



**Emily Thornberry**  
MP for Islington South and Finsbury



## Constituency Report (July 2015)

### Joining the Health Committee



On 1 July I was elected by my Labour colleagues as a member of the House of Commons Health Select Committee.

The Committee is tasked with overseeing the work of the Department of Health and NHS England, as well as the role of local authorities in providing social care and public health initiatives.

The most important role of the committee is to hold the Government to account on health policy. With Jeremy Hunt holding on to his job as Health Secretary, and promising yet another massive shake-up of the NHS as part of the Government's commitment to extending services to seven days a week, it's clear I'll have my work cut out for me.

Yesterday the committee held its first public hearing of the new Parliament. I asked Simon Stevens, the Chief Executive of NHS England, about a number of issues that concern me, including NHS funding, health inequalities, and how patients' experiences of NHS care will be affected by current plans.

I have also persuaded the committee that our first inquiry should focus on the crisis in primary care. This is especially important to me given the alarming number of GP surgeries in Islington that have announced their closure recently, and I look forward to exploring the challenges GPs face in more detail and finding some solutions.

# Challenging the Tory budget

On 13 July I spoke out against the Tory Government's Summer Budget, which will make the poor poorer while the rich get richer.

The budget cut corporate taxation at the same time as it announced a massive cut in working families' tax credits, threatening to increase child poverty by the tens of thousands.



The budget also featured yet more Alice-in-Wonderland style rhetoric from the Tories, as George Osborne announced a “living wage” which is in fact a higher minimum wage and is nowhere near enough to live on, while also reiterating the Government's intention to repeal the Child Poverty Act and measure poverty without any reference to the amount of money families have.

This was yet another disgraceful budget from the Tories and I'm really worried about the effect it will have in Islington, where we already have such extremes of rich and poor. I will continue to fight these destructive proposals every step of the way.

## Visits to Whittington and University College Hospitals

Earlier this month I met with executives at two major hospitals serving our community—the Whittington and University College Hospitals.

Both hospital trusts are facing huge financial pressures and are substantially in deficit, prompting fears that drastic cuts will have to be made.

It was made clear to me, especially at UCH, that their current funding arrangements are a major part of the problem. Funding for specialist care is a particular problem, with reimbursement for some complex operations coming nowhere near covering the full cost to the hospital.

My interest in health policy is strongly driven by local issues and concerns, and I will make sure these kinds of issues are addressed as part of my work on the Health Committee.

# Summer garden party



Last weekend I held my annual summer garden party at Culpeper Community Gardens. We had a great turnout and raised around £1,000 for the CLP.

I was pleased to see so many people, including Ben Bradshaw and Sadiq Khan, who gave speeches and stayed around to chat with guests.

I'd like to say a big thank you to everyone who came, and especially to Indian Veg, who provided the food, and to everyone who brought along a cake.

## Welfare Reform & Work Bill

The Government's Welfare Reform & Work Bill, which was debated in the House of Commons yesterday, will increase child poverty and hit some of the most vulnerable in our community hardest. That is why I could not support it, and voted not to give the Bill a second reading.

I lead the London group of Labour MPs, and we have demanded that at committee stage, when MPs will do a line-by-line analysis of the Bill, amendments are made to ensure that the particular needs of families in areas with high rents are properly met.

I do not agree with restricting benefits and tax credits to families with more than two children. While Labour should be the party of Work, we must always defend those whose pay does not cover their families' needs, or who cannot work because of illness or caring responsibilities. I will continue to fight for these principles as this Bill moves forward, and vote against it if necessary.

# My Diary - June/July 2015

## Constituency Work

- Visited the National Children's Bureau at their headquarters in Wakley Street.
- Met with executives at the Whittington and University College Hospitals.
- Met with Circle 33 to discuss constituents' concerns about housing repairs.
- Held advice surgeries at St Luke's Community Centre and at the Town Hall.
- Held annual garden party in Culpepper Community Gardens.

## Campaigning

- Canvassing in Bunhill.
- Phone banking for Yvette Cooper's leadership campaign.
- Hosted Mayoral and Deputy Leadership candidates Sadiq Khan and Ben Bradshaw at garden party.
- Joined Sadiq Khan for fund raising dinner.

## Parliamentary Work

- Elected to Health Select Committee and questioned leaders from NHS England at first public hearing.
- Spoke in a debate on the security services' powers to monitor communications.

- Spoke in a debate on the pay gap between men and women.
- Met with the Chair of the BMA General Practice Committee.
- Spoke in the debate on the Government's Summer Budget.
- Met with the Chair of the Electoral Commission
- Chaired a meeting of the London group of Labour MPs to discuss concerns about knife crime .

## Media Appearances

- BBC Sunday Politics.
- Today in Parliament (BBC Radio 4).
- ITV News.
- Online articles for the New Statesman, Huffington Post and Politics Home. 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