



News
from
the constituency
Aug/Sep 2020

No. 131



Report from Sharon Hodgson MP



WSW CLP National Policy Forum (NPF) Zoom meetings

I was delighted to welcome Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Justice, Rt Hon David Lammy MP, to our virtual CLP meeting earlier this week (pictured left).

David joined us to discuss Labour's policy platform for the next manifesto, and to talk about the need for reform in the UK's criminal justice system, support for those with often undiagnosed learning difficulties in prisons, and access to legal aid and the courts.

This has been a fascinating series of meetings, and I look forward to further such meetings over the coming months. Details will follow in due course.

David Lammy MP joins Washington & Sunderland West zoom call.

Despite Parliament being in recess, over the last few weeks I have continued to work with charities, Labour members and other Members of Parliament, to raise the issues which matter most to our local community.

As Parliament reconvenes, if you have any concerns, or there is anything which you feel I can help you with, please do contact me by emailing: sharon.hodgson.mp@parliament.uk

Back to school

I send my best wishes to all those children, young people, teachers and staff who have recently returned, or will soon be returning, to school. When schools are closed, we see deep inequalities become more entrenched, and those from more disadvantaged backgrounds lose out the most.

The learning that children have lost in recent months shows that keeping schools safely open to all must be a national priority in the months ahead.

The Government must now ensure that schools are able to remain open, that parents and teachers are supported and reassured that adequate safety measures are in place, and that pupils get all the help they need to catch up.

Child Trust Funds

From the 1st September, young people turning 18 will be able to access their Child Trust Fund (CTF) accounts for the first time. CTFs were an incredibly bold policy introduced by the last Labour Government to ensure that every child had access to savings at the start of their adult life, no matter what their background.

Over the next nine years, thousands of young people in Washington and Sunderland West will be able to manage and access the money put aside for them. Unfortunately, as the Conservative/Lib Dem coalition Government stopped this scheme in 2011, many young people may have forgotten, or may not be aware, that they have money to call their own. In our constituency, over 8,700 accounts were created, but not all by parents.

I don't want any young person to miss out on their CTF.

I would encourage everyone to visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/child-trust-funds> to find their fund and find out more about this scheme. I would also encourage parents, schools and employers in the coming months and years to make sure that people, who are turning 18, are aware that this money is theirs to manage.

VJ Day memorial service



It was an honour to be invited to the service of thanks at the North East Land, Sea and Air Museum (formerly RAF Usworth) on the 75th Anniversary of VJ Day on 15th August, with The Mayor and Mayoress of Sunderland, Cllrs David and Dianne Snowdon. We remembered and gave our respects to No 607 Squadron, who defended the North East 80 years ago to the day during the Battle of Britain. Alongside others from Northumberland and North Yorkshire, No 607 Squadron defeated the largest ever raid on the region. Much further away from home during the Second World War, those who served in the Far East fought under the most harrowing conditions imaginable, and if they were taken prisoner, suffered horrific treatment; it is therefore just as important to remember and pay tribute to those who fought for our freedom on VJ Day in August, as it is on VE Day in May.



Washington and Sunderland West's automotive and aerospace industries

22% of the workforce in Washington and Sunderland West works in the automotive industry, which makes our constituency the Parliamentary seat with the highest proportion of automotive jobs in the country.

Our constituency is also home to a Rolls-Royce site, and I know there will have been some concern last week when the company announced some site closures in the

UK and overseas. It was confirmed however that Washington would not be closed.

Whilst I am of course relieved, it highlights the precarious situation the wider sector is in and I sympathise with workers losing their jobs in other parts of the UK in either the aerospace or automotive sector. It's vital that the Government provides specific sectoral support for both industries with a focus on creating skilled, green jobs, in order to prevent further closures and job losses due to this Coronavirus crisis.

I am proud to represent our constituency, and I will continue to work with those in both the automotive and aerospace sectors, Trade Unions and workers to campaign to protect our biggest employers.

APPG Coronavirus



As a member of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Coronavirus, I recently joined a meeting with members of Bereaved Families for Justice and Long Covid Support Group. As mentioned by Keir Starmer at Prime Minister's Questions recently, these families have shared with MPs their powerful and emotional stories of painful and traumatic losses, and the debilitating impact of "long Covid". Regrettably, the Prime Minister has still not met with them, despite promising he would. I cannot thank the families enough for sharing their heartbreaking stories with our group. Though rates of infection may have dropped, it is important that we all continue to follow Government guidance closely, so that we can all keep each other safe.

The latest Government guidance on what you can and cannot do under social distancing guidelines can be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/yaf6dw4g>

The Labour and Trade Union movement exists to support working people, especially in times of need and strife.

Now is one of those times, and worse may be yet to come. So please encourage friends and family to join the Labour Party and/or a Trade Union. **We are stronger together.**

Join here: <https://join.labour.org.uk>

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