

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

## **Parliamentary Report**

**November 2023**



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## This is my November 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.

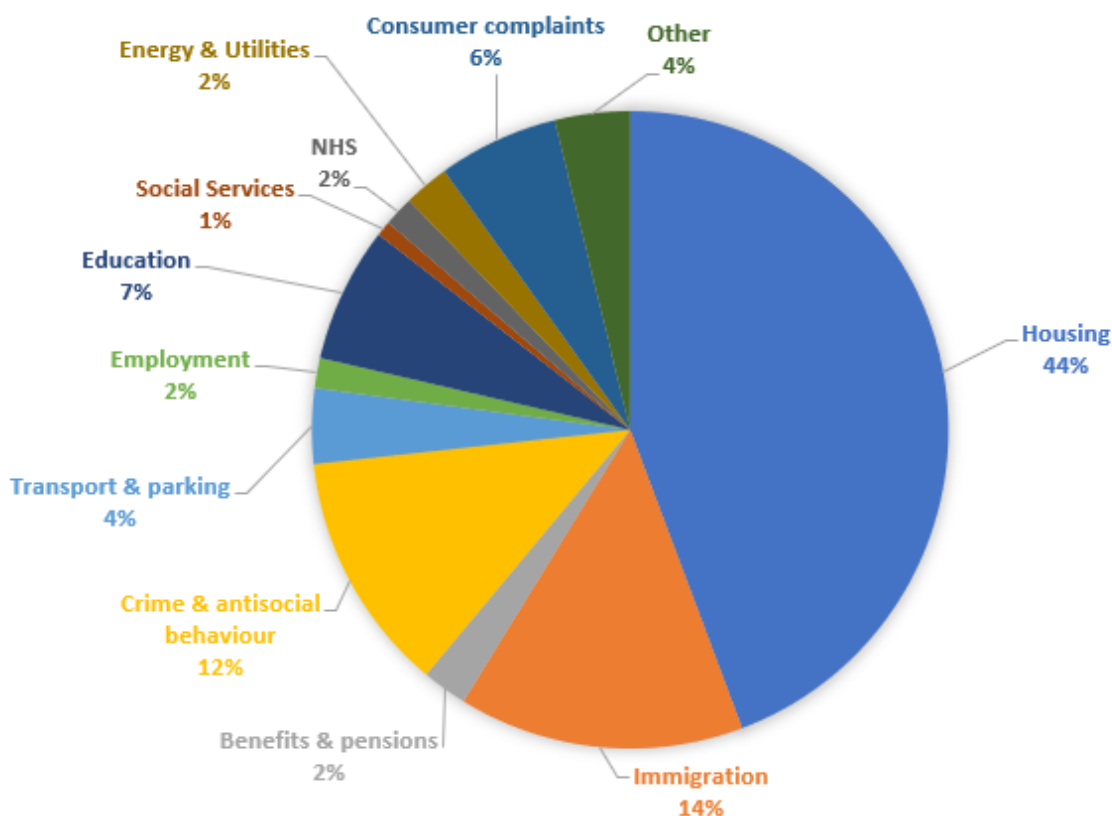
*Haniel Harman*

## Constituency problems - update

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

## New cases breakdown – October 2023

In October I took action on **746** cases.



I recouped **£1,566.03** for constituents. In 2023 so far I have recouped **£253,499.61** for constituents.

## Case summaries:

- A nurse living in Walworth wrote to me regarding several issues within her temporary accommodation, including water leaks, inconsistent hot water, and a rodent infestation. I wrote to her landlord, Southwark Council, to ask what steps they were taking to address my constituent's housing situation and received a response confirming that the Council had been working with her to move her out of this accommodation as soon as possible. I shared this response with my constituent who has confirmed she has successfully bid for a permanent home and has received the keys.
- A self-employed woman contacted me as she believed that HMRC had applied the incorrect tax code and overcharged her for her 2022 Income Tax. She explained that she had tried to challenge the calculations with HMRC directly but couldn't get through to HMRC's helpline. I wrote to HMRC and received a response confirming that HMRC had not recognised my constituent's self-employment status when calculating her tax return. HMRC said they had attempted to communicate this error to my constituent previously but they now acknowledged that this had not been clear and offered an apology payment of £75. I shared this response with my constituent who informed me she had been reimbursed £1,291.03, including the apology payment.
- I was contacted by a man whose parents in Camberwell had received a bidding number from Southwark Council in 2022, however their housing application had remained inactive and they were therefore unable to bid for a Council property. I wrote to the Council to ask if they could re-consider this application and the Council have now confirmed that the application has now been processed and my constituents are finally able to bid.
- A man, originally from Bangladesh, wrote to tell me that earlier this year he had applied for a family visa and paid an additional £800 for the 'Super Priority Service'. At the time, the Home Office had deemed him not eligible and had told him that he would be refunded for the additional fee, but he had not received the refund for over 5 months and he was struggling financially as a result. I wrote to the Home Office to ask when my constituent would receive the refund and the Home Office replied to tell me that the refund had been processed following my enquiry. I shared this with my constituent who confirmed that he had now received the £800 refund.
- I was contacted by a woman from Peckham because she was disappointed with the lack of maintenance and management of Brockwell Park Lido by Fusion Lifestyle. The Lido had been closed for a day unannounced and not communicated to lido members who had still been able to book and pay for a session on the closed day. I wrote to Fusion Lifestyle to share my constituent's concerns and I received a detailed response confirming that they would be doing a full deep clean, increasing the cleaning provisions and conducting a full review of the disrepairs at the facility. They also confirmed that they would be reaching out to my constituent to apologise for her recent experience and to offer her compensation for the cancelled session.
- A Camberwell resident contacted me because they had not received post from Royal Mail in over two weeks. I wrote to Royal Mail and received a response explaining that the SE5 postcodes have been affected by 20% of the workforce

being away from work due to sickness. The response also stated that deliveries are now taking place 6 days per week and my constituent has confirmed that the service has now improved.

In October I received **2,834** emails from constituents on policy issues including:

- Conflict between Israel and Hamas – I have serious concerns about the deteriorating conditions in the West Bank and we must keep working towards the release of all hostages and a cessation of fighting as quickly as possible. See my statement [here](#).
- Reform the Dangerous Dogs Act – I support the decision to update the list of dangerous dogs to include the American XL Bully
- Support mandatory food waste reporting – I want Government to provide funding to cover costs for farmers, growers and producers to distribute their good-to-eat waste food.
- Make polluters pay for the climate crisis – I share concerns and I am committed to putting the climate crisis at the heart of our foreign policy.
- No new oil and gas projects in the North Sea – I share concerns on this issue. The Government's plan for new exploration in the North Sea is wrong.
- Ask the Government to cancel the Saudi Crown Prince visit to UK – I share concerns about the human rights situation in Saudi Arabia and want the Government to use our relationship with Saudi Arabia to press for change and reform.
- Concern about the climate and nature crisis – I agree that we need greater ambition from the Government on UK climate and nature policy.

## RIP Alistair Darling

On 30<sup>th</sup> November we heard the sad news that Alistair Darling, the former Chancellor of the Exchequer and MP for Edinburgh Central and later Edinburgh South West.

A huge figure in the Labour government, he was meticulous because he believed that government should get it right. He eschewed self-aggrandisement because he believed politics was for improving lives, not for political egos. My deepest sympathy go to his family.



## State opening of Parliament

The State Opening of Parliament took place on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023, when King Charles III opened the new session of Parliament which is expected to be the last before the next general election.

The Government has announced several new pieces of legislation dealing with the criminal justice system, including the Sentencing Bill and the Criminal Justice Bill. I will be introducing several amendments to the Government's Bills, including multiple amendments that would implement [my bill](#) to reform the Metropolitan Police disciplinary processes.



The New Clauses I have tabled support would allow for:

- Dismissal by the chief constable of a police officer on conviction for a serious criminal offence
- suspension by the Chief Constable of any officer charged with a serious offence
- dismissal by the Chief Constable of an officer who fails vetting
- A duty of officers to handover their personal mobile phones where it is necessary for gross misconduct procedures.

These changes would mean that Chief Constables would be responsible for, and accountable for, maintaining high disciplinary standards in their force.

## **Suspension of parental rights for convicted child sex offenders**



On 20<sup>th</sup> November the BBC reported the story of "Bethan", who had to pay £30k in family court costs to protect her child from her father who had been convicted of serious child sexual abuse. I spoke to the BBC about her case.

It is unacceptable that when a court has determined that a man is a danger to children, and

imposed an order preventing him from going near other children, it should still allow him access to his own children. The default is to allow a paedophile to access his own children, and it is for the mother to fight to restrict his parental responsibility. We must change this default, so that a man automatically loses his parental responsibility when he is convicted of a serious sexual offence against a child.

I have tabled a New Clause to the Criminal Justice Bill that would make this change. You can see my New Clause [here](#).

## **Remembrance Day 2023**



On 6<sup>th</sup> November, as Mother of the House of Commons, I attended the annual opening of the Speaker's Constituency Garden of Remembrance. I placed a Remembrance stake on behalf of Camberwell and Peckham, commemorating all those currently serving in our armed forces, veterans, and all those who have fallen for this country.

On Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> November I attended the Southwark Borough Remembrance Sunday service at

Borough and laid a wreath at the war memorial. My thanks go to all those who organised this year's ceremony.





Harriet Harman @Harrietharman · Nov 30  
Spectator Parliamentarian of the Year 2023, in pictures | The Spectator

## 2023 Spectator Awards



I was awarded Parliamentarian of the Year by the Spectator, in recognition of the work of the Privileges Committee in its inquiry into the conduct of Boris Johnson.

In my speech accepting the award I said I

want to share my award with all the members of the Privilege Committee during our inquiry, who put up with so much and didn't let it affect their ability to carry out the task assigned to us by Parliament. My thanks go to Andy Carter MP, Sir Charles Walker MP, Alberto Costa MP, Sir Bernard Jenkin MP, Yvonne Fovargue MP and Allan Dorans MP.



You can hear my acceptance speech [here](#).

## Win '24 Peckham Campaign launch at Tola

On Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November I attended the launch of Peckham Labour's campaign to win in 2024 alongside Peckham Labour candidate Miatta Fahnbulleh, Mayor Sadiq Khan, Leader of Southwark Council Cllr Kieron Williams and Joe Fortune, General Secretary of the Co-operative Party.

Next year will be a big year for Peckham Labour, as we will have the opportunity to elect Labour at every level - the Council, London Mayor and Westminster - and deliver real change for Peckham. We were joined at Tola by councillors, activists and supporters from across Peckham to mark the creation of the new Peckham constituency and get ready for the task ahead. We celebrated what Labour in power has achieved in Southwark and in London and looked forward with hope to what Miatta will do as MP for Peckham, with a Labour Government, Mayor, and Council.



## **Black History Month 2023**

October was Black History Month. This is the opportunity each year to celebrate the contribution that black people have made, and continue to make, to our society and our communities.

Nowhere is the contribution of black people more obvious than in Southwark, one of the most diverse boroughs in the country. According to data from the most recent 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 11% of Southwark residents born in Africa, substantially higher than the London and UK averages.

But Black History Month is also an opportunity to focus on the fact that there remains significant progress to be made before we can be satisfied that black people can consider themselves treated on equal terms with white people.

An awful problem which needs to be tackled urgently is that black women are at significantly greater risk of dying in childbirth than white women. Black women have consistently been the ethnic group most at risk during childbirth and the most recent data shows that black women are 3.7 times more likely than white women to die. An inquiry by the Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR) into black people, racism and human rights commissioned polling which reported that 78% of black women felt that the NHS would not give them equal treatment, and the JCHR called for there to be an NHS target to end this discrepancy.

We not only need a clear target to close this gap but we must also have regular and publicly accessible monitoring of maternal mortality rates; the NHS must set clear targets to close the gap; we must work to close wider health and social inequalities; and we have to address the differential delivery of care that is the experience of too many black women.

Black people also understandably still do not feel that the criminal justice system treats them equally. In the same inquiry, the JCHR found that 85% of black people are not confident they would be treated the same as a white person by the police. And the release of Baroness Casey's report into the Metropolitan Police earlier this year revealed that racism, misogyny and homophobia are rampant.

Sir Mark Rowley, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, has vowed to reform the police. And as a London MP I will be holding him to account on that promise. Until such time as the Met have rid the force of racists they won't command the confidence of black people or the wider community.

And black people are at a disadvantage in the labour market. Black people are more likely to be in insecure work, such as zero-hour contracts. And black African women are more disadvantaged than their white counterparts, earning 26% less than the average male worker compared to 14% for white women. Labour has announced that if we get into government we will tackle this, including with the introduction of the mandatory publication of ethnicity pay gaps for firms with more than 250 employees.



There is still much to do. But it is encouraging that in Peckham we are seeing increasing numbers of impressive black leaders in positions of power to lead that change. Not least the local borough police commander Seb Adjei-Addoh, who is the first black officer in charge of Southwark. And my successor as the Labour candidate for Peckham, Miatta Fahnbulleh, who is set to become the first black MP in Peckham and would be a truly brilliant representative of all her constituents.

## Intimidation of female MPs

Following votes in the House of Commons on 15<sup>th</sup> November, many MPs, particularly women, have faced harassment both online and offline and some have had their offices where they work with their small team of staff targeted and vandalised.

MPs must be able to do their job without threats, intimidation, or harassment. I hope the police will take this seriously and I stand in solidarity with all MPs who have experienced any form of abuse or vandalism to their offices while trying to do the job which they have been elected to do.



Harriet Harman @HarrietHarman · Nov 17

MPs must be able to do their work without intimidation and threats. Solidarity with @rushanaraali and I hope police will take action on threats of violence.



## In conversation event with David Isaac, Provost of Worcester College Oxford

On Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> November I took part in an "in conversation" event with David Isaac, the provost of Worcester College Oxford. David is a former chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission and he hosts regular events with people in public life in which he discusses their life and



Harriet Harman @HarrietHarman · 29m

People voted for @FeryalClark to be MP and no one should try and obstruct or intimidate her or her staff. This is an attack on democracy. I hope @metpoliceuk will take seriously. Solidarity with Feryal and her staff.



Feryal Clark MP @FeryalClark · 2h

The cowards who sprayed graffiti on my office shutters, the police have the CCTV footage, and the paint will be removed today. Next time, just try emailing!



Harriet Harman @HarrietHarman · Nov 17

This is criminal damage. And it's an attack on democracy. Solidarity with @JoStevensLabour and shame on those who use intimidation to try & stop MP doing her job

BBC Politics

@BBCPolitics · Nov 17

Labour MP Jo Stevens' office vandalised by pro-Palestine protesters  
bbc.in/40L8bo4

You reposted



Worcester College, Oxford @WorcCollegeOx · Nov 22

Harriet Harman MP talks to our students and guests about what her generation has achieved in politics - and how the next generation will have to work together as a movement if they want to create change





careers and asks what advice they have for others.

I spoke to him about joining Parliament and told him how important the feminist movement was for so many women in the 70s, 80s and 90s as we pushed into previously male-dominated spaces. We still have many barriers remaining to a more equal society and the next generation will need to work together as a movement to achieve this.



Ellie Reeves  
@elliereeves

Proud to mark the 16 Days of Activism to End Gender-Based Violence along with @HarrietHarman, @AnnelieseDodds and @shah\_aarooj.

It was great to speak to so many Labour members about the change a Labour govt can make on tackling Violence Against Women and Girls.

#WhiteRibbonDay



## Event with Labour members to mark 16 Days of Activism to End Gender-Based Violence

On Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> November I joined the Shadow Secretary of State for Women and Equalities, Anneliese Dodds MP, Labour's Deputy National Campaign Coordinator Ellie Reeves MP, and leader of Oldham Council Aarooj Shah to speak to Labour members at an event to mark the 16 Days of Activism to End Gender-Based Violence.

The event was in partnership with White Ribbon, which is the campaign to encourage men and boys to take action to end violence against women and girls and bring about cultural change.

In any room or any engagement there will be women who have experienced coercive control or male violence. It doesn't matter what age you are, there's no protection in terms of wealth or professional status, and it affects women of all ethnicities and backgrounds. A woman is only as safe as her male partner allows her to be. So it is only right that we reflect on men's responsibility to tackle perpetrators, rather than looking at what women can do. And it shouldn't be up to us women to take all the responsibility and lead the campaign. Men are the perpetrators and we need men to help take this forward and take equal responsibility for the campaign to end male violence against women and girls.

You reposted



Fawcett Society @fawcettsociety · Nov 5

One in 10 mothers with under-fours quit work because of childcare. 🇬🇧

Our new research with @TotalJobsUK.



## New Fawcett Society research on mothers in work

On 6<sup>th</sup> November the Fawcett Society, which I chair, published new research that found that 1 in 10 mothers with children under the age of four quit work over childcare costs. This amounts to almost a quarter of a million mothers leaving their jobs.

You can read their new research [here](#).

## Equal pay day

November 22<sup>nd</sup> is “equal pay day”. This is the day that, because of the gender pay gap, women essentially stop being paid for the rest of the year compared to men.

The gender pay gap is closing far too slowly. At the current rate of change, women over 40 will suffer the pay gap until they retire. This is unfair and unjust, and it hurts everyone. A thriving economy relies on the full participation of women, and we are currently locking women out of work they are qualified for and capable of doing.

We need to give the Equality and Human Rights Committee the powers, like other regulators, to set targets and to fine companies and sectors when the targets are not met. Without this the pay gap will continue and progress will be slow.

## Elections to the Parliamentary Labour Party Committee

On Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November the Parliamentary Labour Party was due to have internal elections to elect members to its committee. Previous changes to the election rules meant that MPs were required to vote for at least 2 men and 2 women. There were only 2 men nominated, with 7 women nominated, and so these rules had the effect of reserving places on the committee for men.

I wrote to the Chair of the Parliamentary Labour Party, John Cryer MP, to ask him to cancel the elections and propose a change in the rules which would not require votes for men and then run the election on new rules. No one agreed that there should be reserved places for men. Reserved places are to redress historic under-representation, and there is not historic under-representation of men in the Parliamentary Labour Party.

John agreed with my request, the elections were cancelled and the rules changed. In the re-run election, women were elected to 5 out of the 6 positions.

## 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 a number of organisations in Southwark that can help. Southwark Council’s Cost of Living support can all be found on their [website](#).



Residents who receive certain benefits and need urgent financial support can apply to the Southwark Emergency and Hardship Support, 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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