



News
from
Westminster
Jul/Aug/Sep 2017 No. 96



Report from Sharon Hodgson MP



Pictured here: Sharon visiting the CWU's People's Post stand at the Miners' Gala in Durham, July 2017.

Summer campaigns – Transport

Over the summer, Labour, under Jeremy, have continued to push ahead with setting out our agenda for a better country whilst Theresa May has focused on her premiership and how long it will be. Earlier this week the date for her departure was set as the 30th August 2019, but she has now said she expects to continue on and fight another General Election. The waters become muddier with each day.

Also, over the summer, we had key campaign themes on education and health issues, failures to support transport, together with ensuring we have an economy that works for all with a £10 minimum wage. If my inbox is anything to go by, then I know these are issues of great importance to the people of Washington and Sunderland West.

One of the main issues to dominate my inbox has been transport with constituents expressing their despair at the state of the rail services in our area and across the country, along with wider transport issues such as the problems seen in the press with the A19.

Transport is a big issue for me, and this is why I am continuing my campaign for the extension of the Metro to Washington and have invited Ministers to the region to discuss this matter further. I am also supporting the calls by Grahame Morris MP to hold an inquiry into the situation on the A19 with so many casualties sadly becoming ever-more frequent in our local news.

The North East regularly gets ignored when it comes to transport infrastructure, but when it is crucial for getting people around the region and also boosting our economic growth, it is vital that we continue to push for better investment. This is something that I am committed to doing.

Brexit

This week saw the Brexit negotiations begin again, and still we are none the wiser to what the Government are aiming to do, despite their policy papers published a few weeks ago. Instead we have seen senior ministers squabbling about the direction they are taking the country without any consideration for those it most affects.

Labour are committed to respecting the referendum result, whilst continuing to protect jobs and livelihoods. Sadly, the glacial pace of progress seen during the last two meetings of the negotiators has shown that transitional arrangements must be put in place for a limited time, so that we do not see our economy plummet off the cliff-edge in March 2019.

Ambiguity is not what we need right now and the Government continue to remain light on detail about how our new relationship with our European neighbours will work. Labour believe it is important to get on with the job and to do so will need the right arrangements in place to ensure a strong, lasting and new relationship between the UK and the EU.

In Parliament

Contaminated Blood debate in Parliament



During the last couple of weeks before summer recess, I was very busy in my capacity as Shadow Minister for Public Health, especially around the contaminated blood scandal. During an Emergency Debate, secured by Diana Johnson MP, the Government caved in to demands for an inquiry into this scandal to learn lessons from the grave mistakes made and bring justice for those affected. However, just a week later, an Urgent Question was secured by Diana Johnson MP when concerns were raised that the Department of Health (DoH) were planning to take the lead in the inquiry. All of the charities and the patient groups believe the DoH should have no involvement in the inquiry due to allegations made towards DoH officials over the last couple of decades. So Labour put pressure on the Government to change this decision to ensure true justice is achieved.

Viagogo lobby, London



During my time in Parliament campaigning against ticket touts in the secondary ticketing market, I have grown accustomed to being ignored when trying to hold them to account. With Viagogo causing so much distress for fans across the country and refusing to attend a public Select Committee hearing, myself and my APPG colleague, Nigel Adams MP, took it upon ourselves to doorstep Viagogo and hand-deliver a letter to them. Sadly, we were turned away at the door and threatened with police, but the campaigning still continues to ensure fans are put first in this broken market, rather than being exploited.

In and around the constituency

"MelanomaMe" charity launch, Sunderland



As the Shadow Public Health Minister, I was pleased to be invited to the launch of MelanomaMe, a service which offers support to people affected by Malignant Melanoma and raise awareness of this cancer in and around Sunderland. Washington and Sunderland has a high rate of malignant melanoma cases, but since this disease is 86% preventable, it is crucial to raise awareness and share information to help reduce this cancer.

EngageNE meeting

I was delighted to speak at an 'EngageNE' event recently about engagement during change, with a focus on Brexit. I spoke about how it is crucial to engage with people on issues as big as Brexit and how best to do this, with reference to my Brexit public consultation meetings and the survey I held earlier this year.

National Citizen Service (NCS) meeting



It was great to attend a meeting with National Citizen Service participants, to hear more about the young people's volunteering and social action work over the summer; and also hear about how their new experiences have helped shape their career development. There were many inspirational and fascinating stories and I wish all of the young participants the very best of luck with their future careers.

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