



News  
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# Report from Sharon Hodgson MP



*Sharon pictured with the inspirational Fi Munro at the launch of the Eve Appeal's "Make time for Tea" reception, to help promote Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, in Parliament (See overleaf).*

## Brexit

**It is no exaggeration to say that it has been another tumultuous period when it comes to Brexit. This Conservative Government lurches from crisis to crisis without consideration for the impact on jobs, businesses and our Public Services that the ongoing uncertainty is having.**

There is now less than a month until we are due to leave the European Union (EU) and there is still no clarification on what our trading arrangements will be once we have left. Businesses such as Nissan are now in the absurd situation where they have shipments that are in transit throughout the World that will arrive after the 29th of March, and they do not know whether they will be allowed in on arrival as there is no clarification on what our customs arrangements will be. I recently wrote to the Prime Minister regarding my concerns about Nissan's decision to build the X-Trail in Japan rather than in Washington.

Read my letter to the PM here: <https://tinyurl.com/y2e5v9w4>

and the reply I received from Richard Harrington MP here:  
<https://tinyurl.com/yyvaxdzo>

Events are moving so quickly that it is often difficult to keep track of where the Government stands from one day to the next. That is why I am pleased that the Labour Party is now taking decisive action on Brexit. We put our alternative Brexit plan to a vote in Parliament this week, which was unfortunately defeated. It is now clear that the deal the Prime Minister brings back is unlikely to be hugely different from before. We will therefore be voting against that deal, and against 'No-Deal' which would be disastrous for our region. In line with our agreed conference policy, we will now either support or table an amendment for a Public Vote, in order to break the ongoing deadlock.

## The Labour Party

It has not been an easy couple of weeks for the Labour Party. I was extremely sad to see some of my colleagues take the decision to leave the Party. Whilst I respect and understand why they have done so, for me the Labour Party is my Party in the same way my family is my family, and I can't envisage any circumstances that would make me leave.

There are clearly some issues that are having a real strain on people, particularly Brexit and our ongoing problems with antisemitism. I want to unequivocally state that our Party has been too slow to deal with cases of antisemitism, and we must now start to see real action taken in order to begin the process of rebuilding trust with the Jewish community. The decision to suspend Chris Williamson, after the numerous ways in which he caused offence to Jewish people is to be welcomed and I hope this marks a real turning point.

When it comes to Brexit, it's no great secret to say that finding a position that can unite the entire Party was always going to be difficult. I pay great tribute to Jeremy Corbyn and Keir Starmer who have done their utmost to do so, no matter how difficult it has been at times. Now that time is running out on Brexit, it is more important than ever that we unite around our position moving forward and oppose this destructive Tory Brexit.

### In Parliament

#### Health Question

During Health Questions recently in Parliament, I asked Matt Hancock MP, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care how the Government would reach it's target of ending HIV transmissions in England by 2030 without a fully costed strategy. This is such a hugely important issue to thousands of people across our country and the Government needs to ensure that it doesn't let them down by not backing up such a commitment with the funding it needs to succeed.

#### Lord Sugar Tweet



I am sure many people will have seen Lord Sugar's tweet regarding Sunderland and Brexit, in which he insinuated that any jobs lost due to Brexit would be deserved due to the fact that we had a majority of people voting to leave the EU. I found it extremely offensive and patronising and responded in kind. However people voted during that referendum, they did so in good faith and now is not the time to say 'I told you so'.

#### Rare Diseases Reception and Make Time for Tea



I was delighted that one of our members, Shelly Williamson was able to join me in Parliament for some recent events. We first went to a Rare Diseases Day awareness reception, and then to the launch of Make Time for Tea.

Make Time for Tea is a campaign run by the Eve Appeal that runs throughout Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month in March, in which people organise tea parties and bake-sale events in order to raise money, and awareness of the symptoms and signs of Ovarian Cancer. As Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Ovarian Cancer it was a pleasure to host this event again, and an honour to hear from speakers such as Fi Munro, who have personal experiences of Ovarian Cancer.

### In and around the constituency

#### WASPI Meeting in Washington



I am looking forward to welcoming Laura Pidcock MP to our Constituency on Saturday the 16th of March, at 1pm in the Biddick Arts Centre, for an event focussing on the problems with Universal Credit and the injustices that WASPI women have faced. Laura is the Shadow Minister for Labour and will bring a valuable insight into how a Labour Government

would approach both of these issues. These are both issues that are hugely important to many of the most vulnerable people in our society and as a Party we should continue to stand up for them in every way that we can. The Labour Party is member led and events such as these give us all a fantastic opportunity to feed into policy discussions.

#### Visits to Sunderland Carers Centre, and local Memory Café



It was a real pleasure to visit the Sunderland Carers Centre and the new Memory Café at George Washington Primary School. At the Carers Centre I spoke with young carers in our area about how they care for their loved ones each day, and the needs that they have both at home and in school. I also met with Dr Taylor and Rev Julia Wing to talk about the Memory Café they're running at George Washington Primary School. It's a project that runs on a Thursday for people with dementia and I hope to visit as soon as possible, when Parliament isn't sitting.

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