

Rachel Reeves MP

Monthly Report

News from Rachel Reeves, Labour MP for Leeds West

December 2012

CHRISTMAS CARD DESIGN COMPETITION

WINNERS REVEALED

Benedicte Bolingo of Hawksworth Wood Primary School has defeated competition from hundreds of children who took part in Rachel Reeves MP's Christmas Card competition, and has won the opportunity to see her design in print.

The winning design by Benedicte features a robin perched on a branch on a Christmas night. This design has now been reproduced on hundreds of Christmas cards which Rachel will send to local groups, schools and other MPs.

Olivia Wyspianski of Raynville Primary School finished as runner

up. Rachel is now preparing to tour all the schools, handing out certificates to those who took part.

Rachel said: "I'm delighted that a record number of entries were received for my 2012 Christmas Card Competition. It was fantastic looking at all the children's designs. I would like to congratulate Benedicte and Olivia and I really look forward to meeting them."

The competition was kindly sponsored by Commercial Estates Group and the cards were printed by local Bramley firm Resource.



Pictured: Top, Benedicte's winning design. Bottom, a selection of entries from local schoolchildren

RACHEL RESPONDS TO AUTUMN STATEMENT

Rachel was featured widely across the media this month as she responded to Chancellor George Osborne's belated Autumn Statement, presented on Wednesday 5th December. Rachel appeared on 5Live, Channel 4 News and BBC Newsnight, as well as writing articles for newspapers and several online magazines, and blogs in the aftermath of the Statement.

The Statement revealed that growth forecasts were downgraded yet again for this year, next year and every year until 2016. Rachel criticised the government for having no plans for jobs and growth, which has led

to the Chancellor missing his own target for balancing the books by 2015. The Chancellor revealed he now needs another five years to balance the books, on top of the five years he set himself in 2010.

You can read some of Rachel's responses to the Autumn Statement online at:

[Mumsnet: 'Mummy tax' cut in maternity pay is unfair.](#)

[Left Foot Forward: Osborne's spin and games can't distract from the regressive reality.](#)

MORE NEWS VIA Web: www.rachelreeves.net Twitter: [@rachelreevesmp](https://twitter.com/rachelreevesmp)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/rachelreeves10





DAN JARVIS MP AT LEEDS WEST LABOUR CHRISTMAS DINNER

Member of Parliament for Barnsley Central and Shadow Minister for Culture, Dan Jarvis, was guest speaker at the Leeds West CLP Christmas fundraising dinner, which took place at the fantastic West End pub in Kirkstall on Friday 14th December.

Dan spoke passionately about issues such as the NHS and the importance of a Labour victory in 2015, which he cautioned should not be taken for granted and stressed the importance of holding the government to account and remaining united as a party.

The dinner has so far raised



over £300 for our local party. A big thank you to all those who attended and donated and to the West End for their excellent food and hospitality.

SUPPORTING LOCAL FOOD BANKS THIS CHRISTMAS

This month Rachel visited a food bank set up by St George's Crypt and St. Bartholomew's church in Armley to help raise awareness of the growing problem of food poverty. The food bank is open to help families all across Leeds, Armley, Farnley and Wortley. This year alone, across Britain, over 200,000 people are expected to turn to a food bank for help.



to St. Bartholomew's church, Rachel wrote to local supermarkets and asked them to help make sure there is enough food over the Christmas period.

Job insecurity, benefit changes and the cost of living are all hitting households in Leeds hard. Food prices rose by more than four per cent over the last year. So after her visit

Waitrose in Meanwood, as well as other supermarkets, have now teamed up with St George's Crypt to make sure there is enough food for families this Christmas.

RACHEL VISITS UNDER THREAT CHILDRENS HEART UNIT

Rachel met with staff, families and campaigners at the LGL Children's Heart Surgery Unit this month to show her continued support for the Save Our Surgery Campaign.

Rachel, who has lobbied the government about the proposed closure of the unit, vowed to do everything in her power to support the campaign stating,

"The unit here offers unrivalled co-located care in the North which

means all the services a child may need are on one single site.

"It would be a real blow to Yorkshire parents to lose the ward

"It is an inspiring place full of hope and strength and I was pleased to come to meet patients, families and the team"

Visit <http://www.chsf.org.uk> online for more information about the Save Our Surgery campaign.



Rachel pictured with family members and staff on the unit.



MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM RACHEL AND ALL THE TEAM



Heartfelt support for unit from MP

BY KATIE BALDWIN
HEALTH REPORTER

A LEEDS MP visited city's under-threat children's heart surgery unit to show her support for the campaign to keep it open.

Rachel Reeves met staff and campaigners at the Leeds General Infirmary ward.

The pregnant Leeds West MP also met patients, including tiny 25-day old Benjamin Doyle, from Huddersfield.

Rachel, who has previously lobbied the Government about the proposed closure of the unit, said: "I feel strongly about the Save Our Surgery campaign and will do everything I can to offer my continued support.

"The unit here offers unrivalled co-located care in the North which means all the services a child may need are on one single site.

"It would be a real blow to Yorkshire parents to lose the ward.

"The children's heart ward is an inspiring place full of hope and strength and I was pleased to come and meet patients, families and the team."

NHS bosses decided in July that the unit should stop carrying out children's heart surgery

as part of a national shake-up.

That sparked outrage among families and campaigners, and more recently doctors who say it would put the lives of sick children at risk if they had to travel to a unit in Newcastle.

In October Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt ordered a review of the decision after concerns were raised by councillors.

Earlier this week members of the Independent Reconfiguration Panel visited LGI to find out about the care offered at the unit.

Their recommendations are expected in March.

Meanwhile Leeds campaign group Save Our Surgery is also preparing for a judicial review challenging the decision, which is due to be heard in February.

Sharon Cheng, of Save Our Surgery, said: "Taking the legal route to achieve this has always been our least preferred course of action because of the associated costs to both sides. However, with all other options exhausted, and the Department of Health asking that we continue our legal action, it's now critical that we continue to raise the funds required to complete the proceedings."

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● **BACKING:** Leeds West MP Rachel Reeves during her visit to the children's heart surgery unit.

MP attends launch of scheme to teach children about abuse

Project run by ChildLine aims to let kids know how to get help

BY ALISON BELLAMY
NEWS REPORTER

A NEW project that helps children understand what abuse is and how they can stay safe is being rolled out across Leeds.

Rachel Reeves, MP for Leeds West, launched the ChildLine School's Service at Christ Church Upper Armley Church of England Primary School.

Using assemblies and workshops, the service is designed to ensure children have an understanding of abuse in all its forms, including bullying, and know how to protect themselves and how to access help.

ChildLine bosses say the ongoing Jimmy Savile enquiry highlights the need for children to be able to speak out if they are worried, upset or being abused.

Ms Reeves said: "It is vital that all children and young people are aware of what abuse is, and know who to turn to when they are worried or concerned."

"This new schools service is an excellent scheme which will give children real confidence they will be listened to."

Christ Church's head Anne O'Connor added: "It is very important that children have an understanding of what to do if they are unhappy or worried."

"The service is very good and delivered to children in a child friendly and fun way."

"I would definitely recom-



● GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS: MP Rachel Reeves with pupils from Christ Church Upper Armley primary school

mend it to other schools."

The ChildLine Schools Service programme is designed to encourage children to understand what abuse is and let them know ways to get help, for example, by talking to a trusted adult, teacher or ChildLine.

The service aims to eventually provide these messages to children in every primary school in the UK.

The ChildLine Schools Service programme is delivered by trained volunteers and aims to give children the knowledge they need in clear, reassuring

and age-appropriate language.

The sessions are fun, engaging and sensitively tailored, and have been approved as suitable for nine to 11-year-olds by child protection specialists.

The scheme also has the backing of ChildLine's founder and president Esther Rantzen CBE.

To find out more about volunteering for the ChildLine Schools Service, visit the NSPCC website at www.nspcc.org.uk/schoolsservice or email schoolsservice@nspcc.org.uk.

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MP calls in to show support for threatened heart unit

Published on **Monday 17 December 2012 06:00**

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The pregnant Leeds West MP also met patients, including tiny 25-day old Benjamin Doyle, from Huddersfield.

Ms Reeves, who has previously lobbied the Government about the proposed closure of the unit, said: "I feel strongly about the Save Our [Surgery](#) campaign and will do everything I can to offer my continued support.

"The unit here offers unrivalled co-located care in the North which means all the services a child may need are on one single site.

"The children's heart ward is an inspiring place full of hope and strength."

NHS bosses decided in July that the unit should stop carrying out children's heart surgery as part of a national shake-up.

That sparked outrage among families and campaigners, and more recently doctors who say it would put the lives of sick children at risk if they had to travel to a unit in Newcastle.

In October Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt ordered a review of the decision after concerns were raised by councillors.

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Meanwhile Leeds campaign group Save Our [Surgery](#) is also preparing for a judicial review challenging the decision, which is due to be heard in February.

Sharon Cheng, of Save Our Surgery, said: "Taking the legal route to achieve this has always been our least preferred course of action because of the associated costs to both sides.

"However, with all other options exhausted, and the Department of Health asking that we continue our legal action, it's now critical that we continue to raise the funds required to complete the proceedings."

WHEN the Chancellor of the Exchequer stands up to deliver his Autumn Statement, he needs to take action to ensure jobs and growth are supported. He needs to pursue the long term reforms our economy desperately needs. And he needs to demonstrate that as he puts up taxes and cuts spending, he does it in as fair a way as possible.

In October, David Cameron stood up in the House of Commons and claimed that "the good news will keep on coming". Families and businesses in Yorkshire could have been forgiven for raising eyebrows at the Prime Minister's optimism.

Yes, it is good news that, with the help of the Olympics, Britain had finally come out of a double-dip recession since the Second World War.

But the figures show that our flatlining economy is only the same size as a year ago. In the two years since the spending review we've had just 0.6 per cent growth – compared to the 4.6 per cent George Osborne said his plan would deliver. Over the same time, the American economy has grown by 3.9 per cent.

Long-term unemployment is rising, while business lending is falling. And the result of this slow growth and high unemployment is that government borrowing in the first half of this year has actually gone up.

In Yorkshire, unemployment



Rachel Reeves

Rachel Reeves MP is Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

This should include a British Investment Bank properly backed by the Treasury to boost lending to small and medium sized businesses, a long term plan to rebuild our infrastructure and radical reforms to separate retail and investment banking.

Plans to build infrastructure projects which have been announced so far have failed to become anything more than blueprints. Improvements to the M1 and the delivery of the Leeds Rail Growth Package, announced this time a year ago, are stalled, not creating the jobs and growth we desperately need.

Third, we need fairness underpinning the tough decisions that any government would be making in Britain today. Sustainable growth must be built on an economy that works for all working people, an economy that is balanced for all regions of the UK, and support to deal with the rising cost of living as income growth fails to keep pace.

That means cancelling the fuel duty rise in January, at least until next April, to help struggling motorists with the increasing cost of filling up the tank.

And it means rethinking the plan to give a tax cut to millionaires on the same day that taxes go up for millions of pensioners. 8,000 millionaires will get a staggering tax cut of £107,500 per year from the cut in the top rate of tax from 45p to 45p in the pound.

Just four per cent of all those set to benefit from the tax cut live in Yorkshire, 52 per cent live in London and the South East. But on the same day 363,000 pensioners in our county will lose £83 per year because of changes to the personal allowance.

The Government should abandon the £3bn top rate tax cut for people earning over £150,000. It is the wrong priority at a time when the economy remains weak.

If Labour was in government now, we would not be cutting the top rate of tax or implementing the tax rise on pensioners.

We would postpone the increase in fuel duty which would be so crippling to families and small business, by cracking down on tax avoidance by employment agencies.

We need to build an economy where prosperity and burdens are fairly shared, and in which everyone has a stake.

I hope that Chancellor of the Exchequer will bear that in mind today, but I am yet to be convinced.

We need an economy where prosperity and burdens are fairly shared and everyone has a stake.

has remained stubbornly high. There are still 250,000 people unemployed in Yorkshire and the unemployment rate is 9.1 per cent, compared to 7.6 per cent nationally.

In these circumstances, it demonstrates how out of touch David Cameron and George Osborne are to just sit back, cross their fingers and hope for the best. The good news, far from coming thick and fast, is few and far between for most families and businesses in Yorkshire right now.

So this Autumn Statement needs to be one of action, not complacency. The Labour Party has set out three tests for the Chancellor when he delivers his speech today.

First, we need a plan to create the jobs and growth that are vital to get the deficit down and catch up all the lost ground of the last two years.

We have suggested using funds from the 4G auction to build 100,000 affordable homes, bringing forward infrastructure investment, a temporary VAT cut and a bank bonus tax to fund a jobs guarantee for young people.

Second, we need long-term reforms to strengthen our economy and ensure that other countries do not continue to race ahead of us.

Appendix 4: From the *Yorkshire Post*, Wednesday 5th December 2012

My three tests for George Osborne as road to recovery gets longer and longer