

Emily Thornberry



Islington Labour
ON YOUR SIDE

MP for Islington South and Finsbury



Constituency Report (September 2015)

Challenging the Tories at Work and Pensions Questions



On my first day back in Parliament after the summer recess I challenged the Tory Government's proposals to cut benefits for people with serious long-term illnesses and disabilities.

In a question to Ministers in the DWP I pointed out that their proposals mean that many people who have long-term, deteriorating conditions, including Parkinson's disease and MS, as well as many people with severe mental health problems, will see their benefits cut by more than £30 per week.

This is simply wrong, and I will continue to fight these proposals as they move through Parliament.

Cross-examining Jeremy Hunt on the Health Committee

My work on the Health Committee continues, including a lively evidence session with the Health Secretary, Jeremy Hunt.

Here I am reminding him that more than 220,000 people have already signed the petition calling on him to resign, and asking how many more signatures it would take!

You can watch the session [online](#) and you can also read the coverage in *Pulse* magazine [here](#).



Standing up for the right to strike



“I declare an interest: I am a proud member of Unite the union, and I have been ever since the Miners’ Strike”.

That is what I said when I stood up in the House of Commons to speak out against the Government’s Trade Union Bill on Monday, before voting against it.

The Bill represents the most draconian crackdown on union rights in decades. As well as setting impossibly high thresholds for strike action to be approved in the first place, the Bill would effectively remove employers’ incentive to negotiate.

As I pointed out during the debate, 77% of the public recognise the vitally important role that trade unions play in making sure that working people are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve in

Welfare Reform & Work Bill

The Tories’ controversial Welfare Reform & Work Bill returned to the House of Commons last week. As Chair of the London group of Labour MPs, I have been asked to serve on the committee which is now scrutinising the Bill line by line ,and considering amendments, in order to represent the concerns of London MPs and our constituents.

I am particularly concerned about proposals in the Bill to lower the household benefit cap to £23,000 per year in London.

I have tabled a large number of amendments to the Bill, which focus on the benefit cap and aim to ensure that the benefits system includes a proper recognition of the fact that places like Islington have very high housing costs, through no fault of tenants.

I look forward to continuing the fight against these cruel and reckless cuts, and to ensuring that the interests and values of our community are represented throughout these debates.



Celebrating the work of Islington-based children's charity



Last week I was pleased to welcome The National Children's Bureau, one of the many prominent charities based in Islington, to Westminster for a reception to mark the launch of a new report which highlights some serious inequalities between the health of children who grow up in deprived areas and their more affluent peers.

The report, titled *Poor Beginnings*, also shows that health inequalities are not inevitable. Some of the most deprived areas are also able to defend children's health. In Islington, for example, although the child poverty rate is the sixth worst in the country, rates of tooth decay among children are much better than they are in other, similarly deprived areas.

Much of the success that individual local authorities have been able to achieve in terms of children's health is because of public health programs. The grant that central government gives to councils for public health initiatives pays for vital services aimed at preventing children—as well as adults—from developing serious health problems. For example, midwifery services to help pregnant women stop smoking, or deal with alcohol problems or drug abuse, depend on this money. The benefits in terms of the health of all generations is clear.

I am, therefore, deeply concerned about the impact that the Government's announcement of a £200 million cut in public health funding could have on the ability of councils to protect the health of their local communities, especially their children. I warned at the NCB's event that we need to be strong in our opposition to these proposals and defend the importance of protecting our children's health.

Fundraising for Labour Friends of Palestine



As a long-standing supporter of Palestinian rights I was delighted to join friends for a recent fundraising dinner for Labour Friends of Palestine and the Middle East (LFRME).

Palestinian rights are an important issue for me and for many of my constituents. I am always happy to show my support whenever I can.

My Diary - July–September 2015

Constituency Work

- Held an advice surgery at St Luke's Community Centre.
- Held a walk-in advice surgery at Islington Town Hall.
- Visited the Marx Memorial Library for an event commemorating the life of Eleanor Marx.
- Visited Charterhouse for a meeting between their Director and the CEO of Crossrail 2.

Campaigning

- Visited Golden Lane children's centre with Yvette Cooper's leadership campaign.
- Phone banking for Sadiq Khan's London Mayoral campaign.
- Attended fund-raising dinner for Labour Friends of Palestine and the Middle East (LFPME).

Parliamentary Work

- Cross-examined Jeremy Hunt on the Health Select Committee.
- Joined the Public Bill Committee for the Welfare Reform and Work Bill, questioning witnesses and tabling amendments to the Bill.
- Spoke out against the Tory crackdown on union rights in the debate on the Trade Union Bill.

- Spoke out against benefit cuts in Work and Pensions Questions.
- Met with London LMCs, which represents GPs working in London.
- Met with the new Chief Executive of the Royal College of Nursing.
- Chaired a meeting of the London group of Labour MPs to discuss welfare cuts, the Trade Union Bill and the upcoming campaign for Mayor of London.

Media Appearances

- BBC Radio 5 Live.
- BBC Newsnight.
- ITV News.
- Online articles for Labour List, the Huffington Post and UK Human Rights Blog. You can read all my articles on my website: <http://www.emilythornberry.com/journal-posts-and-comment>

Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance with any issue or if you would like to share your concerns about a policy issue.

If you'd like to get involved with campaigning locally, please call the office on 0207 607 8373