once

again have Labour in government to end the damage and division caused by the Tories and tackle new challenges like the climate emergency.

I entered the Commons as one of only 11 Labour women MPs in a parliament that was 97% men. Now there are 104 Labour women and across all parties women MPs are a "critical mass." But there remains much more to be done till women genuinely share political power with men on equal terms and until women in this country are equal.

I will leave the House of Commons with my feminism, my belief in Labour and my enthusiasm for politics undimmed.

I cannot thank enough all the local party members who, over the decades, have worked with me day in day out in the cause of improving things for local people. And I'm truly grateful for the backing of local party members when I served as Deputy Leader of the Labour Party and when I twice served as party leader. I have never, and will never, take that for granted. I'm deeply indebted to all those who over the years have served as my staff team helping me be the best MP I could be and making a huge difference to thousands of constituents by helping them with their problems.

When I was elected in 2019 I promised the voters I would serve as their MP with dedication and energy till the next election and I will do that, remaining active and diligent both locally and in the Commons.

I know you will now choose a candidate for the next General Election who will be dedicated to the local community, play their part in building support for Labour locally and nationally and make their voice heard as they continue to fight for equality.

Best wishes,

Harriet

RIP Jack Dromey MP

On 7th January 2022 Jack Dromey died suddenly of heart failure, aged 73. His death is a dreadful shock and loss. I'd like to thank all the Camberwell and Peckham Labour Party members and the many people from the local community who got in touch to express their respect and admiration for Jack and their sympathy to me.

On 2nd February MPs from all sides spoke in tribute to Jack in the House of Commons. You can read what they said [here](#). And this is what I said:

Thank you, Mr Speaker. On behalf of myself and my family, I warmly thank all hon. Members who have spoken today. I say to everyone from all the around the country who has sent us cards, emails, texts, tweets, and who have posted on Facebook, that the memories they have shared with us, and the respect that they have shown for Jack, have given so much comfort to me and his beloved family as we face the total shock of his sudden death from heart failure just three weeks ago.

Jack hated inequality and oppression, and his life's work was a steadfast focus on supporting those who were fighting against it. His roots in the Irish working-class immigrant community, his solidarity with black and Asian people fighting against inequality, and his respect for middle-class people who, though not suffering hardship themselves, wanted to work to end it for others, made him the polar opposite of the



culture wars and the living embodiment of the coalition that is the Labour party. He spoke up for people and they heard him, and that made them stronger, whether they were those he worked with or those he had never met.

Much has rightly been said about Jack's support for me in my work. It was phenomenal and it was unswerving. But it was not just because I was his wife; it was a matter of principle. Jack believed that men

should support and respect women, and he detested men who he saw holding their wives back in their own self-interest.

For all of us who received it, Jack's support was a super-power. It made us all walk taller; it made us all feel stronger. We will so miss him. I thank you, Mr Speaker, for your tribute, for your kindness to me and to his family, and for allowing us this time today to pay tribute to Jack.

I was grateful to be able to take a period of bereavement leave but I am now fully back undertaking my duties as Camberwell and Peckham MP.



In local news

southlondonpress LONDON WEEKLY NEWS & Mercury

'The problems for people who own high rise flats are going from bad to worse because of the cladding debacle'

'October is Black History Month'

'Cressida Dick is standing down – the next commissioner will need to do a much better job'

Southwark News

'Close the loopholes to protect rape victims'

'Footballers are as entitled to have political views as anyone'

'What we need to do to sort out our health services'

'I don't want to retreat behind bullet proof glass'

'Every day now the news from Ukraine gets worse'

'TfL have tough choices to make – but they shouldn't make life tougher for those who can least afford it'

A note of thanks!

It's a difficult time to be a Labour Councillor as the demand for local services grows and the Government cuts the resources to our local council. But there has never been a more important time to have a strong and caring local council and despite the cuts Southwark Council is innovative and determined.

It is an enormous privilege to represent Camberwell and Peckham and to work not only in parliament but as part of our local team.

My thanks to our local councillors in Camberwell and Peckham, with a special thanks to those who stood down at the May 2022 election and a welcome to those who have been elected for the first time.

I'd like to thank my fellow members of the Joint Committee on Human Rights and on the Privileges Committee and the committee teams from the House of Commons Clerks Department.

Congratulations to all newly elected Southwark Labour Councillors

The recent local elections on 5th May 2022 saw Southwark Labour win 52 out of 63 council seats, gaining 3 from the Liberal Democrats. This was a huge success and my congratulations on their elections to:

Camberwell Green

- Suzanne Iquo Abachor
- Dora Dixon-Fyle
- Kieron Joseph Williams

- Andy Simmons

Faraday

- Sam Foster
- Kezia Harper
- Kimberly Natasha McIntosh

Champion Hill

- Esme Hicks
- Sarah Eve King

Goose Green

- James Robert McAsh
- Portia Mwangangye
- Charlie Smith

Chaucer

- Helen Claire Dennis
- Laura Anne Johnson
- Joseph Vambe

London Bridge and West Bermondsey

- Sunil Chopra
- Sam Dalton
- Emily Alice Hickson

Dulwich Hill

- Maggie Browning
- Jon Hartley

Newington

- John Seymour Batteson
- Natasha Saviour Ennin
- Alice Macdonald

Dulwich Village

- Richard Michael Leeming
- Margy Newens

North Walworth

- Naima Hussein Ali

Dulwich Wood

- Catherine Ann Rose

- Darren James Merrill
- Martin Luther Seaton

Nunhead and Queen's Road

- Gavin James Edwards
- Reginald Oluwatomi Aku Popoola
- Sandra Dean Rhule

Old Kent Road

- Evelyn Osei Akoto
- Richard John Livingstone
- Michael Kayode Situ

Peckham

- Leona Sabina Emmanuel
- Barrie John Hargrove
- Cleo Soanes

Peckham Rye

- Renata Hamvas
- Victoria Milles

Rotherhithe

- Stephanie Cryan
- Bethan Roberts
- Kath Whittam

Rye Lane

- Jasmine Ali
- Esme Dobson
- Chloe Tomlinson

South Bermondsey

- Cassandra Brown
- Sunny Adegboyega Lambe
- Leo Max Pollak

St Giles

- Ellie Cumbo
- Jason Ochere
- Robert Ian Wingfield

My congratulations also to the new Southwark Cabinet and to Sunil Chopra and Michael Situ on their appointments as Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Southwark, and to all Camberwell and Peckham residents and organisations who received awards at the 2022 Southwark Civic Awards in May.



Southwark Council Cabinet

- Councillor Kieron Williams - Leader of the Council
- Councillor Jasmine Ali - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education
- Councillor Evelyn Akoto - Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing
- Councillor Stephanie Cryan - Cabinet Member for Finance, Democracy and Digital
- Councillor Helen Dennis - Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development
- Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle MBE - Cabinet Member for Community Safety
- Councillor Alice Macdonald - Cabinet Member for Equalities, Neighbourhoods and Leisure
- Councillor Darren Merrill - Cabinet Member for Council Homes and Homelessness
- Councillor Catherine Rose - Cabinet Member for Parks, Streets and Clean Air
- Councillor Martin Seaton - Cabinet Member for Jobs, Business and Town Centres
- Councillor John Batteson - Deputy Cabinet Member for Employment
- Councillor Natasha Ennin - Deputy Cabinet Member for Diversity
- Councillor Kimberly McIntosh - Deputy Cabinet Member for Financial Support
- Councillor Portia Mwangangye - Deputy Cabinet Member for Young People

Thank you Eleanor Kelly

Thank you to Eleanor Kelly who has stepped down as Chief Executive of Southwark Council after over a decade in the role. Eleanor first joined Southwark Council in 2006 as Deputy Chief Executive and became the Chief Executive in 2011.



I want to pay tribute to Eleanor for her dedication to her work in Southwark and thank her for the experience, professionalism and competence that she brought to the role. I appreciated being able to work with her and wish her all the best for the future. I look forward to working with her successor.

Help and Support

Concerned about British nationals who need assistance in Ukraine?

Consular support is still available to British nationals through the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office helpline (open 24 hours, 7 days a week) on:

+380 44 490 3660 (from Ukraine)

+44 (0) 1908 516666 (from the UK)

[Click here for UK Government advice about the situation in Ukraine.](#)

Concerned about non-British family members in Ukraine?

The British Government has announced that British nationals and people of any nationality settled in the UK will be supported to bring family members to the UK. This includes immediate family members (under Family Migration visas) as well as parents, grandparents, adult children and siblings (under the Ukraine Family Scheme).

To check your eligibility and begin the application call the helpline (open 24 hours, 7 days a week) on:

From Ukraine: **+44 808 164 8810** – select option 1

From the UK: **0808 164 8810** if you are in the UK – select option 1

[Find further information on UK Government guidance support to Ukrainian nationals and their families.](#)

Concerned as a Ukrainian national in the UK?

The Home Office has agreed some temporary concessions to support Ukrainian nationals currently in the UK who are now unable to return when their existing visa expires.

If you are in the UK and need assistance, contact UKVI on:

0808 164 8810 – select option 2

Monday to Thursday (excluding bank holidays), 9am to 4:45pm.

Friday (excluding bank holidays), 9am to 4:30pm.

Find further information on UK Government guidance support to Ukrainian nationals and their families.

Need legal advice?

The Ukraine Advice Project UK offers free legal advice on UK immigration, visas and asylum by qualified legal advisors for Ukrainians affected by the crisis.

Send details of your circumstances and the advice you need to:
ukraine@freemovement.org.uk

Find further information from **Ukraine Advice Project UK**

Support and resources for British and non-British nationals who have been affected by the situation in Afghanistan from August 2021. Please click on link to information and advice:

- **Support for British and non-British nationals in Afghanistan**
- **Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme**
- **Afghanistan - Foreign travel advice**
- **Support for veterans**

Southwark Council:

- [General information on Coronavirus](#)
- [Financial support for residents](#)
- [Food access](#)
- [Coronavirus housing advice](#)
- [Covid-19: Support and information for businesses and employers](#)
- [Southwark COVID-19 community grants](#)
- [Voluntary sector help and advice on Coronavirus](#)

Bereavement support:

- The government has published a [bereavement support leaflet](#) to help those who have lost a loved one. The leaflet shares information to help bereaved families, friends, or next of kin make important decisions, sets out what to expect next, and signposts the extra help and support that is available.

Citizens Advice – Benefit advice:

- <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/coronavirus-check-what-benefits-you-can-get/>

Government business advice:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19>
- Government's Business Support Helpline on 0300 456 3565, Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm.

HMRC:

- [Helpline for businesses and self-employed people who are concerned about their tax](#) due to COVID-19.
- 08000 241222, Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm.

Domestic violence help and support:

- [Solace Women's Aid](#) - Advice Line - 0808 802 5565
- Monday - Friday 10am - 4pm. Additional 6pm - 8pm on Tuesdays.
- Email: advice@solacewomensaid.org

Mental health help and support:

- [Lambeth and Southwark Mind](#) - 07871 940 763 - 8am to 3pm Monday, Tuesday and Thursday
- [Samaritans](#) - 116 123 - 24/7
- [The Nest](#) - 020 8138 1805

Legal advice

- [Southwark Law Centre](#)
- [Citizens Advice Southwark](#) has resumed drop-in sessions from 9.30 am to 4.00 pm 5 days a week at:
 - Peckham - 97 Peckham High Street, SE15 5RS
 - Bermondsey - 8 Market Place, Southwark Park Road, SE16 3UQ
 - Walworth – 6-8 Westmoreland Road, Walworth, SE17 2AY



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