



News from **Westminster** Jan/Feb 2019



No. 112



Report from Sharon Hodgson MP



Washington and Sunderland West Labour Party, local activists and Keep Our NHS Public (KONP) have campaigned tirelessly to keep our Urgent Care Centres open.

Sunderland CCG Urgent Care Decision

As many people will know, Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) recently ran a 16-week consultation on the future of how Urgent Care is to be delivered. That consultation period has closed and a decision has now been taken.

It should be a cause for celebration that the GP extended access services will be available at Washington, Bunny Hill and Houghton, as opposed to other GP practices as was initially proposed. A minor injuries service will also be available at both Washington and Houghton. It is however, disappointing that there won't be any walk-in centres apart from at Pallion. I want to pay tribute to all the local campaigners, constituents, Labour Councillors and Labour activists who came together in a committed and determined fashion to campaign against the close of our Urgent Care Centres.

I appreciate that because of damaging Conservative Government funding cuts, the previous arrangements in place were simply not sustainable and the outcome is certainly better than what was initially being suggested. There will no doubt be more work to do on this issue, so I look forward to studying this decision more closely and will be following any developments.

Children's Future Food Inquiry

As part of the Children's Future Food Inquiry, young people from across the country came to Parliament to speak out about their own experiences with food insecurity. I am in no doubt that the evidence they gave will have been extremely informative to all the MPs and Peers who attended. It is shocking that in this day and age, millions of children across the country are either going hungry, or don't have



access to affordable and healthy food options. It was a busy day for the young people who attended, some of whom had travelled from as far away as Scotland, and had to do a number of interviews with the media. The final Inquiry report will be published at the end of April 2019 with support of the Inquiry's Ambassador, Dame Emma Thompson. **You can watch an interview with two of the attendees from Channel 4 here:**

<https://tinyurl.com/yb63a4al>

In Parliament

"Eat Them to Defeat Them" launch



Eat them to Defeat Them is a new campaign from ITV and Veg Power to encourage children to eat more vegetables. Unfortunately, one-third of primary school kids in Britain are overweight or obese and yet only 1.2% of the food and drink advertising on TV is for veg. It was a pleasure to join Stacey Solomon and MPs from across the political spectrum in Parliament to launch the campaign. The health of our future generations is a matter of huge importance to me, and I will continue to campaign to overturn the appalling balance in advertising which is currently geared overwhelmingly to junk food and sugary drinks.

Signing the Book of Commitment for Holocaust Memorial Day



Sunday 27th January this year marked Holocaust Memorial Day, the theme of which this year was "Torn from home". Prior to the day, I was proud to sign the Holocaust Educational Trust (HET) Book of Commitment. It is so vitally important

to honour all those who were murdered in the Holocaust as well as paying tribute to the extraordinary survivors who work tirelessly to educate the next generation.

In and around the constituency

QE Gateshead Alcohol Unit visit and meeting

I was delighted to visit The Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Gateshead along with Alcohol Health Alliance UK in order to see some of the services that are impacted by high-risk alcohol consumption. I was also able to speak to

some of the patients there about their experiences. In my capacity as the Shadow Minister for Public Health I am committed to tackling high levels of alcohol consumption.

Visit to Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS) and consultation



I joined Cllr Tony Taylor, local member Sean Laws, Cllr Barry Curran and Cllr Alex Samuels at a meeting with Chris Lowther, Chief Fire Officer of TWFRS at their Service HQ in Washington. It was a great opportunity to discuss ongoing issues around funding, caused by nine years of Tory austerity. This is something I have been raising in Parliament in recent months and will continue to do so. In November of last year the Fire Authority began a 12 week public consultation on proposed changes to how the service respond to incidents. I know that many of my constituents had concerns about some of these changes and I therefore submitted a formal response to the consultation. This process has now closed, and I understand that the report will now go to the next Fire Authority meeting on the 18th February 2019.

Visits to Rickleton Primary School, Washington & Ridgeway Primary Academy, South Shields

One of my favourite aspects of being an MP is visiting the fantastic schools in and around our constituency. In recent weeks I have been to both Rickleton



Primary School in Washington and Ridgeway Primary Academy in South Shields. At Rickleton, I opened their new library, spoke about democracy and got to see some robots ready for a competition. At Ridgeway, I spoke with pupils who are "Agents for Change" and have input ideas into their school meals so that they're tasty, healthy and interesting. They also helped redesign the school dining hall to make it a friendlier environment.

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