

Rachel Reeves MP Monthly Report

News from Rachel Reeves, Labour MP for Leeds West

March 2014

BUILDING CAREERS WITH LEEDS COLLEGE STUDENTS



This month, Rachel met apprentices at the Leeds College of Building to celebrate National Apprentice Week. As well as trying her hand at welding, she learned what CCATF (Cross-Industry Construction Apprenticeship Task Force) is doing to champion the cause of young trainees in the construction industry and to

encourage firms to take on more apprentices.

She also discussed apprenticeships with members of the Federation of Master Builders (FMB), the UK's largest trade association in the building industry, which defends the interests of construction firms big and small. The Leeds College of Building is the only specialist further and higher education construction college in the UK.

"It was a privilege to meet such enthusiastic apprentices and a pleasure to discover how much CCATF and FMB are doing to open up new opportunities in the construction industry",

Rachel said.

"In today's competitive market place, it is vital that we give young people a platform on which they can build a career in construction or, indeed, any other industry. If young people have done an apprenticeship, they are much more likely to find full-time work.

"Apprenticeships also represent good value for money for employers. Investing in apprentices might cost time and money in the short term but it pays off in the long run in the form of skilled, ambitious and loyal staff."

GIRL POWER AT CASTLETON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Rachel was interviewed by Castleton Primary School pupils Ashanti Carlton and Kaycee Barwell this month as part of the Connecting Girls Programme. A joint initiative of Leeds City Council and the organisation Connecting Enterprising Women, the programme gives local girls the chance to develop their entrepreneurial skills in collaboration with inspiring mentors.

Ashanti, a budding artist, and Kaycee, an aspiring journalist, quizzed Rachel about her own heroines, amongst them Alice Bacon, the first female MP in Leeds and a prescient champion of

decent, affordable council housing.

The interview will be screened at an International Women's Day Conference, held on 4 April to coincide with the return to Leeds of an exhibition featuring photos and stories of girls and their mentors from across Yorkshire. It has been on display in Westminster since February and contains photos of pupils at Leeds East Academy.

Rachel said, 'It was a pleasure to be interviewed by such bright and thoughtful pupils. Girls like Ashanti and Kaycee are the future of growth and creativity in our



region and we all have a duty to help them fulfil their potential.

"The Connecting Girls Programme does a lot to make that happen and I am proud to contribute to the International Women's Day Conference, even though I can't attend in person. "

IN BRIEF:



Rachel with parliamentary candidate Jamie Hanley and team, campaigning in key seat Pudsey this month.



Rachel campaigning in Elmet & Rothwell with parliamentary candidate Veronica King and Angela Kellett, candidate for Rothwell ward.



Rachel attended the Leeds (West) food bank launch service this month at The Oak church in Farsley, alongside Pudsey candidate Jamie Hanley and Bramley local candidate Kevin Ritchie. The food bank has already supported 280 people in the West Leeds area so far this year.

IWD AT THE CREATION STATION



On International Women's Day Rachel joined Pudsey parliamentary candidate Jamie Hanley on a visit to the Creation Station in Guiseley.

The Creation Station is an award winning arts & crafts session for kids, run by mother of young twin boys Hayley Sugden. "It was a pleasure to meet Hayley", Rachel said, "She's a great example of someone who has found a way to work flexibly,

combining motherhood with a career - we will make it easier for more mums and dad to do that too.

"Many of the parents we met today were concerned about the cost-of-living crisis and welcome Labour's pledge to extend free childcare to 25 hours a week."

Jamie Hanley agreed: "I was proud to mark International Women's Day with a visit to a successful business run by a mum in our constituency - we had a lot of fun, and saw the great work Hayley's doing up-close."

"With women's wages lagging behind men's, the cost-of-living crisis hitting women disproportionately and the expense of childcare keeping women away from work, I pledge to champion the causes of women in Pudsey and across the country"

NEW CHAPTER FOR LW ACADEMY

Following the unexpected news that Academy Chain E-Act had pulled out of Leeds West Academy, there is renewed hope for a school rated by Ofsted as good with outstanding leadership. The Department for Education have approved

headteacher Annette Hall and Leeds City College's proposal that the Academy become part of a Leeds-City College Multi-Academy Trust. Work still needs to be done to make it a success but Rachel is hopeful that LW Academy can turn over a new leaf.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wednesday 2 April, 2:30pm,
Armley campaigning, meet Armley Park Court, 9 Stanningley Rd, LS12 2AE

Thursday 3 April, 2:30pm Bramley campaigning, meet Community Centre, Waterloo Lane, LS13 2JB

Saturday 5 April, 10:30am
Campaigning in Farnley & Wortley, meeting place TBC.

SAVE THE DATE: Post-election social at VIVA CUBA, Kirkstall Road. Sunday 1st June from 12:30pm

For more information regarding PUDSEY campaigning: Contact Pudsey Organiser, Charlotte Walker at: Charlotte.walker@labour.org.uk

Appendices

Appendix 1: From *Labour List*, Tuesday 14th March 2014

A Labour government would give young people who have been cast aside by the Tory-led Government the chance to find work through a Compulsory Jobs Guarantee.

The chance to work

Last Wednesday I met four incredible young people. Bright, ambitious yet out of work. Like many young people across the country they had found it hard to get a job, applying for hundreds of positions, in some cases without getting a single interview.

For generations in Britain, when the economy grew, most people got better off but that's not true anymore. Especially for young people.

Under David Cameron's Government, long term youth unemployment has doubled costing taxpayers £350 million a year.

A Labour government would give young people who have been cast aside by the Tory-led Government the chance to find work through a Compulsory Jobs Guarantee.

The Compulsory Jobs Guarantee would mean every young person out of work for more than 12 months will be given a paid starter job. This is work they will have to take up or lose benefits. A Labour government will work with employers to help fund paid work with training for six months. It will mean jobs for over 50,000 young people who have been left on the dole for over a year by David Cameron. It will also apply to adults aged 25 or over who have been out of work for two years or more.

Our jobs guarantee will be funded for the duration of the next Parliament by taxing bank bonuses and restricting pensions tax relief for people earning over £150,000. Everyone deserves to benefit from the economic recovery; that's why we're committed to securing jobs for our young people. Labour believes in changing Britain for the better and that's what our Compulsory Jobs Guarantee will do.

Appendix 2: From *Labour List*, Wednesday 26th February 2014

Under David Cameron's government child poverty is rising not falling. And the government's failure to tackle child poverty leads to kids freezing in the winter because they don't have a coat or arriving at school hungry because they haven't eaten breakfast.

Cameron is too busy trying to redefine child poverty to tackle it

Under the Tory-led government child poverty is set to rise, not fall. More children are going without the daily essentials that most take for granted. Yet ministers [seem more interested](#) in changing the way poverty is defined rather than doing anything to help people get on in life.

It's a typical response of an out-of-touch government which cuts taxes for millionaires while hitting families on low incomes hard, including the Bedroom Tax, and doing nothing to tackle low pay and exploitation.

The extent of the government's failure on child poverty is astonishing:

1. Child poverty is set to rise by 400,000 between 2011-12 and 2015-16 and 900,000 by 2020 [according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies](#)
2. One third of the half a million people helped in the last nine months of 2013 at food banks run by the Trussell Trust [were children](#)
3. The government's decision to cut tax credits and benefits in real terms is set to push 200,000 children into poverty
4. Record numbers of children in poverty are now in working households

It is clear children are bearing the brunt of this government's divisive policies. If David Cameron was serious about cutting child poverty he would scrap the Bedroom Tax, introduce a Compulsory Jobs Guarantee, strengthen the Minimum Wage, provide incentives to employers to pay the Living Wage and extend free childcare provision.

The Bedroom Tax has pushed thousands of families into spiralling debt and has been a major driver in the increasing numbers of people who are being forced to rely on food banks. More than half a million have been hit by the Tories' tax on bedrooms, two-thirds of whom are disabled. The government should ditch the Bedroom Tax; if they don't then a Labour government will.

The Tories have failed to tackle long-term unemployment. The number of young people who are long-term unemployed has doubled under David Cameron. The government should introduce a Compulsory Jobs Guarantee to get the long-term unemployed off benefits and into work. This would ensure real paid work for young people unemployed for a year and all adults unemployed for two years – work they would have to take or lose their benefits. The Compulsory Jobs Guarantee would be funded by a repeat of the bank bonus tax and restricting pension tax relief for the wealthiest.

Labour would address the issue of low pay by strengthening the minimum wage, incentivising employers to pay a living wage and cracking down on the abuse of zero-hours contracts.

David Cameron's childcare crunch is exacerbating the cost-of-living crisis faced by working families and shutting too many mums out of the job market. Helping more women into work or to work the hours they want is good for families, children, and the economy, and helps us control the costs of social security by helping more families earn enough to live on. Labour will help all working parents by extending free childcare provision, for three and four-year-olds with parents in work, from 15 to 25 hours.

And a Labour government will take action to tackle the cost-of-living crisis by freezing energy prices, saving the average household £120 a year.

Government policies are deepening the cost-of-living crisis faced by hard-pressed families. Child poverty is set to rise by 400,000 by May 2015. Changing the way poverty is defined won't cover up the failure of David Cameron's government to tackle child poverty and ensure fewer kids arrive at school hungry and cold.

Appendix 3: From *The Telegraph*, Saturday 8th February 2014

Rachel Reeves has vowed to crack down on the 'broken' pensions system which sees savers missing out on more than £1 billion each year because of poor annuity deals and rip-off fees.

Labour will crackdown on broken pensions system

If it was revealed that £1 billion of taxpayers money was going missing out of the state pension system every year, the scandal would rock the government.

Yet every year hundreds of thousands of ordinary savers are being short-changed to the tune of a billion pounds because of a private pensions system that is rigged against them while this government refuses to act.

After a lifetime of work, hundreds of thousands of people a year convert their hard-earned private pension pot into a guaranteed retirement income in the form of an annuity. Yet far too many people are seeing their savings diminishing as they retire because of the broken pensions market.

The annuities market is complex, confusing and uncompetitive. This suits the pensions industry at the expense of savers, who are confronted with an overwhelming array of products and offers to choose from. The complexity of the market leads to at least half of those buying an annuity taking up an offer from their existing pensions provider, without being told what other deals are available to them.

The result is an astonishing £1 billion lost every year by savers who are missing out on the best annuity deal.

A Labour Government would fix the broken pensions market to help people approaching retirement secure a decent income in return for their hard earned savings.

We would introduce a requirement for all savers to be referred to an independent broker to make sure they get the best deal when they turn their pension savings into retirement income. With the help of an independent broker, the average saver could be £400 a year better off.

Labour will also crack down on rip-off pension fees and charges. The government's own figures show savers could be losing £230,000 from their lifetime savings through excessive fees and charges. Yet after promising a "full frontal assault" on charges, the government has kicked the issue into the long grass. A Labour government would introduce 'a fair cap of at least 0.75% to end the rip off fees and charges enabling people to keep more of their hard-earned savings.

The broken pensions market is a clear example of how the cost-of-living crisis is affecting middle-income households, as well as the poorest. Things are getting tougher for millions of middle-class families who never dreamt that life would be such a struggle. Their worries about whether they will have enough to retire on, as well as helping their children get onto the housing ladder, are part of what now risks undermining our confidence as a country.

David Cameron's refusal to intervene in the pensions market is a slap in the face to people who work hard, save, always do right thing and ask little from government. One Nation Labour will fight their corner, bringing in reforms to tackle powerful vested interests in energy, banking and pensions to help consumers get the best deal.

We believe if you work hard and save for a pension you deserve a decent income in retirement. If David Cameron won't tackle the scandal of the missing £1 billion in private pension savings, then a Labour government will.