

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

January Report

24th January 2023



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This is my January report 2023 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.

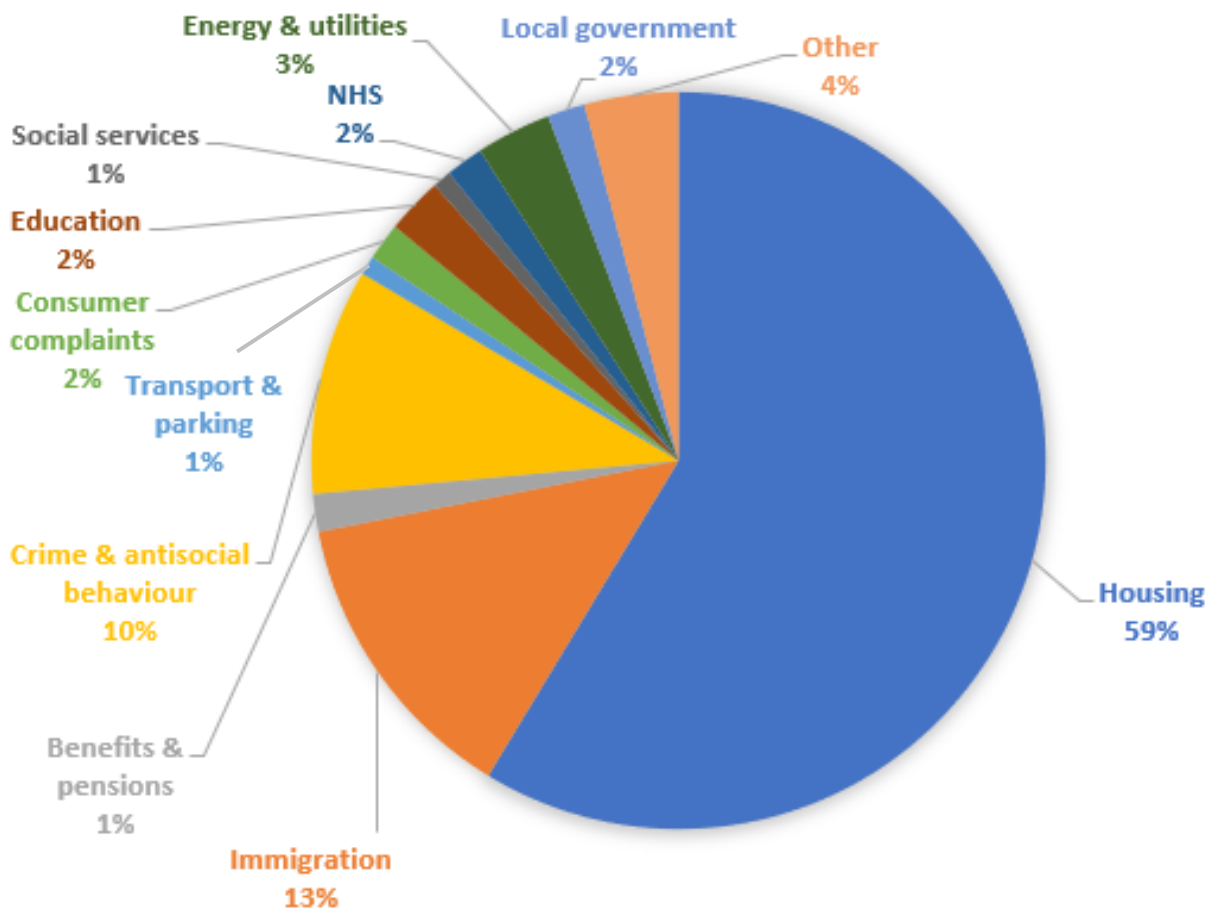
Haniel Harman

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 – December 2022

In December I took action on **551** cases and recouped **£566.88** for constituents. In 2022 I recouped a total of **£16,056.85** for constituents.



Case summaries:

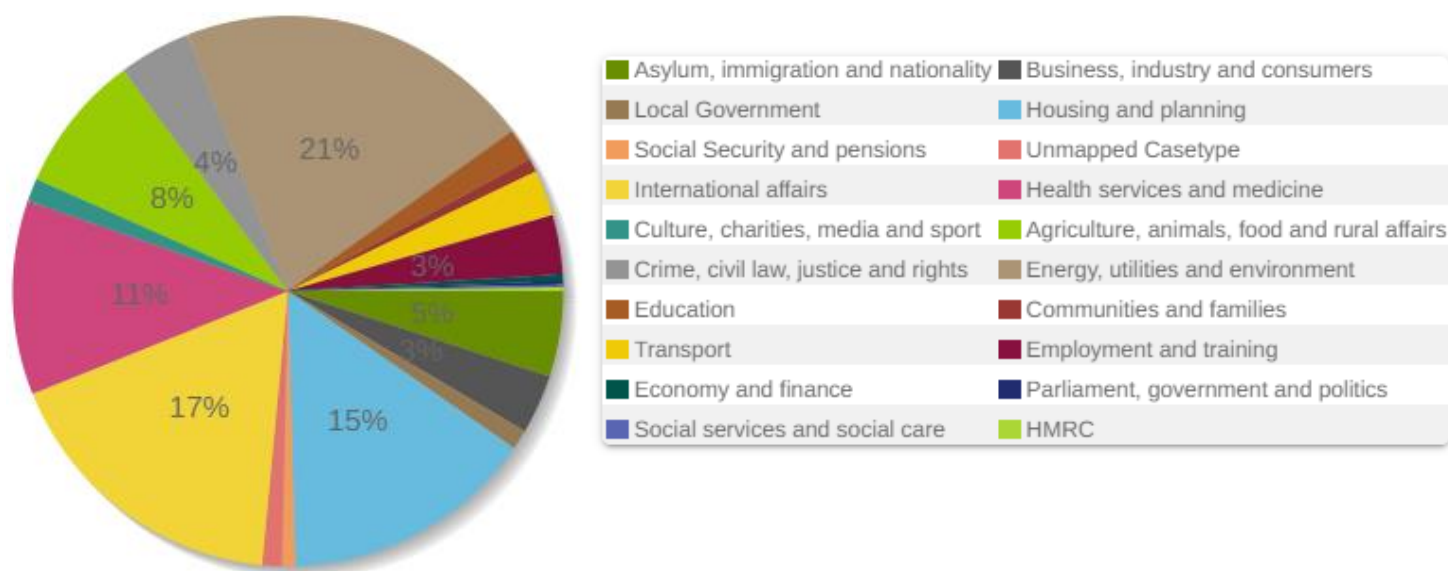
- I was contacted by a Camberwell man who had amassed 17 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) from Transport for London (TfL) totalling £5,508 as he was unaware of the most recent expansion of the Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ). He had challenged the fines and was told by TfL that no further collection action would be taken. However, he then received a letter stating that his challenge had been rejected. He therefore asked to pay the fines by instalments, but this was also rejected and action was taken by a debt recovery service on behalf of TfL. I wrote to TfL on his behalf to ask what support was available to him as he was unable to pay the full amount all at once. As a gesture of goodwill due to my constituent's financial difficulties, TfL agreed to pause all enforcement action and to reduce the amount from £5,508 to £212.50, a reduction of £5,295.50. TfL also confirmed that they have installed over 600 ULEZ signs at the side of every road which enters the ULEZ to ensure that motorists are able to see clearly when they are entering the ULEZ zone. My constituent was satisfied with this resolution.
- In the run up to Christmas a Camberwell woman contacted me about the loss of heating and hot water she was experiencing due to boiler issues in the property that she shares with her housebound father. I wrote urgently to Optivo housing on their behalf asking them to carry out the necessary repairs as a matter of urgency. As a result the issue with the boiler was resolved the next morning and my constituent's heating and hot water was reinstated.
- A Liberian woman living in Walworth contacted me to ask for my help to resolve a problem with her and her son's immigration documents, which due to a Home Office error gave incorrect information about the conditions of their stay. Her status letter from the Home Office said that she was entitled to receive public funds, however her Biometric Resident Permit (BRP) said that she was not. This affected the financial support that she was able to access from Southwark Council. I wrote to the Home Office on her behalf to ask for the discrepancy between the documents to be corrected. As a result, the Home Office issued an apology for their error and confirmed that she was granted recourse to public funds. My constituent and her son have now been issued new BRP cards which reflect the correct conditions.
- In December I was contacted by 27 constituents experiencing various heating and hot water failures. These cases included problems both with individual boilers and with entire communal heating systems. This was particularly worrying due to the low temperatures in December. In each case I wrote to either the Council or their relevant housing association to ensure that their heating was reinstated as a matter of urgency and to ask for my constituents to be paid compensation for the time spent without heating and hot water.
- A man from East Dulwich wrote to tell me that he and his neighbours had been experiencing an internet failure, affecting two streets between Peckham Rye and East Dulwich, for over five days. I urgently wrote to BT Openreach to ask what steps they were taking to restore internet for residents. BT Openreach explained that they had just repaired a major fault in the area and that the service had been restored to all residents. They had also contacted my

constituent's service provider, Sky, who confirmed that the fault was resolved and that all services are now fully working.

- I was contacted by a nurse working at King's College Hospital who had applied to extend his Worker Visa in June 2022 but had not yet received a decision. I wrote to UK Visas and Immigration on his behalf to request an update on the progress of his application. In response UKVI told me that his visa had been extended until September 2025 and his Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) had been issued. I shared this response with him who confirmed that he had received his BRP.

In December I received **413** emails from constituents on policy issues including:

- Support free school meals – I support breakfast clubs for every primary school child in England
- Help resolve the University strikes –all workers deserve decent pay, pensions and working conditions and the Government should have sought to facilitate some sort of resolution sooner
- 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.
- Support onshore wind – I support onshore wind
- Support the #ReviveTheNHS campaign – I share concerns about the NHS and I am pleased the Labour Party has set out a 10-year plan of change and modernization for the NHS
- Support an amendment to the Levelling Up Bill to treat childcare as infrastructure – I agree that accessible and affordable childcare is vital infrastructure
- Support the Long Live the Local campaign to lower business rates – I support an overhaul of business rates





Attending the vigil for Kalabe Legesse

On 6th January I attended the vigil for Kalabe Legesse, who was fatally stabbed in Peckham on 30th December. It was a shocking crime and my deepest sympathies are with his family. I continue to work closely with the local police on this and other issues relating to safety in the local community.

Visiting local hotel housing asylum seekers



On 20th January along with Cllr Jasmine Ali, Southwark Council Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Education and Refugees and council officers, I visited a hotel in Camberwell and Peckham which has been taken over by the Home Office to provide housing for asylum seekers. I met with representatives from Clearsprings Ready Homes who manage the facility on behalf of the Home Office and members of the hotel staff to discuss how they provide housing for a diverse range of individuals and families, and to discuss the support available to residents while they are awaiting a decision on their



asylum applications.

The hotel is providing housing for 441 people, of whom there are:

- 87 single males,
- 33 single females, and
- 110 Families of 2-7 people, including 5 pregnant women.

I am grateful to Southwark Council, Clearsprings Ready Homes, the local schools and GPs services and the local community, who have warmly welcomed and supported the asylum seekers who live in my constituency. But a hotel room is not suitable for long term family housing. One resident told me:

"we do not have the conditions for a full-fledged family and marital life or to cook our usual and familiar food. My son, who goes to school, doesn't even have a chair and desk to do his homework. We eat on the floor because there is no table or chairs."

No family should have to live in a hotel bedroom for months with no ability to cook for themselves, barred from working and with very little money.

I will be visiting the hotel again shortly to meet with more residents to discuss what further support they need and continue to press the Home Office to speed up the

decision making on residents' cases so that they and their children can settle in a home of their own and they can start to work.

ESTABLISHED 1865
southlondonpress LONDON WEEKLY NEWS & Mercury **The new Metropolitan
Commissioner must eradicate
racism from the force**

3 January 2023

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 said 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 among 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 officers. Those who have committed disciplinary offences with any aspect of racism should be dismissed.

The Met 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 per cent 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.

Demanding that the Home Secretary reform the Metropolitan Police

After the tragic murder of Sarah Everard I wrote to the then-Home Secretary outlining my proposals for the reform of the Metropolitan Police. This included that all serving officers against whom there is an allegation of violence against women should be suspended, and a reform of the vetting process of new recruits. 15 months later, we have learnt about the atrocious and repeated crimes committed by David Carrick, who served as



Harriet Harman @HarrietHarman · Jan 16

Re police rapist Carrick: horrifying but not surprising. Calls for action since Sarah Everard murder & before have been brushed aside. Reviews, apologies, new Met Commissioner, new Home Secs but absolutely nothing has changed. Must happen NOW. My letter to Home Sec 2021 📧



Harriet Harman @HarrietHarman · Sep 30, 2021

Sarah Everard was simply walking home. Women must be able to trust the police not fear them. Women's confidence in police will have been shattered. Urgent action needed. Met Commissioner must resign. My letters to Home Sec & Met 📧



a police officer for 20 years without being suspended despite repeated allegations of sexual violence.

On January 17th I spoke in an Urgent Question to the Home Secretary about the Metropolitan Police's response to the horrific crimes committed by David Carrick. I demanded that the Home Secretary bring in without delay new Regulations to change the rules on dismissals in the police and to allow the Met Commissioner, Sir Mark Rowley, to sack officers who need to be removed from policing. I also demanded that the Met take action against the senior officers who enabled Carrick's crimes by ignoring the allegations against him.

Harriet Harman  @HarrietHarman · Jan 17
Home Sec @SuellaBraverman must bring forward draft Regs to change rules which prevent @metpoliceuk Commissioner & Chief Constables sacking officers. All parties would back this. Why only reviews/inaction? My question in Parl 🇬🇧 1/2



5 replies 33 retweets 103 likes 9,952 views

Harriet Harman  @HarrietHarman · Jan 17
@metpoliceuk must take action on senior officers in management roles whose failures on Carrick enabled his crimes to continue 2/2



5 replies 8 retweets 27 likes 2,755 views

My questions to the Home Secretary are below, and you can watch it [here](#).

I thank the Home Secretary for her statement. I completely agree with the very strong questioning put by the shadow Home Secretary, and I also agree with what was said by the former Home Secretary and the current Chair of the Select Committee.

I have two questions. The first is about timing. As hon. Members have said, successive Metropolitan Police Commissioners have complained that the regulations this House has put in place in statutory instruments prevent them from sacking officers who they know are unfit to be in the Metropolitan police, so that puts a responsibility on us to change those regulations. Can I suggest that the Home Secretary, in consultation with the Metropolitan police, brings forward draft regulations, and let us consult not in the overall generality of a review, but on those specific draft regulations? We will be 100% behind her when she brings to the House changed regulations, so that the

Metropolitan police are able to manage the force in the way we all want to see them manage it.

The second point about Sir Mark Rowley and the response to the Carrick situation is that this is not just about change in the future, but about dealing with the individuals who are currently in senior and management positions in the Met who seemed to think it was all right for Carrick to be given extra responsibilities and to be promoted. The management suitability of those officers really ought to be examined by the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, and we need a bit of transparency about that. Will the Home Secretary urge the commissioner, whom we all support in his determination to change the culture, to publish transparently what tracking he has gone through of when Carrick was looked at and nothing was done, because all of those senior officers have colluded? Will she also look through all of the officers, at horizontal level, who were part of the banter and the immediate culture of this officer, and who did nothing

to report him and therefore were colluding in the perpetration of these atrocious crimes?

How Men Who Kill Their Partners Are Getting Away With a 'Fifty Shades Defence'

15 January 2023, by Alex Lloyd, Fabulous Magazine

Natalie Connolly's death was a painful and violent one. The mum of one was found lying in a pool of blood at the bottom of the stairs in her home, having suffered more than 40 injuries.

These included horrific internal damage inflicted with a bottle of carpet cleaner, plus her face had been sprayed with bleach. A post-mortem showed the 26 year old died from acute alcohol intoxication and blunt force injuries.

Yet the man responsible for leaving Natalie's eight-year-old daughter to grow up without a mum, her multimillionaire boyfriend John Broadhurst, who was 38 at the time of Natalie's death, was jailed for only three years and eight months.

The reason? Because he claimed that Natalie had wanted this mistreatment as part of consensual rough sex.

At a trial in December 2018, prosecutors tried to prove Broadhurst had murdered his girlfriend two years earlier at their home in Kinver, Staffordshire, during an angry assault, but later downgraded the charge to manslaughter by gross negligence, to which he pleaded guilty.



Natalie Connolly's twin sister Gemma Andrews

**'The defence
of a sex game
gone wrong has
risen tenfold'**

Natalie's grieving twin sister Gemma Andrews and her father Alan Andrews said listening to his lurid claims only exacerbated their pain. When Broadhurst was released in October 2020 after serving a mere 22 months, Gemma said the justice system had failed her family. She told *The Sun* at the time: "It makes me feel physically sick. Nat wasn't the person she was made out to be. He killed my sister and put us all through hell as he tried to blame her for her own death."

Sadly, this case of a man implicating his victim in her fate isn't an isolated one. Two women a year in Britain were killed or injured during "rough sex" in 1996. Twenty years later, this figure was 20, with the use of the defence of a sex game gone wrong leaping tenfold since 2000.

When British backpacker Grace Millane was killed by a man she met on Tinder while in New Zealand in December 2018, his insistence on blaming the 22 year old for her own death meant details of her intimate life were broadcast around the world.

While Jesse Kempson was eventually found guilty of Grace's murder and jailed for

17 years, then later convicted of a further two sex attacks on women, the damage had already been done.

Grace's cousin, Hannah O'Callaghan, says their family has been changed forever by both their loss and the fallout from the trial. "Grace was a fun, family-orientated free spirit with a caring, loving nature," the 40-year-old mum from Essex tells *Fabulous*.

"She had a passion for art and we enjoyed lots of laughter and jokes at family gatherings. She was more like a younger sister to me than a cousin. All of our lives have changed completely. Her loss to us hasn't eased over the last four years. She's missed as much today as the day she died."

Like Natalie's family, Grace's loved ones felt their grief was compounded by the way her killer portrayed her during his trial. "The coverage was particularly difficult as it was so public," explains Hannah. "At times, it felt like Grace was the one on trial and she wasn't able to defend herself. You cannot consent to your own murder."

Another woman to die in shocking circumstances was Sophie Moss. She was tragically killed after receiving sustained pressure to her neck by her lover Sam Pybus at her home in Darlington, County Durham, in February 2021. He was jailed for four years and eight months after pleading guilty to the manslaughter of the mum of two. Sophie's older brother James told the court that her death felt like he'd lost a part of himself, while their father struggled to understand due to his dementia.

"She was joyous, vibrant, funny, talented and fearless – unless she saw a spider," he said. "She was considerate, generous and loved animals, and we cared deeply for each other."



Alex Lloyd @alexlloydjourn - Jan 15

Incredibly proud to see this @Fabulousmag report out today, on tougher sentencing for sexually-motivated manslaughter. Thanks to Hannah O'Callaghan for speaking so movingly about her late cousin Grace Millane, and to @fionamacmac @Wecantconsentto @Laura_Farris @HarrietHarman



1 4 33 1,912

Her ex-partner, who is raising their two sons, said it took him five weeks to break the horrifying news that their mother was dead – and that Pybus would "most likely be free" before they start asking the first awkward questions. "Our sons have been given a life sentence of grief and emptiness. The youngest often asks: 'Can I FaceTime Mummy in heaven?'" he said.

Tellingly, Pybus' ex-wife Louise Hewitt dubbed his lenient punishment "victim blaming" after the sentencing. In an article, she also said: "The lack of respect for women in the crime and sentencing of this case is appalling and exemplifies the danger of misogyny that permeates our society more than ever. Men in particular need to start

questioning why they get a kick out of strangling a woman. Because, knowing Sam, his act was not about what Sophie wanted."

Outcry over cases like these spurred MPs, spearheaded by Labour's Harriet Harman, and campaigners to demand a change in the law to mean the rough sex defence could no longer be used. The new Domestic Abuse Act says that a person is unable to consent to the infliction of harm that results in injury or death, for the purposes of obtaining sexual gratification. The legislation is a step forward, and perpetrators of non-fatal strangulation could now face up to five years in prison under the legislation

But Newbury MP Laura Farris wants to take things further. She is calling for those convicted of sexually motivated manslaughter to receive a minimum of 12 years' incarceration – sentences are currently, on average, much lower. Last year, she introduced a Private Members Bill in Parliament that would amend sentencing guidelines for judges.

Without the change in legislation, cases like the manslaughters of Natalie Connolly and Sophie Moss will continue to be viewed as lesser offences with lower sentencing guidelines.

"When I read the list of injuries inflicted on Natalie, I found it hard to believe she was still 'up for it'," Laura says. "For the families, this line of argument sullies the memories. And the last act the perpetrator inflicts on the victim – who is deceased and can't say what happened – is to make her look like a 'slag' who invited her own death. I've gone for a starting point of 12 years and I know my constituents think it is too short, but it will show that society does not tolerate this."

The MP believes the problem reflects the growth of a harmful violent culture that insists women "want this".

"The truth is, a lot of women are in abusive relationships where they feel they have no choice or they are forced into these situations," Laura explains. "I'm 44 and this wasn't something I had to live with growing up. Now I hear about young women who tell campaigners that choking is fashionable and they feel obliged to do it. It even gets called 'breath play'." So widespread is this misogynistic trend that research conducted by BBC Radio 5 Live and ComRes in 2019 found a shocking 38% of women aged 18 to 39 have been subjected to unwanted slapping, spitting, choking or gagging in consensual sex.

Fiona Mackenzie founded the We Can't Consent To This campaign in 2018 in response to Natalie's death and the increasing normalisation of violence against women. Fiona was working at Aberdeen University when the case of Mandy McDonald – a Scottish mum who was killed in January 2000 by her husband, who used rough sex as his defence – made headlines not only in Scotland, but across the rest of the UK. This tragic story stuck with Fiona, and when she later came across Natalie's case, she started a project to see how many



Harriet Harman and Laura Farris are campaigning for a change in sentencing

women the rough sex defence affected. Although she was a crucial voice in outlawing the defence, she still feels much more needs to be done.

"The government changing the law is just the start of this and it needs to work in practice," she says. "The criminal justice system is designed around men and men's violence. There is very little understanding of domestic violence and abuse or coercive control.

"We also need to work on the fact that a generation raised on violent porn are immersed in the idea that a woman crying during sex is normal. It is unacceptable as a society for young women to be told that – and for young boys to be coached to carry out sexual violence when they are just children."

MP Harriet Harman is also backing the new bill, after she spearheaded the movement to get the rough sex defence outlawed, but nevertheless believes prosecutors need to be bolder and push for murder convictions, and not settle for manslaughter.

"Ultimately, even if [the bill] is passed, it is still men getting off the hook," she says. "It should be treated for what it is – murder – and lead to a life sentence. There has to be absolutely zero tolerance in the justice system and the end of the culture of excuses. Because if the heart of this is a law which lets men get away with murder, it is difficult to make the argument that violence against women is never justified and that men must take responsibility for it – not seek to put the responsibility on her."

Grace Millane's mum Gillian and cousin Hannah set up the charity Love Grace in memory of the 22 year old. They fund-raise to donate handbags containing toiletries to women fleeing domestic violence who seek help at refuges.

And Hannah agrees that the bill absolutely needs to pass, saying: "Men simply must not be allowed to use this defence as an excuse to kill women, knowing they can get a lesser sentence. It will also mean families won't have to sit and listen while the victim is being re-victimised – and that no other family will have to go through what we have."

Opposing the Government's 'sacking nurses' Bill

On 16th January I voted against the Government's Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill.

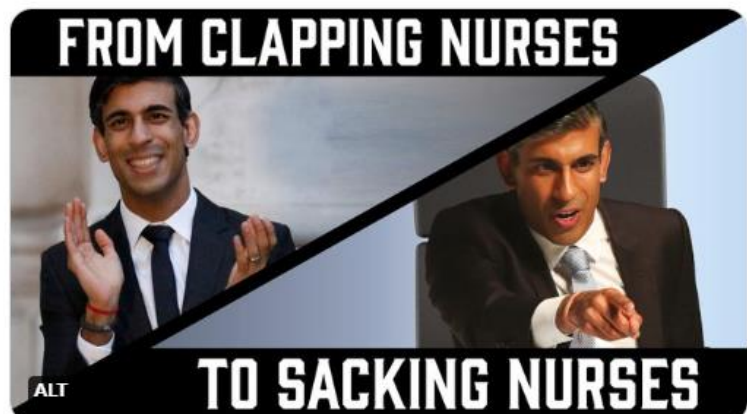
The Government's failed approach has led to the worst strikes in decades. At every stage they've sought to collapse talks and thrown in last minute spanners. Now with this new 'sacking nurses' Bill, they've gone from clapping nurses to sacking them.



The Labour Party @UKLabour · Jan 16

13 years of Tory neglect has left our NHS in crisis, with 7.2 million people on the waiting list.

Rishi Sunak's solution? Sack nurses who go on strike.



The Bill is unworkable and impractical - the Transport Secretary admits it won't work, the Education Secretary doesn't want it, and it will put intolerable burdens on employers.

This isn't about public safety - the Bill doesn't mention safety once. We all want minimum standards of service and staffing in the NHS and on our railways but Ministers are failing to provide it at all.

This is about the Prime Minister playing politics with yet another sticking plaster, distracting from the Conservative's economic mess and NHS staffing shortages. You can't legislate your way out of 13 years of failure.

I strongly oppose this fundamental attack on working people's freedoms on the principle. And Labour will repeal it.

In power, we'll end the Tories' strikes chaos with a new partnership of cooperation between trade unions, employers and Government - meaning issues are resolved before strikes.

Arts Council England must reverse their cuts to culture

On 18th January I spoke in a debate on the funding decisions made by Arts Council England. Government funding for the arts is 46% lower now than it was in 2005, and 70% of the recent cuts by Arts Council England fall within London. These reductions mean that organisations like the English National Opera, the Welsh National Opera, and Glyndebourne have all lost money and will be reducing their national tours as a result. This in turn affects local theatres who no longer benefit from performances by these world class opera companies.

When you reduce funding for the arts you make them more exclusive, not less. These cuts, falsely claimed to be "levelling up", will have a detrimental impact on arts throughout England. Arts Council England must rethink their cuts.

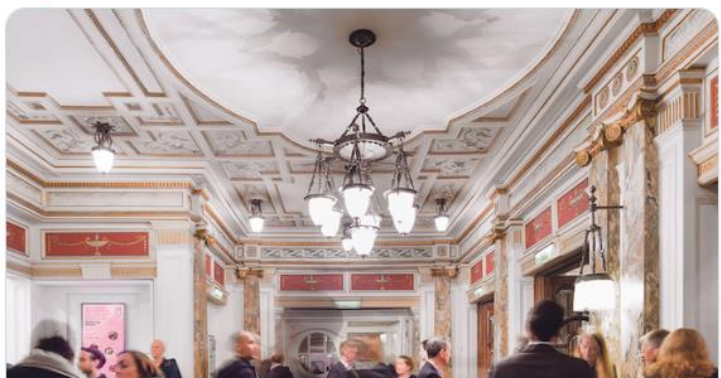
You can read my speech below or watch it [here](#).

I congratulate the hon. Member for Bromley and Chislehurst (Sir Robert Neill) on securing this debate. I back absolutely every word he said, and I join him in urging Arts Council England to rethink this funding round, which has no strategy, has had no consultation, is thoroughly destructive, and importantly makes the crucial art form of opera more elitist, rather than less.



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NEW. [#Conservative](#) MP [@neill_bob](#) leads passionate Commons debate about [#levellingup](#) cut to [@E_N_O](#) - [onlondon.co.uk/tory-bob-neill...](#) Report by [@CharlesWright57](#). [@HarrietHarman](#) [@rgclondoncomms](#) [@londonsoc](#) [@londoncouncils](#)



[onlondon.co.uk](#)

Tory Bob Neill leads passionate Commons debate about government funding c...
London MPs, with support from outside the capital, are continuing their fight against November's decision by Arts Council England (ACE) to remove all ...

As a result of losing a third of its funding, Welsh National Opera has cancelled its 2023 tour to Liverpool. That is more elitist, not less. ENO's core mission is to make opera accessible, bringing the art form to younger and more diverse audiences. The threat to ENO makes it harder to do that work. Because the Britten Sinfonia has lost its annual grant of £500,000, it will not be able to do its education and outreach work in the east of England. Because Glyndebourne has had its grant cut by 50%, it has announced that it will not be able to tour in 2023. When funding is reduced for opera, it is made more exclusive, not less. Public funding is the key way to open up opera to all. The funding cuts make opera more for the elites, not less.

One further consequence of Arts Council England's decision, which I am sure is unintentional, is the effect on regional theatres, which I know my hon. Friends will mention. Peter Wilson, who ran the Norwich Theatre Royal, wrote a letter to Nicholas Serota and Darren Henley at Arts Council England, which said that there are "people who stay loyal to their local theatres, providing the bedrock of serious support because of the regular appearance of challenging first class productions provided by Glyndebourne and WNO...Without them, NTR could not have flourished...And without their support theatres' Friends lists, their ability to raise refurbishment and restoration funds, and their reputations will diminish. Theatres need high quality mixed programming; first class opera is a crucial part of the mix...Once started, a downward spiral in audiences is inevitable. You cannot possibly want that."

What he is saying is that the decisions about these opera companies will make unviable and change vital regional theatres.

Peter Wilson continues:

"Glyndebourne, WNO and ENO have high cultural ambitions that deserve to be shared as widely as possible. To emasculate them—to destroy existing 'skills, knowledge and networks' so wantonly...will not just make those ambitions unavailable in the near future; it will probably ensure that they will never again be part of the national cultural fabric of which I have been so proud for 50 years."

Does the Minister know whether Arts Council England considered the effect on regional theatres of what they are doing to these opera companies? Did it even consult regional theatres, which are dealing with the consequences of all this? This is a very well attended debate, with people from different regions and parties. None of us is whipped to be here. None of us has not got other things to do. All the Members sitting here are those who are committed to the arts. If I was Arts Council England looking at this, I would recognise that I had gone seriously wrong. If the Members who are the backbone of championing public policy on the arts are in Westminster Hall complaining about the Arts Council, it should recognise that it has got things wrong and think again. To say from behind its hands, "Well, we've been told by wicked Secretaries of State and DCMS that we have to do this", is something that I do not accept for one moment. The Arts Council is an independent body, for goodness' sake—the key is in the name, "independent"—and if people take on responsibility for an independent body, they have a duty to that body to act independently. If they are told what to do by somebody whose business it is not, they should tell them to shove off, or threaten to resign. That is the way it is supposed to be.

The Arts Council has to recognise the scale of the problem. However, we are a forgiving group of people, because we love the arts, and therefore if the Arts Council sees sense, we will not complain about it; we will congratulate it. Really, it should read the writing on the wall. As Peter Wilson writes to Nick Serota and Darren Henley, "I've bumped into you both over 25 years...It's plain that your lives and careers have been dedicated to making the best art available as widely as possible throughout the UK."

I say to both of them, keep faith with that. Change your mind. We all believe in redemption; it is not too late.

Speaking at the Fawcett Society's "A House for Everyone" event



On 10th January I spoke on a panel along with parliamentary colleagues at a Fawcett Society event to launch their new report, "A House for Everyone: A case for modernising Parliament".

Based on surveys and interviews with MPs, the report found that 69% of women in Parliament have witnessed sexist behaviour in the past 5 years, and only 37% of women felt that Parliament was an inclusive environment for them.

It shows clearly that we have a long way to go to make Parliament a place where women can work on equal terms

with men. I strongly endorse the recommendations made in the final report, which you can read in full [here](#).

Interviewing international women MPs

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. In 2018 I held a conference for Women MPs of the World in the chamber of the House of Commons. 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 MPs to hear why they had decided to enter politics, how they got selected to stand for parliament and elected, and what they hope to achieve. I continue to conduct these interviews. Recently I have interviewed Senator Gabriela Morawska-Stanecka from Poland, and Hon. Fatoumatta N'Jai from The Gambia.



Supporting the sending of Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine

Along with the Chairs other Parliamentary select committees I have signed the letter written by Chris Bryant MP to the German Defence Minister, Boris Pistorius, urging him to allow German-made Leopard 2 tanks to be sent to the Ukrainian government. You can read the full letter [here](#).



Chris Bryant
@RhonddaBryant

Backbench MPs from four main parties including many select committee chairs and I have written to the German Defence Minister asking him to allow German-made Leopard 2 tanks to get to Ukraine at a moment of urgency



Help and Support

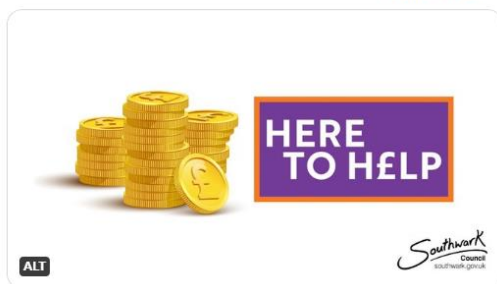
Cost of Living help and support

Residents can apply to Southwark's cost of living support via their [web page](#), where eligibility criteria is also listed.

Households can only receive one payment through this round of Cost of Living Funding, so if a resident has already been referred to the fund they will not be

successful applying through an alternative route.

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



Residents who receive or have recently claimed benefits and need urgent financial support can also still apply to the Southwark Emergency Support Scheme, found [here](#).

Find out what further government support you might be able to get to help with your living costs [here](#).

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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