

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

## **Parliamentary Report**

**18<sup>th</sup> May 2023**



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## This is my May 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.

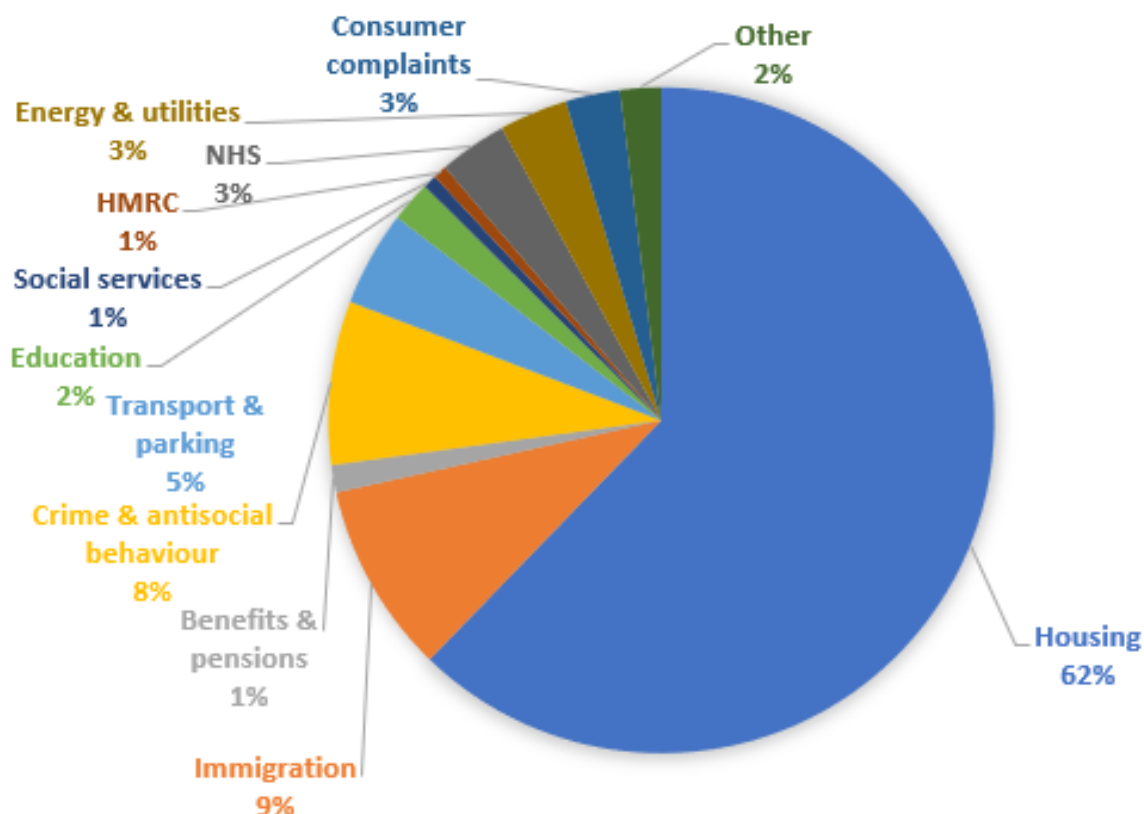
*Haniel Harman*

## Constituency problems - update

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

## New cases breakdown – April 2023

In April I took action on **720** cases and recouped **£3,684** for constituents. In 2023 so far I have recouped **£27,840.45** for constituents.



## Case summaries:

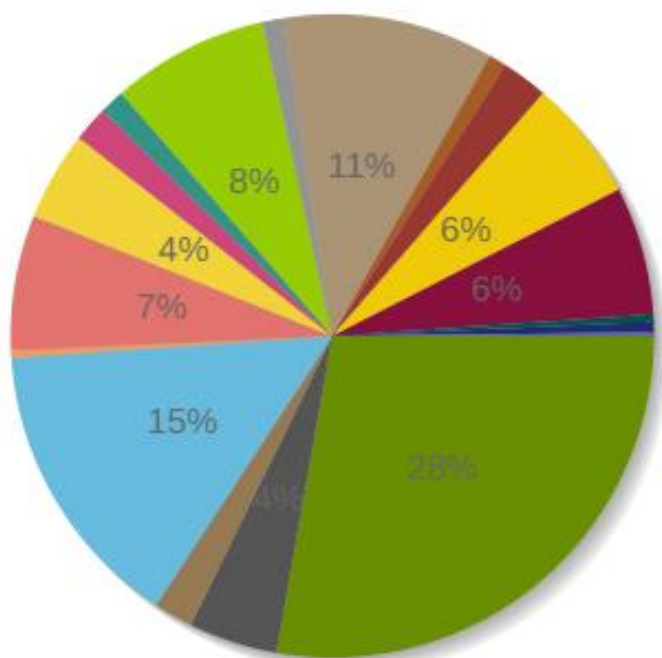
- A single mother with two young children from Camberwell asked for my help because there had been black mould in their flat for over three years, causing serious physical and mental health problems for her and her young family. Peabody, her landlord had not responded to her pleas for help and she asked me for my assistance to move to a new property. I urgently wrote to Peabody Housing on her behalf asking for a full report and requesting that the family be moved to suitable alternative property. As a result, the family have now been rehoused.
- A Camberwell woman wrote to ask for my help because a leaking pipe in her Southwark Council property had caused her boiler to stop working. The problem had been ongoing for 2 months. I wrote urgently to the Council to ask that the necessary repairs be carried out as soon as possible. The Council have now confirmed they have visited and fixed the leaking pipe and boiler.
- I was contacted by two Peckham Rye constituents about the increase in crime and antisocial behaviour in their neighbourhood, including personal robberies and threats of violence. I wrote directly to Southwark Met Police Borough Commander Seb Adjei-Addoh and he responded to say that he would be increasing foot patrols in the area and would work with special units to help deal with this. The police have invited my constituents to attend a “walk and talk” with them to highlight any particular areas of concern.
- I was contacted by a Peckham woman who had applied for Pension Credit from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) in March 2022 but had yet to receive an outcome. She explained that she followed up via telephone in November 2022 and was told that they needed further documentation, which was then sent but my constituent still did not receive an outcome. I wrote to the DWP on her behalf and as a result she been awarded Pension Credit and the DWP will backdate her payments to March 2022, amounting to £10,020.
- A woman from Peckham asked for my help because Vue Cinemas was refusing to refund her after a system error issued her with the wrong film tickets. I wrote to Vue on her behalf and received an email to say that they have issued my constituent a full refund in the amount of £53.94.
- I was contacted by a Camberwell constituent originally from Bolivia regarding an outstanding naturalisation certificate for her son which had been approved by the Home Office in September 2020 but had not been received. The family urgently needed to travel to Bolivia to visit her elderly and unwell parents but she couldn't apply for a passport for her son without his naturalization certificate. I urgently wrote to the Home Office to ask for an update on the progress of the naturalisation application. Following my inquiry the Home Office said that the certificate had been issued. My constituent confirmed she had received the certificate and that she has now been able to apply for a passport for her son.

In April I received **377** emails from constituents on policy issues including:

- Oppose the Illegal Migration Bill – I strongly oppose this bill, which will only make the asylum system even more unfair

- End the use of cages for laying hens – I have long supported ending the use of cages on farms.
- Crack down on imports of dogs with cropped ears – I share concerns and I will continue to support calls for action to protect dogs from this criminal activity.
- Support the development of onshore wind – I support the development of onshore wind.
- Concern about famine in East Africa – I agree that the UK must step up and play our part to support the people of East Africa.
- Concern about recent attacks on Gaza and Al Aqsa mosque worshippers – I am deeply concerned at the violence in Jerusalem and it is crucial that steps are taken to reduce tensions.
- Attend Parliamentary reception for Dignity in Dying – My personal belief is that everyone has the right to choose how they end their life.

## Policy issues breakdown



Health services and medicine	Parliament, government and politics
Social Security and pensions	Crime, civil law, justice and rights
Social services and social care	Culture, charities, media and sport
Education	Business, industry and consumers
Housing and planning	International affairs
Communities and families	Energy, utilities and environment
Employment and training	Transport
Asylum, immigration and nationality	Agriculture, animals, food and rural affairs
European Union	Local Government
Child Maintenance	

## RIP Coral Newell

On 12<sup>th</sup> May it was announced that Coral Newell, a former councillor, Bermondsey community campaigner and Freeman of the London Borough of Southwark, had died. Coral was an incredible woman, activist, feisty, joyful, brave and determined. She was a massive support for me and gave unfiltered, good advice. Coral will be sorely missed.



**Richard Livingstone** @Livingstone\_RJ · 2h

A sad day - I've just heard that **Coral Newell** - former councillor, Bermondsey community campaigner, Freeman of London Borough of Southwark - has died.

Here's a picture of her in happier days, with then-PM @GordonBrown @HarrietHarman and a much younger me.

Coral Newell RIP





## Attending the Coronation of King Charles III



On 2<sup>nd</sup> May in my role as Mother of the House, I, along with the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Father of the House, welcomed the King to Parliament ahead of his coronation.

I attended the coronation on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> May. 39% of my constituents were born outside the UK, many of whom were born in the Commonwealth, and in the coronation they saw not only their countries of birth represented by the leaders in

attendance, but also by the diverse performers and leaders that were part of the coronation ceremony. Pretty Yende, a South African soprano, was the first African to sing solo at a British coronation. The Ascension Choir performed 'O Sing Praises' and was the first gospel choir to perform at a coronation. And as part of the ceremony, faith leaders and representatives were seated in the Cathedral, many of whom represent religious communities in my constituency, including Baha'ís, Sikhs, Shia and Sunni Muslims, Buddhists and Jews.

The coronation also saw Penny Mordaunt be the first woman to perform the role Lord President of the Privy Council, responsible for carrying the sword of state and giving the jewelled sword of offering to the King.

## Demanding improvements from the Met Police

On 15<sup>th</sup> May I met the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Mark Rowley, at Peckham Police station, along with the Southwark Borough Commander Seb Adjei-Addoh and Helen Hayes MP, Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP, Florence Eshalomi MP and Leader of Southwark Council Kieron Williams.



Harriet Harman [@HarrietHarman](#) · May 15  
No time to waste in getting Londoners the policing we need. Important meeting at [@MPSPeckham](#) station with [@metpoliceuk](#) commissioner Sir Mark Rowley, [@helenhayes](#), [@BellRibeiroAddy](#) [@FloEshalomi](#) [@kieronjwilliams](#) [@clairekholland](#)



I explained to the Commissioner that he had our full support and good will for his planned reforms, but that our constituents need to see change now, not a long list of objectives and strategies for future change.

The Commissioner reiterated his need for a change in the legislation that governs police dismissals and misconduct to allow him to sack officers guilty of crimes. I assured him that MPs stand ready to make these changes as soon as the legislation is brought forward.

The Met has never been trusted by huge sections of Londoners. There is no golden age of trust to which the Met needs to return. If Sir Mark Rowley is to achieve his objective of reforming the Met and gaining the trust of Londoners, he will have to recognise the depths of distrust and show evidence that he is changing the police for the better.

## Attending Camberwell roundtable on male violence against women and girls

On 24<sup>th</sup> April I attended a roundtable at St Giles Trust in Camberwell with Keir Starmer MP, Yvette Cooper MP the Shadow Home Secretary, Jess Phillips MP the Shadow Minister for Domestic Violence and Safeguarding, and a number of campaigners and experts to discuss approaches to ending the epidemic of male violence against women and girls.

It was an opportunity to hear first hand the impact of male violence, including from Emily Atack who spoke about her experience of cyberflashing, and Georgia Harrison whose ex-boyfriend was recently jailed for 21 months for sharing a private video of them having sex.

At the roundtable Keir reiterated Labour's commitment to halving incidents of violence against women and girls. The awful statistics for rape prosecutions show that this Government is incapable of protecting women and ensuring that they receive justice. Only 2.5% of reported rapes end up in a charge, the lowest rate on record. And recently the conviction rate of cases that go to trial has decreased from 69.1% to 61.9%. Labour has published its Green Paper on ending violence against women and girls.

## Opposing the Illegal Migration Bill

28<sup>th</sup> April 2023

New figures show that Southwark is one of the most diverse boroughs in the country. According to data from the 2021 Census, 25% of Southwark residents reported their ethnic group as "Black, Black British, Caribbean or Africa", well above the London average of 14% and the UK average of 4%. And Southwark has a very high proportion of residents who were born outside the UK, with 13% of people born in Europe and 27% born outside Europe and the UK. Of these, 11% of Southwark residents were born in Africa, substantially higher than the London and UK averages. The country where the highest number of residents were born was Nigeria, with 4% of residents born there.

This diversity is one of Southwark's strengths. Those who have come here from abroad contribute significantly to our local communities. But it also means that many residents have at some point had to go through the Home Office's processes for

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Alimatu Dimonekene MBE  
@TheAlima

I was please to have been invited to a roundtable meeting today at the St Giles Centre with @Keir\_Starmer MP (Opposition Leader) and a number of other Labour front bench politicians on Violence Against Women and Girls.

The roundtable brought together senior representatives from national support and advocacy organisations, police representatives, representatives from health and housing services and leaders who work to address attitudes among men.

Sir Keir who I was also fortunate to have worked with whilst he was at the Crown Prosecution Service on the Serious Crime Bill looking at FGM and it's many offences said to the experts ....  
"Hearing people's stories today was a reminder of how much work we have to do to tackle violence against women and girls."

"My Labour government will halve levels of violence against women and girls in a decade and support victims to get the justice the deserve."

Also at the meeting was @SophieKLinden Deputy Mayor of Policing, @YvetteCooperMP Shadow Home Secretary, @jessphillips MP and @HarrietHarman MP who sadly will be leaving her role as MP for Peckham. A huge supporter of the community. I know the candidate @Miatsf who takes over has big shoes to fill. But in great hands.

Also at the meeting we're several other leading voices.



immigration or asylum, processes which are expensive, frustrating and often dysfunctional.

The problems caused by the Government's immigration policies are evident in the daily stories I hear from people who come to me for help. Immigration and asylum problems are consistently the second most common concern that constituents contact me about, after housing. The system is opaque and applications often take far longer than they are supposed to. The process is particularly difficult if you don't speak English.

One constituent from Ethiopia who, along with his wife and two young children, is seeking asylum, made his application a year and four months ago and yet still hasn't even been called for an asylum interview. Another constituent from Eritrea who submitted an asylum application in June 2021, almost two years ago, has still not been called for an interview. And one of my constituent's wife, who is Ghanaian, recently submitted an application to visit her husband in the UK, and was refused on the grounds that she did not have adequate funds to support herself whilst she was in the country, despite my constituent being in full time employment and his wife being a landlady.

Many of the people who come to the UK are desperate and vulnerable, fleeing persecution and warfare. And yet this week the Government has undermined them and left them without protection, passing its Illegal Migration Bill through the House of Commons on 26<sup>th</sup> April, which I voted against.

The Government claims that this Bill will stop people risking their lives by trying to get to the UK in boats across the channel but in reality it will make the chaos and danger in the channel worse. It will not stop the criminal gangs or dangerous crossings. It makes it easier for those gangs. It will not return everyone who shouldn't be here to their country. In fact it makes it harder for the UK to get return agreements with other countries. And most importantly for those of my constituents waiting years just to be interviewed by the Home Office, the Bill will not clear the asylum backlog and it will mean tens of thousands more people marooned for years in asylum accommodation and hotels.

Instead of the Government's Bill, Labour want to see action to stop the gangs and to prevent these dangerous boat crossings. We voted for the establishment of a new cross-border police unit, for decisions to be fast-track and the prompt returning of those who shouldn't be here. We want new agreements with France and other countries on returns, on family reunions and on reforming resettlement. This would clear the backlog, end hotel use and be fair, humane and effective.

During 13 years of government the Tories have broken the asylum and immigration system. Only Labour will rebuild our border security and restore a properly functioning, credible and humane asylum and immigration system.

### Labour voted for:

- ✓ **A new cross-border police unit** to tackle gangs
- ✓ **A new deal with Europe** on returns and controlled legal routes
- ✓ **Consultation with local councils** on local asylum accommodation and hotels
- ✓ **The removal and return** of terror suspects
- ✓ **Fast-track** decisions and returns to safe countries
- ✓ **Safe legal routes** for children with family in UK



**TORY MPs VOTED AGAINST THIS**



15<sup>th</sup> May 2023

This is Mental Health Awareness Week. And our mental health services are in crisis.

Across England, 1.2 million people are waiting for mental health treatment. Whether you get help when you need it depends on where you live. The situation is so bad that two-fifths of patients waiting for mental health treatment end up in a crisis, needing emergency or crisis services, before they get treatment. And one in ten patients end up in A&E. The length of time children have to wait for mental health services have been described as "agonising" by the Young Minds charity. In some parts of the country vulnerable children are waiting almost three years to get the mental health care they need.

For people in Camberwell and Peckham, waiting times are even worse than the national average. In South East London Clinical Commissioning Group, which covers Camberwell and Peckham, the time people have to wait for mental health care exceeds the national average for the time it takes people to access their first treatment. Nationally the average wait to get your first treatment following referral was 20.9 days. For people in Camberwell and Peckham the average waits were 22.8 days.

And while people suffer from the lack of mental health services, their inability to get the help they need hits other services too. When people can't get mental health care they often end up in crisis and the police get called out. When I met Sir Mark Rowley the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police this week at Peckham Police Station he told me that 40% of the incidents attended to by Met Police response units were mental health-related.

Police officers called out to go to mental health incidents often end up taking the person to A&E for treatment and then have to stay with them in hospital until they get seen by a doctor. This means that police officers are not able to be out on the streets carrying out their frontline policing roles. It means that A&E services are occupied by people who should have been seen long before it got to that point. And it also means a suffering person has to wait in A&E which is not the right place for them and where they wouldn't need to be if they had been treated before they had a crisis.

This is not a new problem caused by pressure on services arising from the Covid-19 legacy. It is the result of failures by the Tory Government. Even before Covid-19, in 2018, a report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary reported "grave concerns" about police officers having to attend so many mental health-related incidents. The report blamed our broken mental health system.

Like so many of our services which have deteriorated under the Tories, a Labour government will have to fix this. Labour will focus on prevention, guaranteeing NHS treatment in a month for anyone who needs it, recruiting thousands of mental health





professionals and putting mental health support in every secondary school. And unlike the Tories, a Labour government will guarantee a fair share of health funding for mental health.

One in four adults, and one in ten children, experience some form of mental illness. Ensuring they receive quality care and treatment is the least we can do to help their suffering and will be a priority for a Labour government.



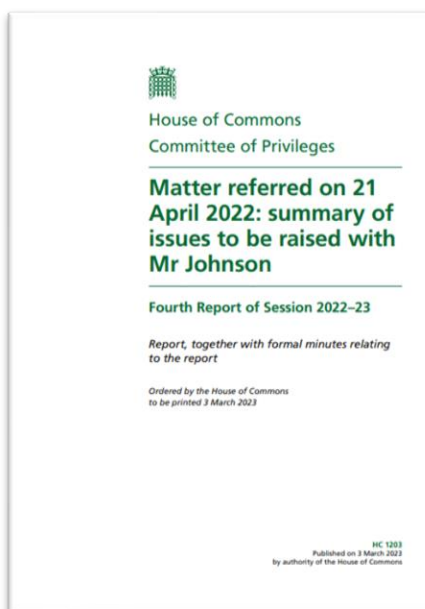
### **British Library event – Feminism in Politics: Past, Present and Future**

On 27<sup>th</sup> April I was pleased to join a panel to discuss women's political representation in British politics. Alongside Helen Pankhurst, Charlene White and Joeli Brearley, I discussed why we have still not achieved the equal political representation of women in the UK, what the barriers are to women's participation and what we can do to change that.



It was great to say hi to a former constituent who had originally asked me for help with an issue back in 1997. She still has the letter that I wrote to her!

### **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, on 3<sup>rd</sup> March we published our interim report which you can read [here](#), and on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March we held our oral evidence session with Boris Johnson MP, which you can view [here](#).

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**

**Concerned about rising cost of living? Finding support in Southwark:**

If you, or someone you are supporting is struggling financially, there are lots of organisations in Southwark that can help. Southwark Council's Cost of Living support can all be found on their [website](#).

Southwark Emergency Support Scheme (SESS) can help if you're a Southwark resident who is facing a crisis, emergency or disaster and needs help.

Residents who receive certain benefits and need urgent financial support can 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](#).

Information about grants and other financial support can be found [here](#).

Cost of living support for businesses can be found [here](#).

### **Free confidential advice:**

- [Citizens Advice Southwark](#)

Citizens Advice Southwark provide free, confidential, independent and impartial advice to help people resolve their problems with money, housing, employment, legal issues, and more.

Advice line: 080 8278 7849

Drop-in sessions from 10.00 am to 2.00 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

### **Domestic abuse 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)

- [National Domestic Abuse Helpline](#)

The freephone, 24-hour Helpline: 0808 2000 247

### **Support for victims of crime:**

- [Victim Support South London](#)

South London Victim Assessment and Referral Service on freephone: 0808 168 9291, then dial 3

Lines are open 8am-8pm Monday to Friday and 9am-5pm on Saturdays.

If you need support outside of open hours, call the Supportline on freephone 0808 1689 111

### **Mental health help and support:**

- [Lambeth and Southwark Mind](#)

020 8159 8355 - 8am to 3pm Monday, Tuesday and Thursday

- [Samaritans](#) - 116 123 - 24/7
- [The Nest](#) - 020 8138 1805

### **Support for older people:**

- [Southwark Pensioners](#)

Open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

020 7708 4556 [info@southwarkpensioners.org.uk](mailto:info@southwarkpensioners.org.uk)

- [Age UK Lewisham and Southwark](#)

020 7701 9700 phone line open 10am to 4pm Tuesday to Friday

### **Legal advice:**

- [Southwark Law Centre](#)
- [Migrant Legal Action](#)

53 Addington Square, London. SE5 7LB

Opening hours: Monday- Friday, 9:00am-5:00pm. Appointment only.

Reception: 0207 701 0141

Advice Line: 0203 150 1470 (2:00pm to 4:00pm)

Email: [info@migrantlegalaction.org.uk](mailto:info@migrantlegalaction.org.uk)

- [Cambridge House Law Centre](#)

Provides legal advice and advocacy services by way of appointment for individuals and families dealing specifically with housing, employment, benefits, and community care issues.

Printworks, Unit F, 22 Amelia Street, London SE17 3BZ

Telephone: 020 7358 7025

Email: [lawcentre@ch1889.org](mailto:lawcentre@ch1889.org)

- [Disability Law Service](#)

Provides free legal advice to disabled people, their families and carers. For issues of employment and discrimination at work, or welfare benefits:

Advice Line: 0207 791 9800

Opening hours: Monday-Friday, 10am – 1pm, 2pm – 5pm

### **Food and essentials:**

- [Southwark Food Action Alliance](#)

Southwark Food Action Alliance is a group of local organisations that care about good food for all in the borough. Many of its members provide food support to Southwark residents. The SFAA website has information on low-cost recipes and maps showing where you can learn to grow food and where food support services are located in Southwark. Some food support services are only for specific groups, such as older adults. So do check who the service is for before visiting.

- [Pecan foodbank](#)

Peckham Methodist Church, 2 Wood's Rd, SE15 2PX. Monday and Thurs 1pm to 3pm (by appointment only).

Pecan foodbanks work using a voucher referral system. In order to get help from Pecan, people need a voucher issued by a local agency before arriving at a centre. For more information email [foodbank.support@pecan.org.uk](mailto:foodbank.support@pecan.org.uk) or call 020 7732 0007.

Pecan also run [Peckham Pantry](#). Members of Peckham Pantry pay £4.50 per shop, which gives access to fresh fruit and veg and store cupboard favourites – to the value of £15 or more. For further information please contact [pantry@pecan.org.uk](mailto:pantry@pecan.org.uk) or 020 7277 7075.

- [Spring Community Hub Foodbank](#)

Spring Community Hub, 1 Wilson Road, Modular Building, SE5 8LU. Thursday and Friday 10am to 1pm. Spring Community Hub Foodbanks also work on a referral system. For more information email [office@springcommunityhub.org](mailto:office@springcommunityhub.org) or call 07901 617 189.

### **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.](#)

### **Concerned about British and non-British nationals who have been affected by the situation in Afghanistan?**

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](#)



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