



News  
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# Report from Sharon Hodgson MP



*Sharon raises Nissan with PM Boris Johnson, 25th July '19*

## **Brexit / General Election**

**Many people will have been concerned to see Parliament suspended (prorogued) in the middle of a national crisis. In 2017 I was honoured to be re-elected as the Member of Parliament for Washington and Sunderland West. My job is to represent everyone in our constituency in Parliament, scrutinise and amend legislation and hold the Government to account.**

At a time of such huge political significance, it is outrageous that MPs are being denied the maximum time possible to represent our constituents. Suspending Parliament is just one of the ways in which Boris Johnson has been attempting to force through a reckless No Deal Brexit.

A No Deal Brexit would be disastrous for our country, and particularly damaging for the manufacturing industry in our region. I therefore voted for a new law designed to stop the Government forcing through a no-deal and am pleased that it has now been passed.

Considering that the Prime Minister is reportedly open to the idea of breaking that law, it was right that the Labour Party – along with other opposition parties – voted against a General

Election taking place before that law has been enacted. Boris Johnson simply couldn't be trusted not to move the date of any agreed election, in order to force through a No Deal Brexit. I will continue to oppose a No Deal Brexit and will be working hard for all my constituents during prorogation. The many problems people face in our community cannot be ignored, and in the coming weeks and months, we in the Labour Party will be setting out our vision for a fairer society that works for everyone.

## **Register to vote**

As the Government has no majority and the Brexit stalemate is set to continue, it is likely that a General Election could soon take place. Depending on its timing, it is set to be dominated by the issue of Brexit and how we move forward as a country. We must remember however, that such an election would also be an opportunity to change our country for the better. After almost a decade of punishing Tory austerity, our public services – and those who rely upon them – are suffering. We need a Labour Government.

That's why it will be important to make sure you're registered to vote, and to encourage your friends and family to do the same. More information can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>

## **Labour's New Deal for Leaseholders**

Last year I launched a constituency-wide consultation on the issue of leaseholds after a number of people had written to me regarding the difficulties they had faced with them. Having raised the issue in Parliament on several occasions, I am delighted that the Labour Party has now taken an unequivocal stance on the issue and is proposing a "New Deal for Leaseholders" which includes a ban on the sale of new leasehold houses and flats and cutting the cost of buying the freehold of an existing home.

Leaseholds are symbolic of our failing housing system, and the sheer volume of problems experienced by leaseholders, shows why we urgently need change. More information can be found here: <https://bit.ly/2NDMPH3>

**In Parliament**

**Holiday Hunger question to the Prime Minister**



At Theresa May's penultimate PMQs, I had the opportunity to question her on her pledge to tackle inequality; three years after she first entered Downing Street, thousands of families remain worried about how to feed their children over the school holidays, hindered by low wages, delays in benefit and an inability to access free school meals during the summer months. Holiday hunger is rising faster in the North East than anywhere else in the country, with many food banks and charities running on a shoestring budget, unable to access funding, as demonstrated by an ITV Tyne Tees report on my question. You can see my question, and the Prime Minister's response here: <https://bit.ly/2kA9TJ7>

**In and around the constituency**

**Visit to Hylton Castle refurbishment**



I was delighted to be given a tour of Hylton Castle over the summer, which will soon be opening to the public. The radical renovation of this historic building, in order to make sure that it is fully accessible to the public, has been brilliantly led by Castle Ward Labour Councillors and the local community action group, and will ensure that the castle no longer stands a derelict relic, but is put to better use by local residents for activities and training.

**Maple Lodge care home visit in Witherwack, with NCS**



It was great to meet young people volunteering at Maple Lodge as part of their participation in the National Citizenship Service. At a time when the Government is cutting spending on youth services by up to 70% in some areas, it was good to hear how activities over the summer holidays help young people fulfil their potential and contribute to their local community.

**Washington Mind fayre and Mayoress "At Home" event**



As a proud patron of Washington Mind, I was delighted to attend the Mind summer fayre, run this year alongside the Mayoress Cllr Dianne Snowdon's "At Home" event. This was a brilliant opportunity to reflect on the work this organisation does to help those with mental health issues, and to offer my appreciation to local staff for what they do for many in our community. The Government has not made their job any easier by slashing local authority funding and failing to protect mental health budgets. A future Labour Government will pledge to invest more in mental health services and ring-fence budgets, so that funding reaches those who need support.

**Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Service naming ceremony**

I was privileged to attend a renaming of a room at T&W Fire Service HQ in memory of Ross Irwin, who sadly drowned in the River Wear in 2016. TWFRS Fire Service Crew Manager Dave Irwin, Ross' father, has campaigned tirelessly to promote water safety and reduce drowning incidents across the region. As Vice-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Water Safety and Drowning, I will continue to campaign for better education in schools and increased Government funding for initiatives to decrease instances of drowning amongst young people.

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