



News
from
Westminster
Mar/Apr 2019



No. 115



Report from Sharon Hodgson MP



includes schools, universities, hospitals, care homes, meals on wheels, and prisons, providing meals for some of the most vulnerable in our society. Food suppliers from across the sector have warned that any disruption to supply chains or price increases due to leaving the European Union (EU) without a deal could have a disastrous impact on the delivery of nutritious meals to those who need them the most. I was proud to stand up for public sector catering services, users and campaigners on this important issue and was pleased to see support from across Parliament. I will continue to oppose a No Deal outcome at every opportunity.

International Women's Day, 2019



Laura Pidcock speaking in Washington.

It was a pleasure to welcome Laura Pidcock MP, Shadow Minister for Labour, to our constituency this month for an excellent event organised by our local Washington and Sunderland West CLP, focussing on Universal Credit and WASPI women. I know that both of these issues are hugely important to many constituents.

Brexit – No Meal No Deal debate

As Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on School Food I recently held a Westminster Hall debate in Parliament about the impact that a No Deal Brexit could have on public sector catering. Public Sector catering



On International Women's Day (IWD) this year, I hosted a forum that brought together the Police and Crime Commissioner Vera Baird, local councillors, community leaders and school pupils. Over the course of the event we discussed important issues such as domestic violence; period poverty; female representation in public life and equal pay. The theme for this year's IWD was #BalanceForBetter, focussing on how we can all work towards a world which is truly gender balanced. It was a pleasure to bring so many women and girls together from across my constituency to discuss issues that affect them. Although some of the topics we discussed were difficult, we also spoke about the positive ways in which we can move forward to a world in which there is true equality for women. I hope that this event will be the first of many moving forward, and I look forward to seeing the progress made from year to year.

In Parliament

Metro campaign developments



Ever since I was first elected in 2005, bringing the Metro to Washington has been a key campaign of mine. Back then it was extremely unlikely it would ever happen, I was told that in a letter from Nexus, but now it's very much part of all local transport plans. Washington is the largest town in England without a rail link, despite being home to almost 70,000 people. An extension of the Metro to Washington is well overdue, and I know it's something that many of my constituents are hugely passionate about also. Such an extension would not only incentivise investment and growth, but would also provide a more sustainable mode of transport and open up more accessible options for post-16 education. I recently submitted a letter to the Department of Transport's Call for Evidence on light rail and sent a copy of this letter to the Transport Secretary, Chris Grayling. You can read my letter by visiting: <http://tinyurl.com/y5fys8g8> I also raised this issue in Parliament recently, you can see a short clip here: <https://tinyurl.com/y46artne>

Teal Heroes in Parliament



In my capacity as Chair of the APPG on Ovarian Cancer I was delighted to host the second ever "Teal Hero" day in Parliament, Teal being the colour of Ovarian Cancer

Awareness. Held during Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, the event gives MPs the chance to become a Teal Hero by dressing up as superheroes for media purposes in order to help raise awareness of the symptoms of ovarian cancer and help more women get an early diagnosis. Knowing the symptoms of ovarian cancer is vital, not only for women of all ages, but also for healthcare professionals. I was delighted that over 40 MPs took part, with many, like me, enthusiastically embracing the dress-up options available. More information about the symptoms of Ovarian Cancer can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y5rxw8bu>

National Apprenticeships Week

Apprentices bring huge value to our economy, and the opportunities that decent apprenticeships can provide for young people are fantastic. As part of this year's Apprenticeship Week I was pleased to host a reception in Parliament with QAA Apprenticeships. I also spoke to apprentices from the Nissan plant in my constituency at an event organised by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) about the work they have been doing. Further Education remains a huge gateway for social mobility and life-changing experiences, and I believe that it is vital that we invest in every part of our education system in order to ensure that everyone has the opportunities they deserve.

In the Constituency

Litter picking in Blackfell, Washington



I enjoyed taking part in the #GreatBritishSpringClean. I joined some of our local Sunderland Councillors Harry Trueman, Dorothy Trueman, Bernie Scaplehorn and Dianne Snowdon alongside local volunteers from "Washington Clean and Green" and "Keep Washington Tidy" to pick up rubbish and collect discarded trolleys around Blackfell Village. Astonishingly, we found 40 trolleys which is a staggering number and has inspired my next campaign which will be to encourage people to take more responsibility in caring for our local environment. With the message regarding trolleys being, if you do use one to get your shopping home, then please do the decent thing and take it back!

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