



Rt Hon Harriet Harman KC MP

Member of Parliament for Camberwell and Peckham

Mother of the House of Commons

December Report

22nd December 2022



House of Commons

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This is my December report 2022 in which I:

- share with you how I'm going about my work as MP,
- hear from you if you agree with how I'm approaching things and
- what further issues you think I should be addressing.

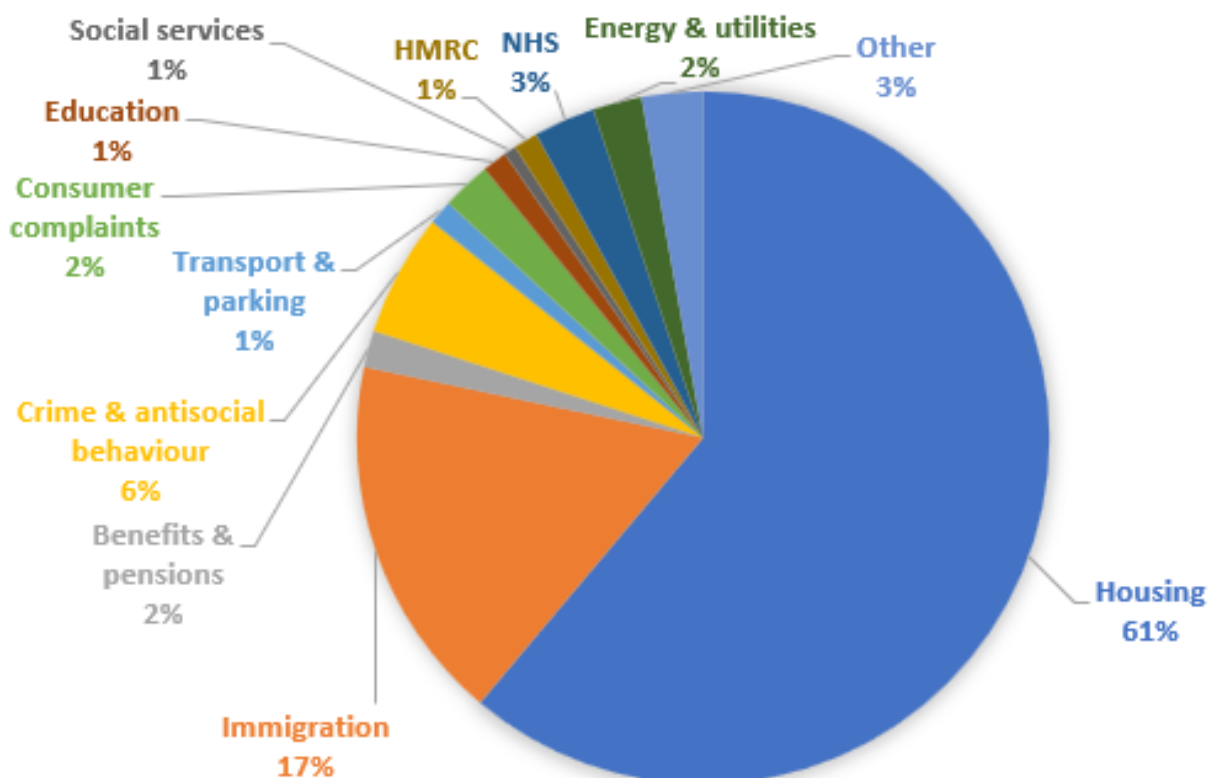
Haniel Hamman

Constituency problems - update

My casework team continue to deal with problems and there continues to be an increase in the number of constituents seeking my help.

New cases breakdown – November 2022

In November I took action on **709** cases and I recouped **£616.88** for constituents. This year I have recouped a total of **£15,489.97** for constituents.



Case summaries:

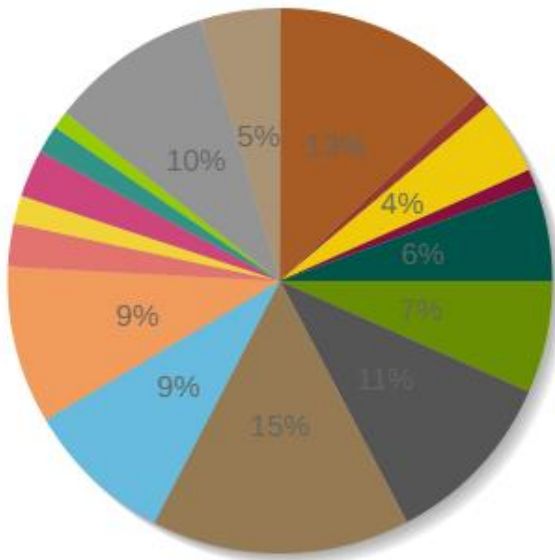
- An Egyptian woman from Camberwell with a European partner contacted me to ask for help as she had submitted a European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS) application in February 2022 but had not yet received a response from the Home Office. The woman urgently needed a decision on her application so that she could travel to Egypt to see her parents who are unwell. I quickly wrote to UK Visas and Immigration to ask that this case be expedited and received a response 6 days later confirming that a decision had been made on the constituent's application and that she would be notified. I shared this with the individual who confirmed that she had received a positive outcome and as a result she will now be able to travel to see her family for the first time in nine years.
- I was contacted by a constituent who told me that he had submitted an application for a Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) driver's licence in July 2021 but almost 18 months later had still not received the licence, despite paying the relevant fees and passing all the required exams. Due to the delay in his licence he had been unable to start his job as a taxi driver. He had tried to contact Transport for London (TfL) on numerous occasions to find out the progress of his application but hadn't received a response. I wrote to TfL to request a report into the process of his application, and I received a response confirming that the licence had now been issued for a full three-year term. I shared this response with my constituent, and I am currently waiting for my constituent to confirm he has received the licence.
- A Southwark Council tenant who was diagnosed with schizophrenia over 10 years ago wrote to me as he had recently learnt that he should be exempt from Council Tax payments due to his diagnosis but up until now he had been paying the full rate. He asked me to contact the Council to register his entitlement to a Severely Mentally Impaired exemption and to request that he be refunded for the previous payments that he had made in error. I wrote to Southwark Council on his behalf to ask them to confirm that this individual qualified for an exemption and to reimburse him. The Council responded with confirmation that the constituent has been granted an exemption and they have credited him with an initial £566.88 on his account whilst they calculate the total reimbursement he is entitled to. I shared this response with my constituent, who confirmed that the Council had also contacted him to notify him of the change in his Council Tax status and the credit he was entitled to.
- A man from Camberwell wrote to me about having no heating and hot water in his home. He had been without heating and hot water for six days, during which time the temperature had plummeted and his health and well-being had been seriously affected. This was an urgent situation due to the continuing cold weather and I quickly contacted Southwark Council to ask for a full report into the constituent's situation and to request that it be sorted out immediately. I received a response from Southwark Council informing me that the situation had been investigated as a Stage 1 complaint and confirming that the hot water had been restored. My constituent confirmed to me that the repairs had been completed and he was pleased with the outcome.

- A Sierra Leonian constituent contacted me through his solicitor about an immigration problem he and his mother were facing. They had applied for Further Leave to Remain in February 2022 but had yet to receive a decision from the Home Office. They needed to travel back to Sierra Leone urgently for a funeral following the death of a family member and the Home Office delay was preventing them from being able to travel abroad. I urgently wrote to the Home Office to request a report and ask that their applications be expedited on compassionate grounds. I was then informed by their solicitor that following my inquiry the applications had been granted and that my constituents were able to attend the funeral.
- I was contacted by a woman from Peckham who had no heating and hot water in her home. She had already contacted her landlord, Hexagon Housing Association, but they had not been able to tell her what they were going to do to sort it out. I have written urgently to Hexagon Housing Association to ask for the necessary repairs be undertaken as soon as possible and for my constituent to be compensated for the time spent without heating and hot water.

In November I received **474** emails from constituents on policy issues including:

- Keep abortion accessible – I strongly support access to early abortion pills at home
- Help stop the Rosebank oil field – I am against new fossil fuel developments in the North Sea
- Support the Eat Play Love campaign for early years nutrition – I agree we need a renewed focus on the early years and to deliver a modern childcare system, giving children the best start in life.
- Protect the right to free speech in the Online Safety Bill – I support the broad principles of the Online Safety Bill and along with other Labour MPs I will continue to try and improve the Bill
- Support the Online Safety Bill to protect people from online scams – I support measures to tackle fraudulent advertising
- Support the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill – I support the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill
- Demand reform of childcare, flexible working and parental leave – I strongly support improved childcare, flexible working and greater rights to parental leave
- MPs need to scrutinise the UK-India free trade agreement – I support calls for the Government to allow Parliament to scrutinise trade negotiations
- Press the Government to provide more support for NHS cancer services – We need urgent action to support the NHS and Labour will make the NHS fit for the future
- Support the Hunting Trophies (Import Prohibition) Bill – I support ending the import of wild animal trophies from threatened species

Policy received – November 2022



Health services and medicine	Energy, utilities and environment
International affairs	Crime, civil law, justice and rights
Agriculture, animals, food and rural affairs	Employment and training
Transport	Social Security and pensions
Economy and finance	Housing and planning
Parliament, government and politics	Defence
Education	Business, industry and consumers
Asylum, immigration and nationality	Culture, charities, media and sport
Communities and families	

Chairing the investigation into whether Boris Johnson MP misled Parliament

I continue in my role as Chair of the Privileges Committee's investigation into whether former Prime Minister Boris Johnson MP misled Parliament when he said that there were no parties in No. 10 during lockdown and that no rules or guidance was broken. We have obtained documentary evidence from the Government, we will hear oral evidence including from Boris Johnson MP and will report next year. The members of the Privileges Committee are four Conservatives, Sir Bernard Jenkin MP, Alberto Costa MP, Andy Carter MP and Sir Charles Walker MP, one Scottish National Party, Allan Dorans MP, and myself and Yvonne Fovargue MP from the Labour Party.



5 December 2022

Last week ambulance workers joined nurses in voting for strike action this Christmas. And I really do understand why our NHS staff have voted for industrial action. They feel desperate.

And they have been forced into this action by the Government.

When the Conservatives are in government our public services are eroded. Not only does this lead to people suffering, but the Conservatives use the crisis they have caused in public services as a pretext to attack them. Rather than address the legitimate concerns of those striking, they seek to clamp down on the right to unionisation and strike action. And rather than actually fix the issues facing our NHS and social care, they argue that the solution is more privatisation.

One of the major issues which is causing problems for people and the NHS is the Government's failure on social care. Nationally there are 400,000 "late discharges" from NHS hospitals every month. These are people who don't need any more medical treatment, are well enough to leave but for whom there isn't the social care available to enable them to be discharged. Here in King's College Hospital 100 out of the 900 beds are occupied by people waiting to leave hospital. So that means 11% of hospital beds are occupied by people who should be being taken care of by help at home or by a care home.

The delay in discharges is a symptom of a much wider systemic problem. Some people are unable to be discharged because they require help to adapt their home, like installation of handrails or a stairlift. Others are waiting for suitable new housing. But many of the longest delays are while people wait for the complex funding arrangements to be in place to enable them to go into a nursing home.

This situation prevents beds being used for people who need treatment and prevents people being moved into hospital from ambulances which in turn means ambulances are not able to go out to collect people who need them in an emergency. In the worst cases people with potential heart attacks or strokes now face a one hour and 40-minute average wait.

But also it's bad for the people who remain stuck in hospital. People are more comfortable when they are at home or in a care home. It's easier for their friends and family to visit them. A hospital bed is not the right place for anyone who is not having medical treatment. Their recovery will be hampered the longer they are kept in a hospital bed rather than in their community with their friends and family around them.

The starting point for our NHS should be delivering fast, safe and successful outcomes for patients. That means ensuring the NHS has sufficient funding. Overall we spend less per head on healthcare than countries like France, Australia and Germany. But it's also about how we spend the money. We spend more on in-patient care costs than other countries. Late diagnoses and struggling to see a GP promptly mean people end up needing to seek emergency care rather than preventing their condition from worsening. We need more investment but also to focus that spending on areas like primary care, mental health and diagnostics. This will mean faster care and better outcomes. We also need to invest in our NHS workforce, who do so much for patients on a daily basis. That is why Labour has committed to spending £1.6bn to fund the expansion of our NHS staff if we were in government.

If the Government cared about improving people's health it would support the staff who feel they have no other option than to go on strike. The Royal College of Nursing has never taken strike action before. But they feel forced into it by the Government. Through underfunding and undervaluing our NHS the Government has created this problem. We need urgent action to improve our NHS and that will only happen with a Labour government.

ESTABLISHED 1865

southlondonpress

LONDON WEEKLY NEWS & Mercury

13 December 2022

In the wake of the resignation of Cressida Dick, London now has a new Metropolitan Police Commissioner. Sir Mark Rowley, who has taken up the UK's top policing job, has an impressive track record and says he is determined to bring about change. Everyone in London is entitled to a police service in which they can trust and who will help keep them safe, so I will give him every support.

Certainly he has a big task.

I do not think it's a matter of restoring trust in the police. There has not been, since I have been MP over the last 40 years, a golden age of trust in the police to which we need to return. What is happening now is long overdue recognition of what has long

been the case, that there is a lack of trust in the police particularly amongst the black community.

In the past complaints about racism in the police were brushed aside. Then they were characterised as "anti-police" when they were nothing of the sort. At last now the intention is to tackle it.

From the Scarman Report on the Brixton Riots in 1981, to the Macpherson Report on the murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 there have been numerous moments when change has been promised. Yet it has never materialised and so cynicism has grown.

This time there really must be change not just good intentions

Firstly, there needs to be a thorough-going vetting of all existing Met Police officers. Those who have committed disciplinary offences with any aspect of racism should be dismissed. The Met Police say that restrictive rules laid down by Parliament prevent them dismissing officers who are not fit to be in the police. Along with other London Labour MPs I have assured Sir Mark Rowley that if he drafts new rules which enable him to effectively manage the force to keep the necessary high standards, we will introduce them into Parliament. Over the years Met Police leaders have complained about restrictive management rules but have never been specific about what changes they need. As soon as they do that we will make the necessary changes in Parliament. It is not good enough for them to bemoan their hands being tied. They need to specify the take action which we, the Mayor and the Home Secretary are more than willing to take. Sir Mark Rowley has said there are hundreds of officers who can't do their job because their previous actions have shown them to be unfit to be in contact with the public yet they remain in the police.

Until such time as the Met have rid the force of racists they won't command the confidence of the black community. However many community meetings the police hold, it won't work if black people's everyday experience of the police is discriminatory

Secondly, the black community need to be able to see black officers in our local force. One third of Camberwell and Peckham people are black (compared to 4% nationally). They are entitled to a diverse force so the Met should have a specific policy of deploying black officers into Camberwell and Peckham.

Finally the Met need to establish an independent process to benchmark and publish annually the views of the black community to measure whether the actions they have taken are working to engender trust in the Met in the black community. Black people are entitled to be protected, not subjected to discrimination. They are entitled to a police service they can trust. And it's Sir Mark Rowley's job to deliver that.



Pressing the Commissioner of the London Fire Brigade to take action to root out misogyny and racism

On 6th December along with London MP colleagues I met with the Commissioner of the London Fire Brigade, Andy Roe, to press him

The review found misogyny, racism and bullying through the LFB and Nazir Afzal OBE described the organisation as "institutionally misogynist and racist". This is not new. In 1985 I supported a woman fire fighter who had been forced to watch masturbation and had urine thrown on her by colleagues.

I will continue to monitor the LFB's progress in rooting out misogyny and racism and strongly support the Commissioner's work so far.

Following Jeremy Clarkson's grossly misogynistic column about Meghan Markle in The Sun, Caroline Nokes MP, Chair of the Women and Equalities Select Committee, wrote to The Sun's editor demanding action against Jeremy Clarkson, the issuing of an unreserved apology and a guarantee that articles like this will never be published again. I signed the letter along with many of my colleagues.



Harriet Harman  @HarrietHarman · Dec 8

V impressed hearing how Commissioner Andy Roe is leading the @LondonFire tackling the dreadful situation exposed by @nazirafzal's Independent Review. NB my complaints in 1985! bit.ly/3VFHk9y





(FBU) ... and it was first time, too" appeared on his behalf to the Fire Authority, which was run by the Labour-controlled Greater London Council (GLC), and they reinstated him. I protested and led a delegation to the General Secretary of the FBU, Ken Cammish. It was considered disloyal for a Labour MP to side with management against any union, let alone one which was affiliated to the Labour party, and especially when it was in support of a sack- ing. And it was frowned upon to challenge a Labour council, particularly at a time when the GLC was under attack from the Thatcher government. But I felt I had to take action to support a woman who was breaking into what had always been an exclusively male occupation and take issue with the sort of harassment which drives women out, and his dismissal was reaffirmed. Sexual

Dawn Butler MP   and 4 others

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Fighting the Arts Council England decision to reduce funding to key cultural institutions

I continue to work with colleagues across the House of Commons to fight the decision by Arts Council England to reduce funding to key cultural institutions across the UK.



On 4th November Arts Council England, the organisation that oversees the disbursement of government funding to arts institutions, announced that there would be big cuts for arts funding in London. This included slashing the funding for the English National Opera, one of the UK's flagship opera houses, and forcing it to move out of London.

I disagree with this decision in the strongest terms and on 5th December I spoke in an adjournment debate in the House of Commons on this issue which

you can watch [here](#).

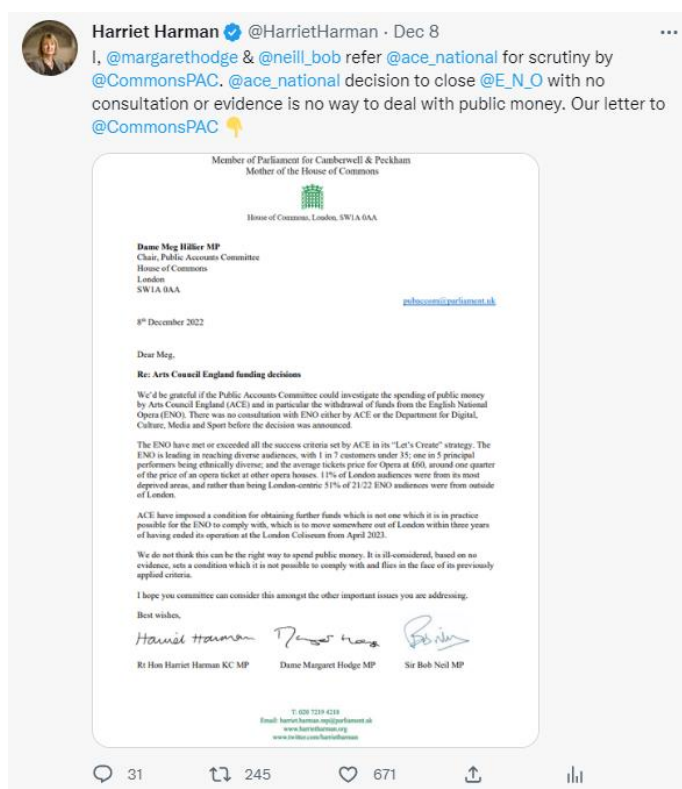
On 8th December, together with my colleagues Dame Margaret Hodge MP and Sir Bob Neill MP I wrote to ask the Public Accounts Committee to investigate the way in which Arts Council England have spent public money without any consultation and with no evidence underpinning their decision.

Dear Meg,

Re: Arts Council England funding decisions

We'd be grateful if the Public Accounts Committee could investigate the spending of public money by Arts Council England (ACE) and in particular the withdrawal of funds from the English National Opera (ENO). There was no consultation with ENO either by ACE or the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport before the decision was announced.

The ENO have met or exceeded all the success criteria set by ACE in its "Let's Create" strategy. The ENO is leading in reaching diverse audiences, with 1 in 7 customers under 35; one in 5 principal performers being ethnically diverse; and the average tickets price for Opera at £60, around one quarter of the price of an opera ticket at other opera houses. 11% of London audiences were from its most



deprived areas, and rather than being London-centric 51% of 21/22 ENO audiences were from outside of London.

ACE have imposed a condition for obtaining further funds which is not one which it is in practice possible for the ENO to comply with, which is to move somewhere out of London within three years of having ended its operation at the London Coliseum from April 2023.

We do not think this can be the right way to spend public money. It is ill-considered, based on no evidence, sets a condition which it is not possible to comply with and flies in the face of its previously applied criteria.

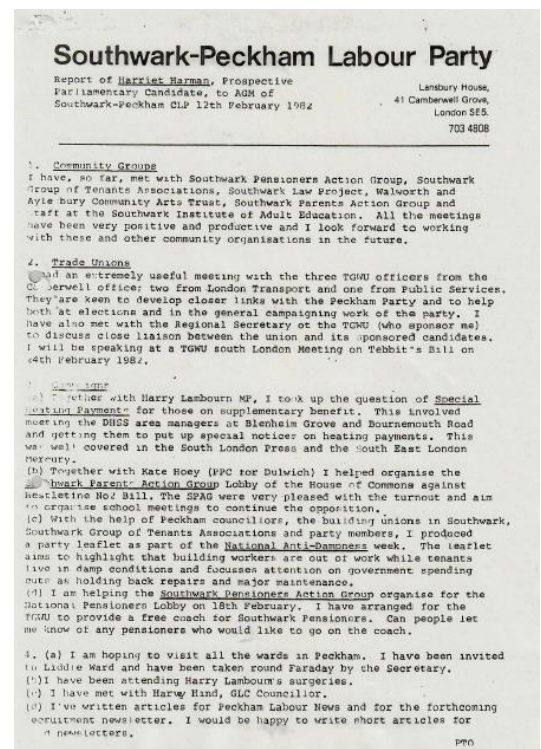
I hope your committee can consider this amongst the other important issues you are addressing.

Speaking to Labour's newly selected Parliamentary Candidates

On 6th December I spoke to a group of newly selected Labour Parliamentary Candidates in seats that we hope to win at the next general election. Showing them some of the reports I wrote as a Parliamentary Candidate back in 1982, I encouraged them to make sure they are as visible as possible and stressed the

importance of them working to ensure that we remain a united party and supporting the work that Keir Starmer and Rachel Reeves are doing in the run up to the next election. The single most important thing for their

prospective constituents is a Labour Government and that is what they need to be working towards.



Christmas visit to Camberwell Royal Mail delivery office

On 13th December I was pleased to make my annual visit to the Camberwell Royal Mail delivery office to thank the postal workers for their dedicated work over the last year.





Opening of the new roof terrace at Persepolis, Peckham

I was honoured to be asked by Sally Butcher, owner of Persepolis on Peckham High Street, to cut the ribbon of her restaurant's new roof terrace on 8th December. Sally also launched her great new cookbook "Veganistan".

Christmas catch-ups with local Labour members in Peckham Rye, Champion Hill, Goose Green and Dulwich and West Norwood CLP

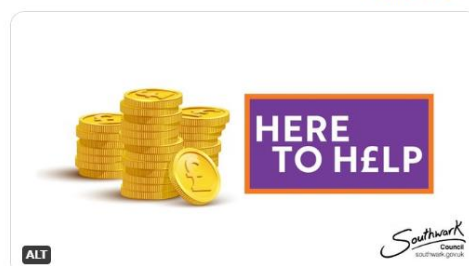


Help and Support

Cost of Living help and support

Find out what support you might be able to get to help with your living costs. You can get benefits and other financial support if you're eligible. Find out [here](#).

Southwark Council @lb_southwark · Dec 19
We're here to help you during the cost of living crisis. Answer a few quick questions about your personal circumstances and check you're getting all the benefits and other financial support you're eligible for orlo.uk/9sp58



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](#)**
- **[Covid-19: What can you do to help](#)**
- **[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](#)**
- **[Impact on council services](#)**
- **[Advice on potential coronavirus related scams](#)**

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 during this national emergency, 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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Let me know your views at harriet.harman.mp@parliament.uk