



News from **Westminster** Feb/Mar 2017



No. 93



Report from Sharon Hodgson MP



Pictured above: Sharon at the North East Keep our NHS Public rally in Newcastle, with fellow MPs Emma Lewell-Buck, Mary Glendon and Chi Onwurah. Pictured below: Sharon with Labour's Gill Troughton, campaigning in Copeland.

This month has seen the Labour Party fighting to hold on to two of our seats, after two of our colleagues decided to step down from Parliament and triggered by-elections. The ground campaigns in Copeland and Stoke Central were exceptional and we had two great candidates in Gill Troughton and Gareth Snell. I was able to go along and campaign with Gill twice during the campaign in Copeland, and despite the rain, Gill was an incredible candidate who would have made an excellent Member of Parliament.



On the doorstep, it was important to hear from voters about what they want to see from the Labour Party but also to put across our messages, especially on the NHS, which became such a dominant topic in Copeland, where their maternity and A&E services are threatened with closure. The crisis our NHS is currently facing under this Tory Government concerns me greatly, and I am sure that many others are concerned about the future of the NHS also. This includes all of us in the Parliamentary Labour Party, both on the frontbench and backbenches, who are doing all we can to hold this Government to account in Parliament. Take for example, this week, where our Shadow Health Secretary, Jonathan Ashworth, raised an Urgent Question on the news of the NHS failing to deliver over half a million letters of results

and appointments to patients – proving once again, the complete mismanagement of the NHS under the Tories.

In Stoke Central, Gareth's victory was one which staved off UKIP in this post-EU referendum world, and was a clear rejection of division and hate-fuelled campaigning from those who seek to divide us. Although the turnout was low, we should still welcome the fact that Labour held on to this seat, but there is still a long way to go before we reach the General Election in 2020.

Both results mean a great deal of reflection is needed by the Party, but that we continue to speak to the voters and continue down the road to developing our manifesto and our policy offer to the country for the next General Election, whilst holding the Government to account on Brexit and everything else currently going on in the country.

Finally, I want to offer a tribute to our recently-departed colleague, Sir Gerald Kaufman – the former Father of the House of Commons. Sir Gerald was a valiant campaigner and Parliamentarian who sought justice for all. It goes without saying that he was a true credit to the labour movement and especially the Labour Party after his many years of service. My thoughts go out to his family at this sad time.

In Parliament

Meet the Lords BBC showing

Copyright BBC, 2017.



Some of you might know about the new documentary on the BBC about our friends in the House of Lords, called "Meet the Lords". This documentary is similar to the one "Inside the Commons" which aimed to demystify Parliament and Westminster to the general public. In the first episode, yours truly is featured, where I met with Baroness Oona King and Angela Rayner MP to discuss campaigning and lobbying for parents of adopted children and the cap on child benefit. I hope many of you will be able to watch it or catch it on BBC iPlayer.

Make Time for Tea Parliament reception



As Chair of the Ovarian Cancer APPG and Shadow Minister for Public Health, I hosted the Eve Appeal's "Make Time for Tea" event in Parliament, for the third year in a row. This month is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, which is all about raising awareness of this lesser-known cancer, and Eve Appeal, along with other ovarian cancer charities do amazing work on this issue. Yet still, ovarian cancer has a much lower-than-average survival rate compared to other cancers, because its symptoms are less widely known.

Meeting with local School Teachers in Parliament

I was delighted to speak to school teachers from across the country who were visiting Parliament, including 3 from Academy 360 in Pennywell, about my work as an MP

and everything that goes on in Parliament as part of the Parliamentary Education Services' on-going engagement with teachers and schools.

In and around the constituency

NE Rally for the NHS (pictured front page)

I was proud to attend the NE Rally for the NHS, with fellow MPs, Emma Lewell-Buck MP, Chi Onwurah MP, Mary Glendon MP and Dave Anderson MP, to march to support our NHS and also hear a barn-storming speech from Emma about Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs). Our NHS is such a precious institution and is something we should protect and help to continue to meet the needs of the nation's health. As a Shadow Health Minister, this is something I am working on day-in and day-out, along with other fellow Shadow Health Ministers and backbench Labour MPs.

New Gentoo Housing Opening in Downhill



I was honoured to be invited to cut the ribbon to open the brand new housing development at Castle Rise in Downhill. It was lovely to visit some of the new residents and hear how much they were enjoying their new homes and how they are looking forward to building a community there. Housing is such an important policy for us to get right, and examples such as those at Downhill, are important ways for us to ensure affordable, quality homes for everyone.

Second Brexit Consultation and Survey, Sunderland



Last weekend, I hosted my second Brexit public meeting in South Hylton. It was a lively discussion with many opinions and views being shared with me by a wide variety of constituents. My thanks to everyone who came along, and to all who filled out the questionnaire – which I am now studying to fully inform myself of my constituent's views.

Sharon Hodgson MP, Washington & Sunderland West Constituency
Units 1 & 1A, Vermont House, Vermont Road, Concord, Washington,
Tyne & Wear NE37 2SQ
Tel. 417 2000

Website: www.sharonhodgson.org E-mail: [info\(a\)sharonhodgson.org](mailto:info(a)sharonhodgson.org) Twitter: @SharonHodgsonMP