



# News from **Westminster** Oct/Nov 2018



No. 109



## Report from Sharon Hodgson MP



*Sharon with the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme, enjoying vegetables at Marlborough Primary, Sulgrave in Washington.*

### **Budget 2018**

The Autumn Budget was announced earlier this week, and is already known as the Broken Promise Budget. Although Theresa May and the Conservatives continue to claim that “austerity is coming to an end”, the reality could not be further from the truth. This shameful budget will make very little difference to the vast majority of people in our constituency or across the country.

### **Universal Credit**

The families already on Universal Credit, and those expecting to be rolled onto it soon, will be alarmed that there was no announcement by the Chancellor to halt the roll out, and replace it with a comprehensive system that won't make anyone worse off. Instead of doing that, the Chancellor promised £1.7bn for Universal Credit, less than a third of the £7bn of social security cuts still to come.

### **NHS**

The Tories' NHS funding settlement is all smoke and mirrors. Instead of the pledged 3.6% NHS spending increase, according to the Nuffield Trust the total Department of Health budget will increase by just 2.7% in real terms in 2019/20. This is simply not enough. Only a Labour Government will ensure that our NHS is properly funded and resourced.

### **Policing**

With violent crime on the rise, you would expect the Government to properly fund our police forces. But the reality is that the Government

has cut police funding in real terms by 30% since 2010, leading to cuts of 21,000 police officers in England & Wales and decimation of support staff. Regular policing will not receive a single penny from the Tory Government this year.

### **Schools**

It is beyond belief that whilst some schools are having to close early due to lack of funding, the Chancellor announced no new funding for the day-to-day costs of our schools. I know that many people in our constituency are concerned about school funding and have been for some time. I am sure that like me, they will have found the Chancellor's announcement of a tiny amount of additional funding for “little extras” extremely offensive, particularly when many schools are struggling to afford basic necessities and retain staff due to shrinking budgets. It is very telling that more money was found to fix pot holes than to help fix our struggling schools. Of course, this budget could all fall apart in five months time when the UK leaves the EU in March next year.



**In Parliament**  
**Ovarian Cancer Debate**



As the Shadow Minister for Public Health, I responded to the debate and called on the Government to take a number of actions that could improve the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of Ovarian Cancer. I was also able to raise the case of a constituent of mine who had written to me with details of their younger sister's personal experiences with Ovarian Cancer.

**3rd Washington Scouts visit to Parliament**



I hugely enjoyed welcoming a group of local Scouts to Westminster. Their visit to Parliament was part of a short trip to London and after a brief tour, we sat down for a Q&A session. Many of the Scouts challenged me on a wide variety of topics including; Brexit, Mental Health Services, and of course the extension of the Tyne & Wear Metro to Washington. I was truly impressed by their enthusiastic engagement in politics and local constituency issues and I hope there were some future politicians among them.

**Standing #ShouldertoShoulder with WASPI Women**

The decision to accelerate the rise in the women's state pension age has had a devastating impact on many women who were born in the 1950s, some of whom are now facing hardship and destitution as a result. Thousands of women across the country are rightly refusing to accept this decision without fighting back, including some who staged a notable protest during the delivery of the Budget speech in the House of Commons. A few weeks prior to that I joined some of my constituents, and hundreds of women at the #ShouldertoShoulder rally in Parliament square – to send a clear message to the Government that action has to be taken to right this injustice.



**In and around the constituency**  
**Marlborough Primary School visit, Sulgrave**



As Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on School Food, and Shadow Public Health Minister, I am hugely passionate about the health of our children. I was therefore delighted to visit Marlborough Primary School and learn more about their Healthy Eating Workshop as part of the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme and also open their new play area. It is so vital that children are given the opportunity to learn about the best ways to eat well and maintain a healthy lifestyle from an early age.

**Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Urgent Care Centres (UCC) consultation**

As many people will be aware, Sunderland CCG has been consulting on the future of UCCs across the city, two of which are in our constituency. This consultation has now ended and there will now be a period of reviewing & evaluating the evidence gathered during the consultation. I understand the final decisions will be now be made in January 2019, rather than in December of this year as planned. I have been firmly opposing any closures as a result of this consultation, and will continue to do so as the process moves forward. You can find more information on the consultation and what happens next by visiting:

<http://www.sunderlandccg.nhs.uk/get-involved/urgent-care-services>

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