



News from **Westminster** Dec/Jan 2020

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Report from Sharon Hodgson MP



Sharon Hodgson is re-elected as the Labour MP for Washington and Sunderland West, Dec 2019.

General Election

I was honoured to be re-elected as the Member of Parliament for our wonderful constituency. The national result was of course hugely disappointing for the Labour Party, and we now face five more years of a Tory Government, which will harm the most vulnerable in our society. For a decade now, our region of the North East has been neglected when it comes to investment and funding. The Conservatives promised to reverse that during the election, and it's now time for them to make good on their word and deliver.

I will continue to be a champion for everyone in the constituency and look forward to being back in Parliament in order to hold Boris Johnson's Government to account. During the election it was clear to me that many people were unhappy with the Labour Party and felt that perhaps despite supporting us in the past, they were unable to at this election. Over the next five years, I will ensure to work as hard as possible to win back that trust and act on the concerns that were raised with me on the doorsteps.

Withdrawal Bill Vote

Prior to Christmas, Boris Johnson brought his Withdrawal Agreement back to Parliament. I have always been clear that I would not be able to vote for a form of Brexit that has the potential to harm the jobs, rights, and living standards of my constituents. However, I also recognise that a great many of my constituents are frustrated by the delay in Brexit being delivered. I therefore chose not to prevent progress from being made and abstained on both the 2nd and 3rd reading of the Bill.

I will now put every effort into holding this Government to account in the next phase of Brexit, particularly on issues relating to the manufacturing and automotive industries which so many of my constituents rely upon.

Leadership Election

The elections to decide who will succeed Jeremy Corbyn and Tom Watson as leader and deputy leader of the Labour Party have now begun. I am hugely encouraged by the wide range of candidates putting themselves forward, including many fantastic women. I look forward to the contests being conducted in a respectful and positive manner, and to hearing the candidates' respective platforms for leading our Party back into Government.

Breast Implant Illness (BII)

I spoke to BBC Newsbeat in my capacity as the Shadow Minister for Public Health regarding the hundreds of thousands of women suffering from Breast Implant illness (BII). Despite many women voicing their concerns, there is no agreement within the medical industry as to whether this condition is real or not. Unfortunately, I can see many similarities between this issue and that of the problems with vaginal and hernia mesh, which I have been working on for some time now.

It is vital that we listen to women when it comes to healthcare, and not dismiss their concerns. That's why I am calling for women to be told of all of the risks of BII before they sign the consent form to go ahead with implants. You can see the programme here: <https://bbc.in/39KD157>

In Parliament

Breast Cancer Now - Wear It Pink Campaign



As Shadow Minister for Public Health and former Vice-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Breast Cancer, I was proud to take part in Breast Cancer Now's #WearItPink campaign, raising awareness of the signs of breast cancer and the need for funding for research and treatment. Breast cancer is one of the most common cancers in the UK, but, if detected early, there is a very good chance of recovery. I will continue to press the Government to provide GPs with the training, resources and support they need to refer patients quickly, and to ensure that NHS diagnostic services are not held back by cuts and staff shortages. Cancer patients deserve personalised, tailored care, and access to state-of-the-art treatment on our NHS.

Westminster Hall Debate on the effect of waste processing facilities on the local environment

In a Westminster Hall Debate tabled by my colleague Darren Jones MP, I called for the Environment Agency to be given the power to issue on-the-spot fines to corporate offenders who damage the local environment. I know too well from the experience of my constituents in Teal Farm the effect that waste processing facilities can have on the lives of local residents. The Government must act to reform the remit of the Environment Agency, to ensure that corporate bodies can be held to account.

In and around the constituency

Washington Food Bank opening at the Galleries



Alongside Cllr Dianne Snowdon, I recently opened the new Washington Community Food Project facility in the Galleries, a vital community service which will aid some of the most vulnerable in our communities. Though I am very grateful for the dedication of the food bank volunteers, food is a basic human right and people should not be forced to do without it in the fifth richest country in the world. I will continue to pressure this Tory Government to tackle growing social inequality, so that food banks are no longer necessary. Thank you to our local Labour Party members who continue to generously donate food every month, at our CLP meetings, to our local food banks.

Launch of Washington Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal & Remembrance Sunday Service



As Honorary President of the Washington Branch of the Royal British Legion, I was a proud to be a part of the 2019 Poppy Appeal, and contribute to the Washington Remembrance Sunday Order of Service. As someone with family who have served in the Armed Forces, I take great pride in attending Remembrance events every year to reflect on all those who have died or been injured in service, and to commend those who put their lives on the line to keep our country safe.

Visit with the 2nd Hylton Girl Guides, South Hylton



It was a great pleasure to meet with the Guides as part of UK Parliament Week, to discuss Parliament and the role of an MP. We discussed the issues which are important to young people in our community, such as social media, knife crime and mental health, as well as the pledges made by the Girl Guides to tackle plastic pollution. We must be ambitious in our aim to increase recycling and reduce the use of plastics, and I look forward to working alongside groups like the Guides, schools and local businesses to see how Washington and Sunderland West can become more environmentally-friendly in 2020.

Sharon Hodgson, Washington & Sunderland West Constituency

Units 1 & 1A, Vermont House, Concord, Washington,

Tyne & Wear NE37 2SQ

Tel. 417 2000

W: www.sharonhodgson.org

E: [info\(a\)sharonhodgson.org](mailto:info(a)sharonhodgson.org)

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/@SharonHodgsonMP>