

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

## **Parliamentary Report**

**23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023**



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## This is my February 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.

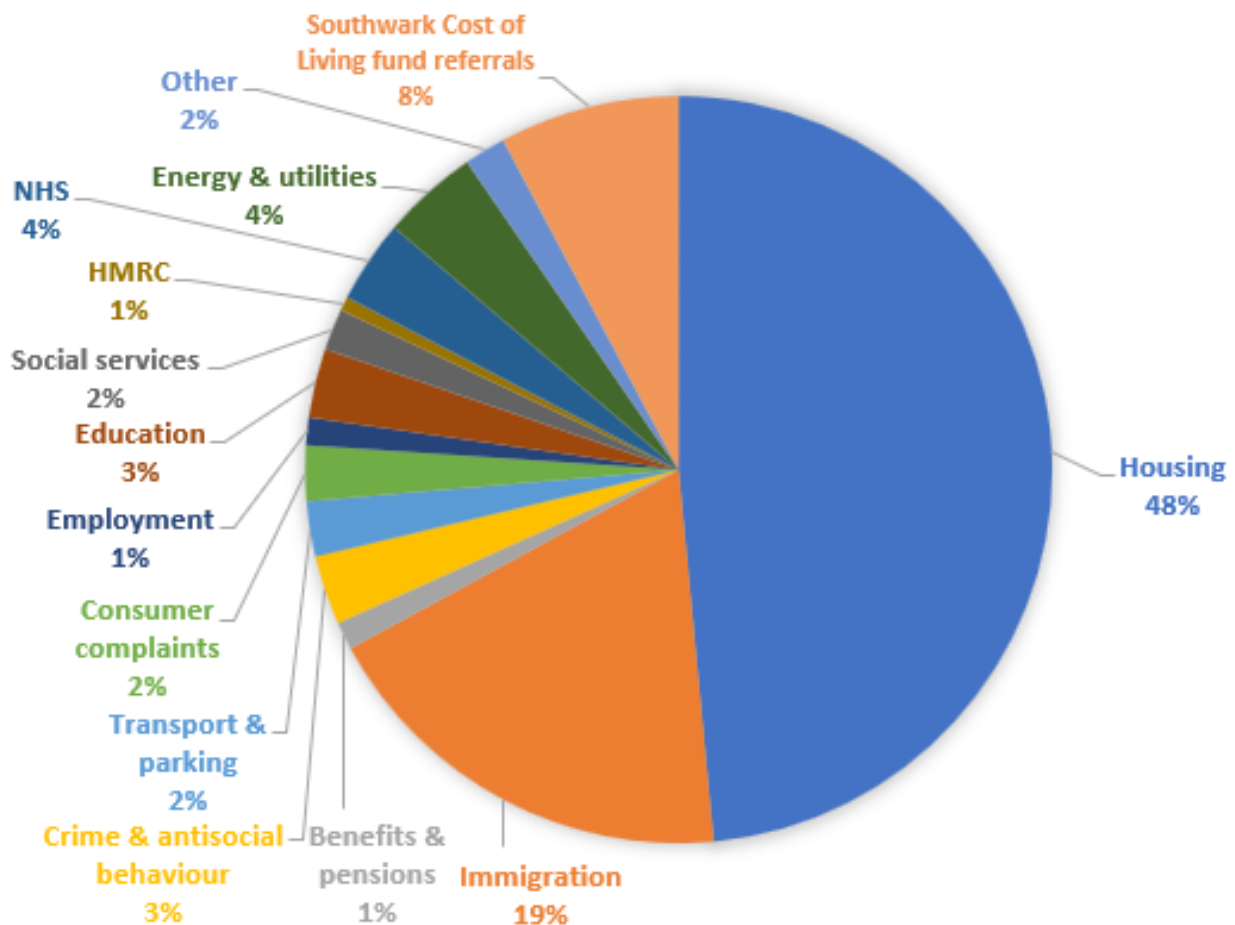
*Haniel Hamman*

## Constituency problems - update

There continues to be an increase in the number of constituents seeking my help with their problems.

## New cases breakdown – January 2023

In January I took action on **719** cases and recouped **£5,951.38** for constituents.



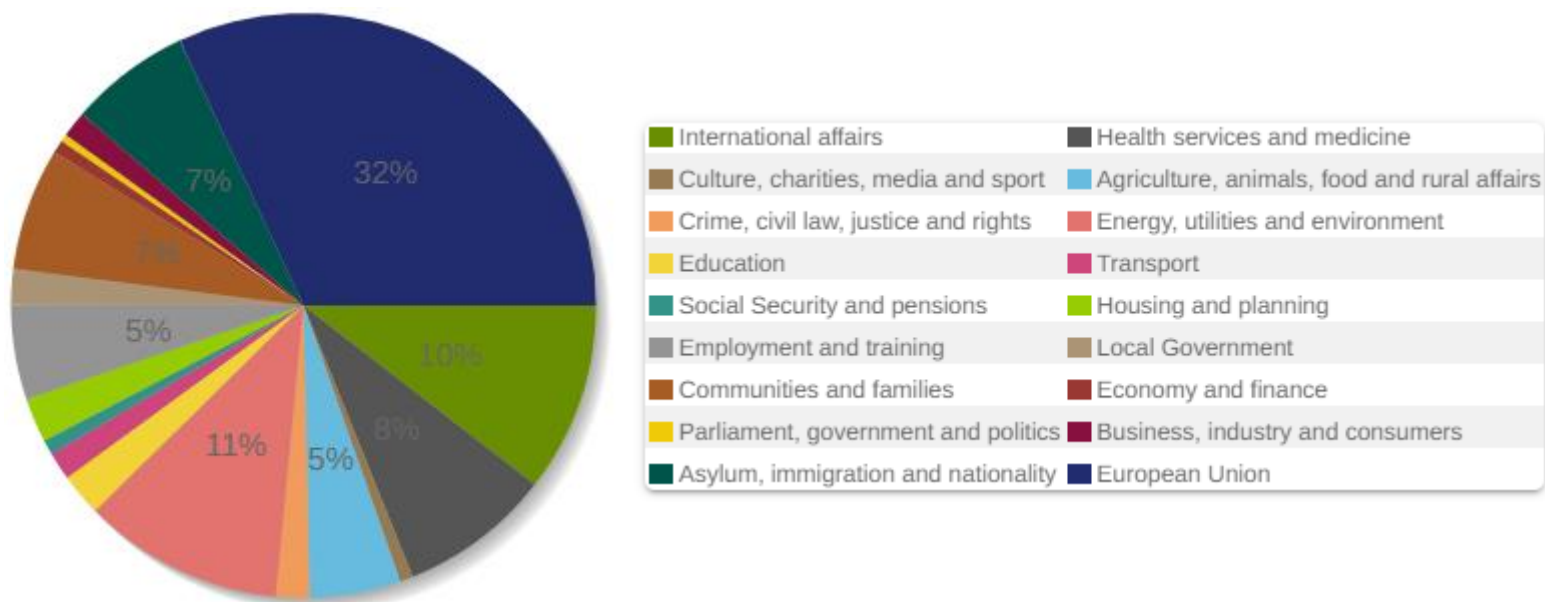
## Case summaries:

- A Southwark Council tenant wrote to me with concerns about the lack of lighting around Welland House and Trent House due to broken floodlights at the entrance to the estate. My constituent had reported this to the Council in December but the floodlights had still not been repaired. Residents were particularly concerned about the issue of poor lighting because of the tragic fatal stabbing in Peckham Rye Park on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022. I urgently wrote to the Council to ask for them to resolve the issue. As a result of my contact with the Council contractors have carried out the necessary repairs to the floodlights and the area is now well lit.
- A man living in Nunhead wrote to tell me that he had applied to renew his Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) driver's licence in November 2022 but had not yet received a decision on the application. As a result he was unable to work. I wrote to Transport for London (TfL) asking them when the decision was likely to be made on this application and as a result TfL renewed the licence for a full three-year term. I shared this response with my constituent who is now able to continue to work.
- A mother living in Walworth and originally from Nigeria asked for my help because though her three children were granted British Citizenship in December 2021, one child had yet to receive his UK registration certificate. I wrote to UK Visas and Immigration to ask when my constituent could expect her son's registration certificate to be issued and delivered. I received a response confirming that the initial certificate had been printed in December 2021 but as it had not been received by my constituent a reprint was ordered and dispatched following my enquiry. I shared this information with my constituent, who confirmed that she has now received the certificate.
- A Peckham woman from South Africa asked for my help because she had not yet received her Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) and needed to urgently travel back to South Africa to see her father who is receiving treatment for Stage 4 cancer. I urgently contacted the Home Office to ask for her case to be expedited on compassionate grounds. The Home Office confirmed that the request to expedite her application had been granted and that her BRP had been issued. I shared this response with my constituent who confirmed that she had received her BRP and was preparing to travel to see her father.
- I was contacted by a single mother from Jamaica living in Walworth who informed me that she had applied for leave to remain on the basis of family and private life and had attended her biometrics appointment over a year ago but had yet to receive an outcome or an update from the Home Office. This was causing her a lot of distress as she needed these documents in order to be able to work. I wrote to the Home Office to ask for a full report into her situation and when she could expect to receive her Biometric Residence Permit (BRP). The Home Office responded to confirm that her leave to remain had now been granted and her BRP has been sent to her. My constituent has confirmed that she has now received her BRP.

In January I received **881** emails from constituents on policy issues including:

- Retained EU Law Bill – I voted against the bill and continue to oppose it.

- Support for Afghan families promised support – Delays to the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme are shameful. I oppose the Government's policy of removing asylum seekers to Rwanda.
- Defend the right to strike – I am opposed to the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill and will continue to oppose its passage through parliament.
- Concern over missing children from asylum hotels – I am deeply concerned by reports of children going missing from asylum hotels. The Home Office must immediately move vulnerable children to safer accommodation.
- Support the #ReviveTheNHS campaign – I share concerns about the NHS and I strongly support the Labour Party 10-year plan for change and modernization of the NHS.
- Stop arming Israel – I supported calls for the Government to provide an assessment of the use of any exported arms in the Israel-Palestine conflict and for it to have a duty to examine the risks involved in any future arms sales to the Israeli security forces.
- Support the Long Live the Local campaign to lower business rates – I support an overhaul of business rates.



## Hearing President Zelenskyy speak to Parliament

It was a privilege to hear from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on 8<sup>th</sup> February. He spoke to assembled parliamentarians in Westminster Hall and gave a historic address thanking the UK for its solidarity with Ukraine and asking for more military equipment to support the Ukrainian defence against Putin, including fighter jets.





## Commemorating Holocaust memorial day

I signed the House of Commons book of commitment to mark Holocaust Memorial Day on 27<sup>th</sup> January. We must never forget the six million Jewish men, women and children murdered during the Holocaust.



Keir Starmer @Keir\_Starmer · Feb 15  
My first act as Labour leader was to commit to tearing antisemitism out of the party.

Today's EHRC announcement shows how far we've come. We're never going back.

Labour is the party of patriotism and equality. Together, we'll deliver a better country.



thetimes.co.uk

Keir Starmer: My Labour is patriotic, a party of equality not protest  
Promising change is the easy part. Delivering it is painstaking. It requires commitment, hard graft, focus and humility. From the ...

## Labour no longer in EHRC special measures on antisemitism

On 14<sup>th</sup> February the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) announced that the Labour party is no longer in special measures, following its investigation into antisemitism in the party. Under Keir Starmer's leadership, the Labour party has torn antisemitism out by the roots. The job is not yet finished but we are heading in the right direction. Keir Starmer has written about this and you can read his article [here](#).



## Are leaseholders getting the support the government has given on energy bills?

11<sup>th</sup> February 2023



This winter too many people in Southwark have faced desperately hard decisions between food and heating in the face of soaring energy bills. A UK survey showed almost a quarter of adults planned to keep the heating off this winter and as many Southwark residents are on low incomes it means that here that figure is even higher. This

Government is insisting that they'll let energy companies put up prices again in April and end their energy support for businesses.

And even the Government Energy Bills Relief Scheme is not working properly for many people in Southwark. In particular those who live in flats and get their heat from a communal boiler. They have got almost none of the Government's promised financial support. Many on communal boilers have seen their bills go up a staggering 900%, more than 4.5 times the already crippling rise in the prices for people not on those systems. The problem is that while the Government has given some financial help to Housing Associations, constituents tell me that Housing Associations are not passing on that help to the leaseholders that are actually paying the bills.

I'm pressing the Government to ensure that the help reaches those leaseholders who are entitled to it. I have written to the Hyde Housing Association but have yet to receive a reply.

And while people struggle with bills the Government is standing by while the energy companies make huge profits because of the energy price increases caused by Putin's attack on Ukraine. On 2<sup>nd</sup> February Shell announced its highest profits in 115 years,

reaching \$39.9bn, double their profits the previous year. And Shell is not the only one.

Everyone faces an increase of 40% in their energy bills in April. The Government should put in a proper windfall tax on the energy companies and backdate it to 2022. Though they made profits of \$39.9bn Shell paid only \$134m in tax, 0.3% of their total profits.

The problem is that the Prime Minister is too weak to stand up for the British people. Labour would stop energy prices going up in April. It cannot be right that companies make unexpected windfall profits from the effects of an illegal war in Ukraine. It will need Labour in Government to sort out this unfair mess, to tackle the cost of living crisis now, deliver a long term plan to cut bills for good and make Britain a clean energy superpower.

## Calling on Housing Associations with properties in Southwark to identify and tackle the problem of mould

Last year a coroner determined that the tragic death of two year old Awaab Ishak was caused by exposure to black mould in his home. I have written to the 8 major Housing Associations in Southwark to ask what they are doing to find out whether any of their housing stock has dangerous black mould, and what plans they have to ensure that it is fixed. I have also asked for further information on any helplines that residents can use to contact their Housing Association.

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



House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

Patrick Franco  
Chief Executive Officer  
Notting Hill Genesis  
Bruce Kenrick House  
2 Killick Street  
London  
N1 9FL

15<sup>th</sup> February 2023

Dear Patrick,

Re: Mould in Notting Hill Genesis housing stock in Southwark

Everyone was shocked by the tragic death of Awaab Ishak, who died as a direct result of black mould in the flat that he lived in. I would appreciate it if you could tell me whether you have done an audit on all Notting Hill Genesis-owned social housing properties in Southwark to see which are unfit due to mould, and what plans do you have and how long will it take to make those properties compliant with regulations?

I would also appreciate if you could confirm whether you have a dedicated line that residents can use to report issues of mould and damp.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Harriet Harman KC MP



**Harriet Harman** @HarrietHarman · Jan 24

Supporting @RhondaBryant as he argues for equal marriage in Church of England.



**PARLY** @PARLYapp · Jan 24



Here is @AndrewSelous answering the UQ on same sex marriage and the C of E  
[twitter.com/PARLYapp/statu...](https://twitter.com/PARLYapp/status...)

I continue to be in close contact with Cllr Darren Merrill, the Southwark Council cabinet member with responsibility for social housing, to monitor the situation in Council-owned housing stock in my constituency.

## Supporting equal marriage in the Church of England

On 24<sup>th</sup> January I supported Chris Bryant MP and colleagues on both sides of the house arguing in favour of the Church of England changing its rules to allow priests to perform gay marriages. Currently only prayers of blessing for gay couples are allowed by the Church.

Colleagues such as Ben Bradshaw MP, Chris Bryant MP, Andrew Selous MP and Cat Smith MP all spoke in favour of change, which I am strongly supportive of. Despite deeply held views on both sides of the argument, the debate was held in a very respectful way with both sides listening to each other and putting forwards their opinions. It was an example of how debates in the House of Commons should be conducted.



## **"Committee Corridor" podcast on call for an apology to mothers and children affected by forced adoption**

On 15<sup>th</sup> July 2022, the Joint Committee on Human Rights, which I chair, published its report into the experiences of mothers and children who were affected by forced adoption in the 1950s, '60s and '70s. This included the recommendation for the Government to apologise to all those mothers whose babies were taken from them and to the children who were thereby separated from their mothers. You can read the report in full [here](#).

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.

This month I spoke to the Committee Corridor podcast about the Committee's inquiry and our call for the Government to provide an apology. You can listen to the podcast [here](#).

## **Visit to Parliament by St Peter's Church of England School**

On 23<sup>rd</sup> January I met students from St Peter's Church of England School when they came to Parliament's education centre to learn about Parliament and MPs. The children asked insightful questions and I was pleased to see that there are several budding politicians among them.



## **Writing to the Health Secretary with concern about the pressures facing community pharmacies**

Along with MPs and Peers from across the political spectrum I have written to the Health Secretary, Steve Barclay MP, about the challenges faced by community



pharmacies. There's a shortage of pharmacists, increasing staff costs and rapidly rising medicine prices. Since 2015 there has been a 30% real terms funding cut. The Government must support medical services to stay open and to continue providing vital medical support to local communities. You can read more about it [here](#).

The letter I signed:

*As Members of Parliament, we want to raise with you our deep and growing concern over the unprecedented pressures facing the community pharmacy sector in England, and the risks that this poses to patient care and safety, if left unchecked.*



*Community pharmacies have the potential to do more to support and deliver clinical services to patients, building on the agility that they demonstrated during the pandemic. But many pharmacies in our constituencies are currently operating at a loss. This stems from a DHSC and NHS funding arrangement which is no longer fit for purpose, but which provides pharmacies with 90% or more of their income. This funding has reduced by 30% in real terms since 2015. The impact of this is already causing pharmacies to cut back services and reduce their opening hours.*

*We fear that if these pressures are left unaddressed, we could see a large number of unplanned and permanent pharmacy closures in the near future. This would run the risk of our constituents being unable access their prescription medications and other pharmacy services which they rely upon. Those pharmacies which remain will not have sufficient resources to take on all the patients displaced by closures which could endanger some of the most vulnerable people in society and place further pressure on the primary care network.*

*To prevent this from happening, we call for your urgent consideration of three measures:*

- 1. A short-term financial injection of at least £400 million to stabilise the position and enable pharmacies to keep their doors open.*
- 2. A commitment to working with the sector to create a fair and fit for purpose future funding model that ensures sustainability and properly funds pharmacies for what they do. This must enable us to build positively the contributions that pharmacies can make.*
- 3. A fairly funded Pharmacy First service. With adequate funding, we believe this could alleviate wider pressures in the primary care system and the NHS.*



## Chairing the Privileges Committee

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 and we will hear oral evidence from Boris Johnson MP. 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. You can read more about the committee's work [here](#).



## Help and Support

### Southwark Council Cost of Living Fund

I am a referral partner for the Southwark Council Cost of Living Fund, which is able to provide a one-off payment of £100 to eligible households to help them pay for energy, food, and other essentials. I have so far referred 19 constituents who are experiencing financial hardship due to rising living costs to the Southwark Council Cost of Living Fund (SCOLF).



Constituents whose income is below the median and do not receive means-tested benefits are able to apply directly to the council for the SCOLF via their website [here](#). Constituents who are in receipt of means-tested benefits can contact any of the referral partners, including me, for referral to the fund. The fund will close in March 2023.

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.

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](mailto: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](mailto: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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