

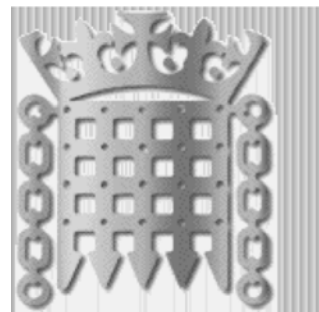
# **Harriet Harman QC MP**

**Member of Parliament  
for Camberwell & Peckham**



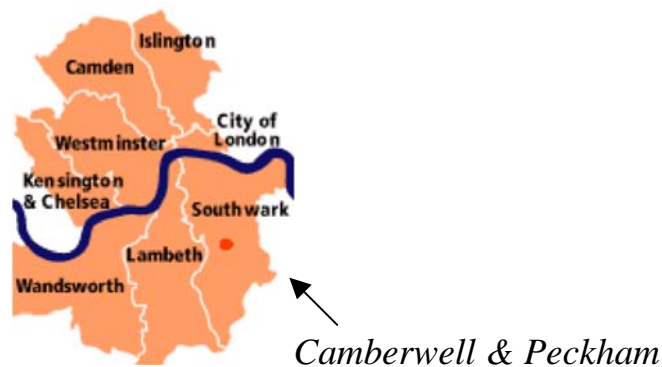
## **Constituency Annual Report 2002/3**

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## **Introduction**

This annual report aims to

- Tell my constituents about my work in the constituency
- Tell them about my work in government
- Set out what progress has been made on the aims I set out in my last annual report and
- Look ahead to what my priorities will be for the next 12 months.

The aim of the report is not only to inform but also to account for my work and to enable my constituents to comment on the work I've done and my priorities for the future.

## **Progress report on my 2002 priorities**

In my last annual report I identified four priorities for my constituency work

- Getting a Children's Centre in Peckham
- The restoration of Caroline Gardens Chapel for community use
- More police in Southwark and
- Setting up an after-school club in Oliver Goldsmiths School

Further on in this report I explain how work has progressed on each of these.

## **New priorities for 2003**

In addition to continuing to work on the 2002 priorities, I have identified two new priorities for 2003. They are

- Tackling the shortage of GPs and
- Strengthening my links with my African constituents and the African countries from which they come

Further on in this report I explain why these are priorities and what I'm planning to do.

*Haimeel Hauman MP*

## **A Children's Centre for Peckham**

Peckham has a high percentage of children under 5 years old. Most mothers work – to give their children a good standard of living – they study or train, to improve their prospects. They want their children well looked after while they do their important work in our public services and in our local economy. Many mothers – particularly those who have come from abroad - do not have the back-up of grandparents and aunts. So high quality childcare which is affordable for Southwark families is essential. And there just isn't enough good, affordable childcare.

I have, for many years, campaigned for this to be a government priority. The Government has set up the National Childcare Strategy and I want to make sure that the services are there for my constituents' children.

In the centre of Peckham, in Cator Street, is a large building which used to be a secondary school and is now used for education offices. It has grass at the front, which is unused, and a large area – currently used for parking – at the back. It would be ideal as a children's centre which could include

- Nursery places for under 2's
- Places for under 5s
- Afterschool club places
- Childminder drop-in
- Health visitor drop-in
- A laundry and community café

The new homes in Peckham replacing the old 5 estates are a great improvement. But a community needs services as well as homes and an area with many young children needs childcare.

I'd like to thank all those who have supported the campaign for a children's centre in Peckham and have worked hard to make it happen – they include local tenants' representatives, particularly Eileen Ridgeway, Sabina Emmanuel and Ali Balli, local residents such as Debbie Welsh and Maria Williams, the local councilors Barrie Hargrove, Tayo Situ and Billy Kayada, Southwark Council leaders Stephanie Elsy and now Nick Stanton; Southwark Council Officers, particularly Roger Smith and Dave Wallis, Southwark Childcare First and many others.

I addressed the full Council of the London Borough of Southwark in March 2002 explaining why we need a children's centre in Peckham and there was a vote giving unanimous backing from the Council.

The working group which I convened to push this forward has held meetings at my office in the House of Commons.

I'd like particularly to emphasize how much help and active support we have received from the Government Minister with responsibility for childcare – Cathy Ashton. I have

been to see her to set out our case and her officials in the Department for Education and Science are working on it.

A team from the Council are working up the proposals and have been to Denmark to look at their children's centres.

I am aiming for a new, really high quality, flagship building which will not only provide an excellent place for children but will also symbolize the high priority that we give to children in Southwark.

I am hopeful that over the next few months we will make even further progress and the plans will be firmed up. If all goes well, I expect the building could start as early as the end of 2004 or the start of 2005.

### **Caroline Gardens – restoring the chapel for community use**



*The Chapel at Caroline Gardens  
wanted for community use*

Caroline Gardens is a beautiful eighteenth century development of former alms houses which are now 170 council homes for people over 50 years old. It is grade II listed and is an architectural jewel just off the Old Kent Road. Its residents are very community-minded and, for the most part, active. They have one of the most active residents committees in the Borough under the leadership of Kevin Gould. But they do not have a community centre of their own in which to meet. In the centre of Caroline Gardens is the beautiful chapel. It is currently being used by some sculptors. Their work is sometimes noisy causing disturbance to the residents. Whilst they are in occupation the building is deteriorating and the residents are not able to use it.

The residents have been campaigning to take over the chapel and use it as a community resource accessible and available to all residents. I am strongly backing their campaign. I've met with the residents a number of times, had meetings with the council officers concerned, raised it at meetings with the Council Leader and chief executive. Last year, I invited the Minister, Tessa Blackstone down and have kept her informed of our plans. I have also taken this up with English Heritage and the National Trust, both of whom are strongly backing the project.

So there is much support both nationally and locally. But I would like there to be more progress in the next 12 months than there has been over the last 12 months. Every day that goes by the chapel deteriorates and the community lose out on the use of an excellent facility.

## **Oliver Goldsmiths After School Club**

I'm delighted that at long last and after years of campaigning, an after school club started at Oliver Goldsmith's Primary School on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2003, as this annual report goes to press. I have been pressing for a club at the school since 1999, and it was one of my priorities for 2002.

The registration for parents wanting a place for their child was a success and the 60 places available were immediately filled, with a waiting list of 15 pupils before the club even began. Of these places, 50% will be children of working parents who pay a small fee and 50% have free places.

Most of the mothers of Oliver Goldsmith's pupils go out to work and many find they can't get to the school gates at 3.30pm to collect them. It's particularly a problem in the winter when children go home on their own in the dark. And many children are new into the area and don't know their way around. It was very heart-rending that it was on his way home alone from Oliver Goldsmiths School that Damilola Taylor was killed.

After his death I re-doubled my efforts to get an after-school club in this school. Working with local residents and parents at the school, I lobbied councillors and on numerous occasions myself and my staff attended the Oliver Goldsmith School governors meeting to argue for an after-school club. I carried out a survey amongst the parents which showed strong support for a club. The Council gave their strong backing to opening up an after school club. And I'd like, in particular to pay tribute to the exceptional commitment of council officer Dave Wallis – who I believe is one of the best childcare officers in the country.

The opportunity for after school care is important for all children and I continue to support the expansion of after school clubs across the borough.



*Children of Robert Browning School at the opening of their after school club*

## More police in Southwark – Our Campaign for 1000 Police Officers



Despite the fact that the government has increased police numbers to a record level -there are now 129,000 and the government has promised to increase the number of police nationally to 132,500 by 2004 - there is still a constant complaint that there are not enough police in Southwark. People want more police so that they can feel safer when they are out and about and when they are in their own home. That's why I made it a priority in 2002 to campaign for more police and more civilian staff to back them up.

<b>Date</b>	<b>March 1997</b>	<b>March 1998</b>	<b>March 1999</b>	<b>March 2000</b>	<b>March 2001</b>	<b>March 2002</b>	<b>December 2002</b>
<b>Police Officers</b>	881	849	878	862	749	775	799
<b>Civilian Staff*</b>	278	265	249	248	206	176	165

\*civilian staff are actual staff in post, not establishment figures, which are not available at this time. Police Officer figures are establishment figures.

I have brought the concerns of people in Camberwell and Peckham about police shortages to the attention of Police Minister John Denham and set up a campaigning group to co-ordinate the efforts of all those in the borough. The campaign is based in the local community and I have worked closely with other councillors and MPs.

The campaign group, which I chair, meets regularly and includes Tessa Jowell MP, Simon Hughes MP, Val Shawcross, GLA, Southwark Council, the Police Sector Working Groups, Southwark Police & Community Consultative Groups and Southwark Chamber of Commerce and meets at my office in the House of Commons.



*A meeting of the 'Police 1000' campaign team: (back L-R) Cllr Beverley Bassom, Cllr Richard Porter, John Gorsuch, Lee Bartlett, Cecile Wright, (front L-R) Simon Hughes MP, Harriet Harman QC MP, Val Shawcross, GLA Member and Tessa Jowell MP at the House of Commons*

We are calling for the number of police in Southwark to increase to **1,000** – with an increase in civilian staff to back them up.

I'd like to thank Rod Jarman, Borough Commander (till February 2003) and his team of officers for their work in our borough. They have made great efforts to improve relations with the local community and I look forward to them being able to recruit more officers and particularly to recruit officers from our ethnic minority communities. The new commander, Chief Superintendent Ian Thomas, will have my strong support.

The next steps to increase the numbers are to keep the pressure on the Metropolitan Police Authority chaired by Sir Toby Harris, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir John Stephens and to ensure that the Home Secretary and other Home office ministers remain well aware of our concerns.



## Constituency Casework



I hold regular surgeries at the Town Hall on Friday mornings and Tuesday evenings. These surgeries are very important as they enable me to meet and talk to a large number of my constituents and hear personally from them about their problems and issues that concern them.

At most advice surgeries my team and I deal with 60 cases. Each case can consist of two or three people, meaning I can have 100 to 200 constituents at each advice surgery. My constituency team also offer advice and assistance to people over the phone, and people can contact me by email or letter.

I'd like to express my thanks to my regular advice surgeries team: Charlotte Smith, Cllr Dora Dixon-Fyle, Cllr Alun Hayes, Cllr Barrie Hargrove, Charlie Robinson. My thanks, also to the Town Hall Reception Team Christine, Beverley and Ellen.



## **Examples of Constituency Casework**

### ***In need of Housing suitable for their needs***

Constituent B had been attending my advice surgery for a number of years, drawing attention to the fact that her mother was very ill, had suffered a stroke and needed ground floor housing. She was restricted to one bedroom at the top of a high rise block with no lift, unable to go outdoors. In the summer the single window was insufficient to ventilate the room and in the winter the roof leaked and her bedroom became damp and cold.

I made representations to the Housing Department at the London Borough of Southwark to get various repairs done and to transfer the family to a suitable home. The local Councilors and the GP added their support to the case by writing to the council.

The London Borough of Southwark have now allocated the family a specially adapted home and they are due to move in April 2003.

### ***Trying to get compensation following a violent attack***

Constituent D a young woman in her twenties, was violently attacked in Brixton. She had been trying for a number of years to get the Police to tie up all the loose ends so she could claim compensation.

She felt the delay was causing her almost as much stress and unhappiness as the original attack. She could not move on with her life. Her depression was affecting her children and other family members.

I made representations and was able to get the Police to trace the missing files and forward the matter to the Criminal Injury Compensation Authority. She received compensation and this has now closed a very traumatic period in her life.

### ***In need of a kidney transplant to save her life***

Constituent C is only in her thirties but needs a kidney transplant. Without it she will die within four to five years, and her two children - aged 3 and a few months old would be without a mother.

Kings College Hospital made enquiries with the Kidney Transplant Agency but told her the waiting period would be very long, despite the fact that the Government were advertising to increase the number of kidney donors from the black population.

It was then discovered that my constituent's brother, who lives in Nigeria, was willing and able to donate a kidney. The hospital consultants tried relentlessly but without success over a period of some months to get the Home Office to give entry clearance to her brother so his kidney could be removed and transplanted.

Constituent C came to see me at my advice surgery at the Town Hall.

I made strong representations on her behalf and her brother was allowed to come to the UK at Christmas and plans are now well advanced for the kidney transplant to go ahead.

### ***Desperate to see Family in Jamaica***

Constituent A telephoned my office on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December and told me that in February 2002 he had made a booking to go with his family for the holiday of a lifetime to Jamaica. They had saved for months and months. The two children had never been to Jamaica before and were eagerly looking forward to seeing their grandparents and other relatives for the first time.

However, with just 5 days to go before travel he noticed that his 12 year-old daughter's ticket had a different surname – her dad's - to that on her passport. My constituent took the ticket to the travel agent and asked him to change the surname. The travel agent refused saying it would be impossible and adding that as a consequence of having a different name on the ticket from that on the passport, would not allow her to travel. She would therefore would have lost her seat on this very busy and popular holiday flight. So either the family would have had to cancel their holiday and lose their money or go on holiday without their daughter.

My constituency team contacted the Travel Agent the next day, and they reiterated their position – “their hands were tied” – “regulations made them unable to help the family”. My constituency team then phoned Richard Branson's private office at Virgin Atlantic. At first they were reluctant to make an exception but within 48 hours they had relented and the ticket was changed and made ready for collection at the airport on the day of their departure to Jamaica

### ***Dedicated employee threatened with move after years of loyal service***

Constituent F had been employed by the London Borough of Southwark for over 30 years and was now approaching retirement. He was told he would have to leave his tied accommodation cottage and would have to move to a 1 bed tower block flat, which could have been anywhere in the borough.

His health and that of his wife's wouldn't allow them to live in a high rise flat as they could not walk up the stairs if the lift ever broke down. He was faced with having to sell the contents of his home, accumulated over a lifetime. His wife was distraught at the thought of moving away from friends and family. And he was very upset at the way he was being treated after giving a lifetime's continual service to the same employer.

Constituent F came to see me at my advice surgery. I made representations on behalf of him and his family and they were happy to be offered a ground floor home just around the corner from their daughter and her family in the same area they had lived for over 30 years.

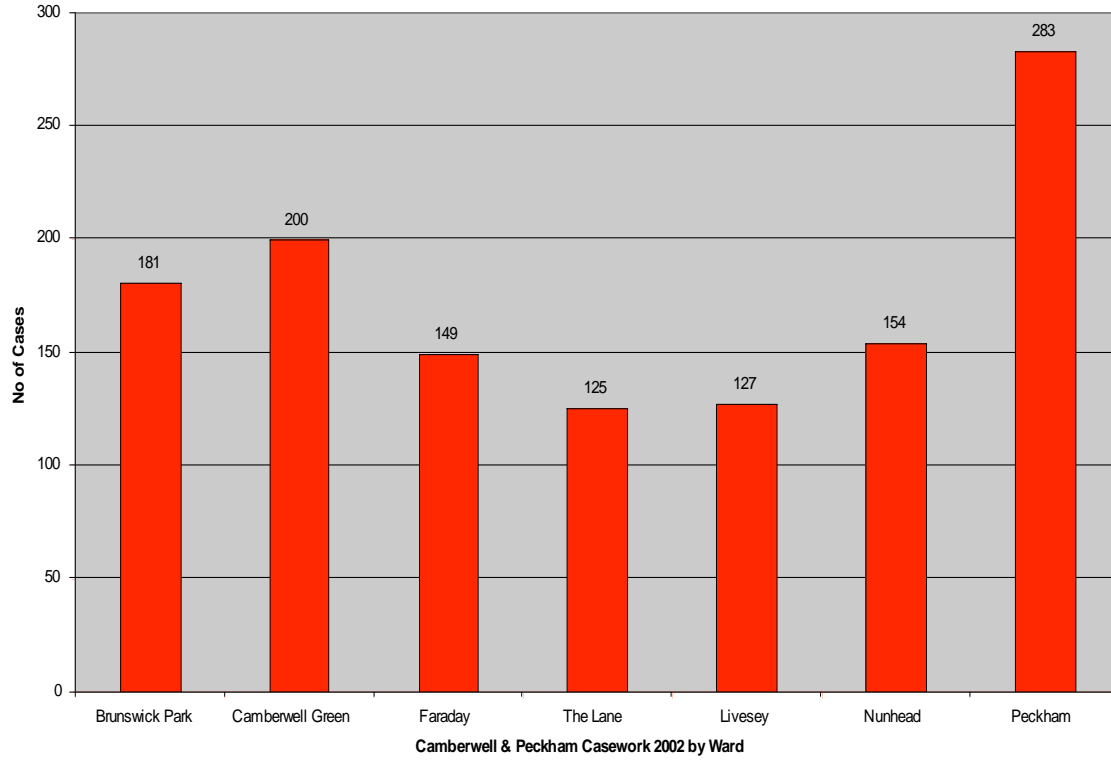
### *Talented Dancer in need of funding to take Dance School Place*

Joy Animashaun is a gifted 12 year old ballet dancer from Peckham's Friary Estate. Joy had been attending the prestigious Arts Educational School Tring Park until it became impossible after just 6 weeks for her mother to continue to pay the fees, which would have ultimately cost her £80,000 in total. Joy had to leave the performing arts school and as a last resort she and her mother sought my help. I was determined that Joy's talent should not be wasted simply because her mother was unable to afford the high fees. I took up her case with the Secretary of State for Culture Media & Sport and with Lord Putnam, Chair of The National Endowment for Science, Technology & Arts (NESTA). After my Caseworkers explored several other avenues Lord Putnam arranged for a special audition for Joy. Joy passed with flying colours and is now fully funded through a scheme introduced by the current Government. In September 2002 Joy started again at the Arts Educational School Tring Park.

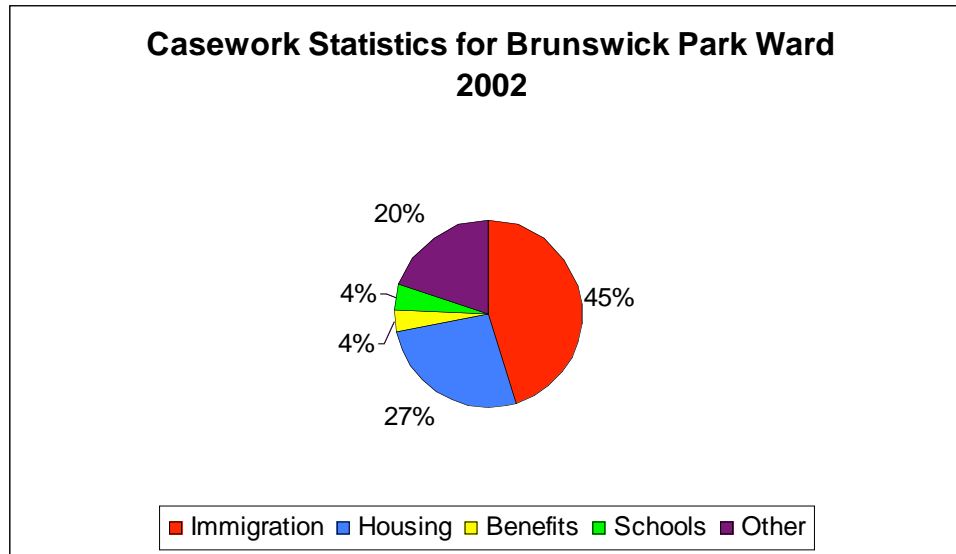


Joy and her family on the terrace at the House of Commons with Lord Putnam and myself. She is now doing very well at her performing arts school.

## Camberwell and Peckham Casework 2002 by Ward

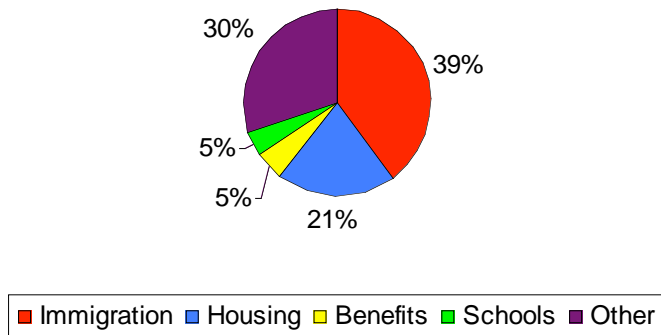


### Casework Statistics for Brunswick Park Ward 2002



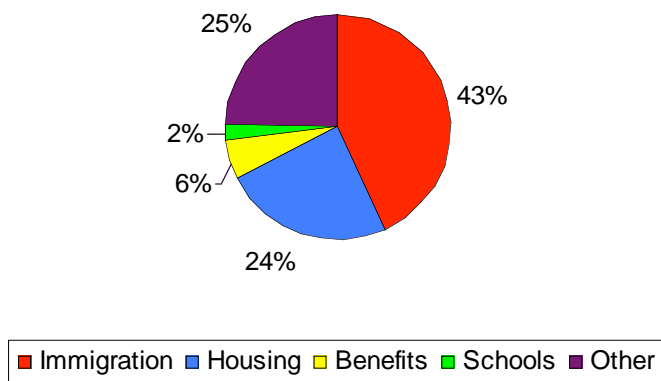
(Immigration: 82 cases, Housing: 48 cases, Benefits: 7 cases, Schools: 8 cases, Other: 36 cases)

### Casework Statistics for Camberwell Green Ward 2002



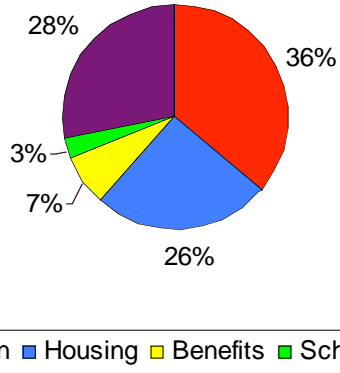
(Immigration: 80 cases, Housing: 41 cases, Benefits: 10 cases, Schools: 9 cases, Other: 60 cases)

### Casework Statistics for Faraday Ward 2002



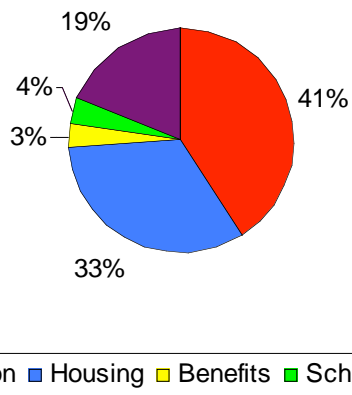
(Immigration: 64 cases, Housing: 36 cases, Benefits: 9 cases, Schools: 3 cases, Other: 37 cases)

### Casework Statistics for The Lane Ward 2002

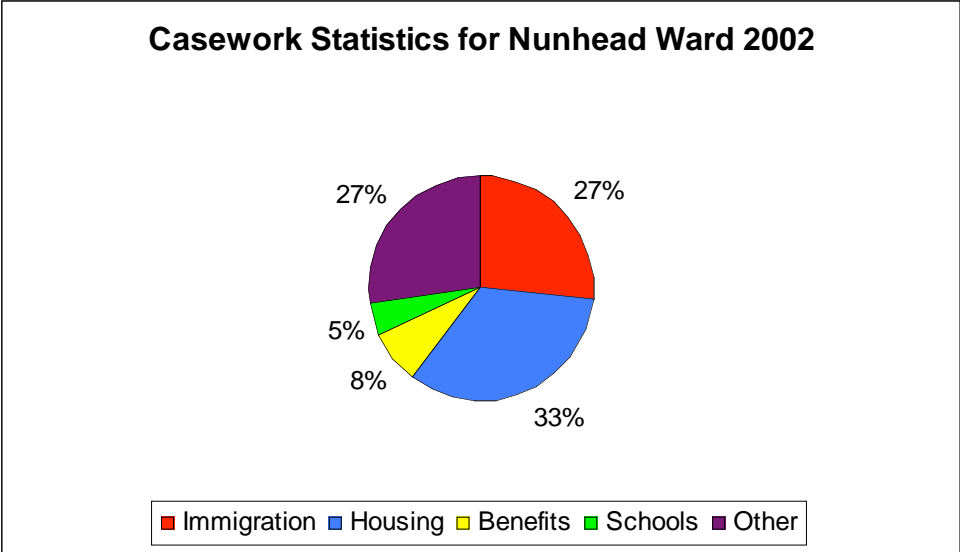


(Immigration: 45 cases, Housing: 32 cases, Benefits: 9 cases, Schools: 4 cases, Other: 35 cases)

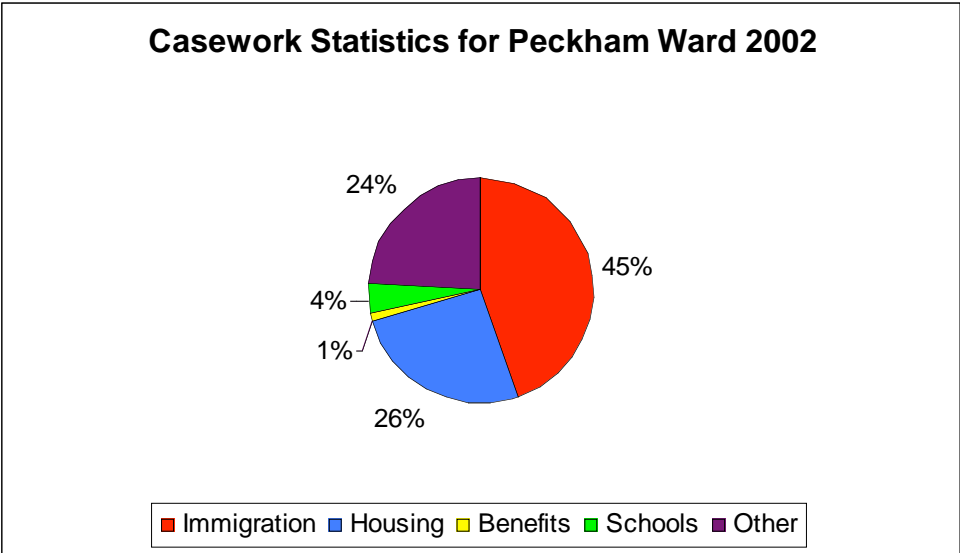
### Casework Statistics for Livesey Ward 2002



(Immigration: 52 cases, Housing: 42 cases, Benefits: 4 cases, Schools: 5 cases, Other: 24 cases)



(Immigration: 41 cases, Housing: 52 cases, Benefits: 12 cases, Schools: 7 cases, Other: 42 cases)



(Immigration: 126 cases, Housing: 72 cases, Benefits: 4 cases, Schools: 12 cases, Other: 68 cases)



## Closer Links with Africa

There are two reasons for building my links with Africa

- The government is committed to working closely to support and help Africa and
- Many of my constituents are new immigrants from African countries.

The Government is concerned that all Ministers do what they can to take forward government's commitment to Africa which includes

- Increasing Aid
- Reducing debt
- Opening up trade opportunities
- Supporting good government
- Helping end conflict

Many who make their home in my constituency come from Africa – particularly Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and Sudan. I have developed links with Southwark's African community organizations such as Women of Nigeria International, Southwark Black Elders Project, Confederation of African Professionals and African Caribbean Finance Forum.

I continue to help many of my African constituents who have problems sorting out their immigration status with the Home Office.

I am doing an exchange with a Member of Parliament from Tanzania. Monica Mbega MP came to England in November 2002 and shadowed me for a week and I hope to return to Tanzania this year. Whilst shadowing me, Monica visited Camberwell & Peckham, attended one of my advice surgeries, met with local Councilors at the Town Hall and attended various meetings with me in my role as Solicitor General.



Photograph courtesy of Lionel Healing, Southwark News

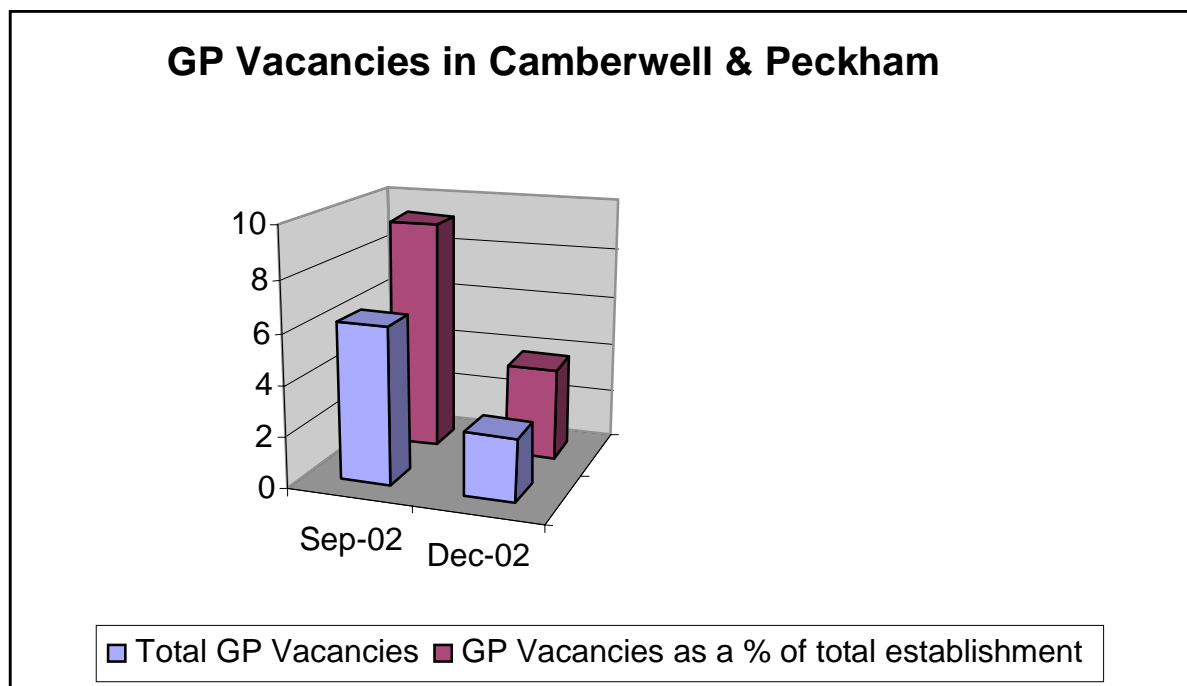
*Cllr Alun  
Hayes, Cllr  
Alfred  
Banya, Cllr  
Dora Dixon-  
Fyle,  
Monica  
Mbega,  
Tanzanian  
MP, Cllr Ian  
Wingfield,  
Cllr Tayo  
Situ  
(courtesy  
of  
Southwark  
News)*

## GP shortage

Constituents have been complaining to me that they cannot get on a GPs' list, or they can't get an appointment within a reasonable time. And GPs have been complaining to me that they cannot find holiday and sickness replacements.

I have taken this up as one of my priorities and in September 2002 arranged a meeting between our local GPs and the Health Minister John Hutton MP. I've also taken up the GP shortage with the Chair and Chief Executive of the Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham Primary Care Trust which is the body responsible for GP services.

I continue to work closely with the Primary Care Trust to press them to step up their efforts to bring new GPs to Southwark and to support the GPs we already have so they do not leave. As you can see from the table below, the situation is improving.

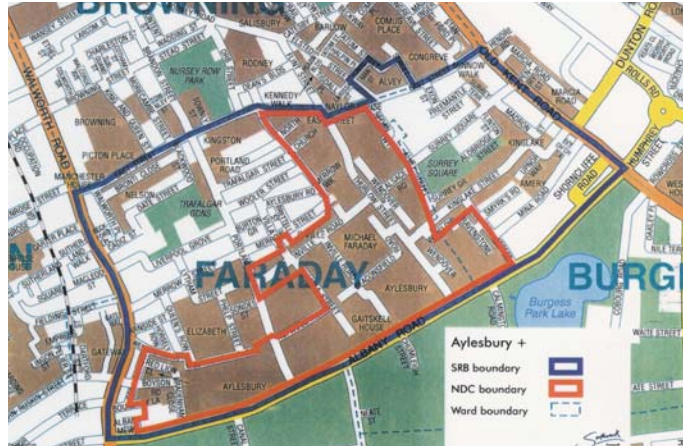


*Data courtesy of Southwark Primary Care Trust*

## Aylesbury Estate – Looking to the Future

As outlined in my last annual report, the Aylesbury Estate badly needs improvement. 10,000 people live on the estate, and work needs to be done on the outside and communal areas.

Now that the tenants have voted overwhelmingly to reject the Aylesbury Master-Plan in December 2001, we have a responsibility both nationally and locally to find a satisfactory alternative.



*The Aylesbury Estate*

It seems that over the last year progress has begun to be made on the Aylesbury. The New Deals for Communities Board have now put forward a proposal to start work on quarter of the estate. This would be the South-West corner of the estate – the Missenden and Chiltern areas - and would use a combination of money from the NDC scheme and money from the Council's repairs and maintenance budget.

I strongly support this initiative. The Aylesbury has had a spotlight of media attention but has chronically lacked real progress. Whilst there has been much consultation over the years there has been a lack of tangible improvement. There is a need for (a) Capital and (b) Maintenance for glazing, refuse, lifts, entry phones, lighting and gardening which I am hopeful this initiative will provide.

I have been keeping closely in touch with the NDC Board and liaising with the Minister responsible for our NDC – Tony McNulty MP. I've made it very clear to the Minister that the situation on the Aylesbury is not acceptable and that the tenants are expecting the government to back them in their efforts to sort it out. I've also made it clear that I expect the government, as well as the council, to make the necessary funds available to turn the Aylesbury into a first class estate.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank some of the people who have worked so hard over the last year to make progress on the Aylesbury Estate– Joan Amodio, Jean Bartlett, Cllr Lorraine Lauder, Cllr Paul Bates and Cllr Abdul Mohammed, the Chair and Director of the NDC Board, Victor Adebowale and Steve Pearce, and the other members of the NDC Board to mention but a few.

## Continuing my work as Solicitor General



*Solicitor General's Question Time in the House of Commons (Robin Cook in shot)*

I am very pleased to have served for another year in the office of Solicitor General. As Solicitor General I am deputy to the Attorney General, Lord Goldsmith. The Attorney General and the Solicitor General are the Government's Law Officers and as such

- We are the government's legal advisors
- We superintend the Crown Prosecution Service and
- We have quasi-judicial powers to do a number of things such as referring unduly lenient sentences to the Court of Appeal, giving consent to important prosecutions, prosecutions for contempt, and extradition proceedings

### ***Tackling domestic violence***

As Solicitor General I have taken a particular role in prosecuting domestic violence. The government is determined to tackle crimes of violence – and domestic violence accounts for 25% of all violence crime, and 1/3 of all homicides. The Government is determined to support families with children - and domestic violence always harms children.

I have supported the Crown Prosecution Service new national network of domestic violence prosecutors and am pleased that they are making progress in bringing domestic violence offences to court.

In May 2002 I referred a domestic violence sentence to the Court of Appeal. Dr D had assaulted his wife leaving her with black eyes, broken ribs and a punctured lung. She was treated in hospital for 4 days. He pleaded guilty and did not dispute the facts of the offence. But he argued that he should not go to prison as he was a fine upstanding member of the community, well respected in his profession and had been driven to his attack because his wife was planning to leave him. He was put on probation, and not sentenced to prison. The victim complained and I referred the case to the Court of Appeal and argued that the sentence should reflect the severity of the injuries and that it was not acceptable to reduce the sentence for violence in the home because of good conduct outside the home. The Court of Appeal agreed and imposed a prison sentence. The case will set a precedent for sentencing in future cases.

To tackle domestic violence we need

- A change in attitudes – violence in the home is every bit as much a criminal offence as violence in the street on a stranger.
- Better operation on the ground – the police and the CPS are working more closely together, and with victim support and refuges, to help victims come to court to give evidence
- The right legal framework. The government will bring in new laws on domestic violence with a Bill which will be announced later this year. It will toughen the law by giving anonymity for victims to help them give evidence in court, extra powers so courts can make “restraining orders” when they sentence. And it will ensure reviews after all domestic homicides and make breach of an injunction (non-molestation order) a criminal offence. We are also considering establishing a register of domestic violence offenders – like the sex offenders register.

I referred three cases to the Court of Appeal where men had killed their wife or girlfriend and then argued the defence of “provocation” – that they were provoked by the victim. In one case, the offender argued that his wife was planning to have an affair, in another case he argued that his girlfriend drank, and in the third the offender argued that his wife was manipulative and a bad mother. The Court of Appeal did not accept my argument that the sentences in these three cases were too lenient. I remain very concerned that the provocation defence allows men to make excuses when they kill their wife and that sexual jealousy should not be accepted as an excuse for violence of any sort – let alone murder. The Attorney General and I have been discussing what to do about the problem of the provocation defences with the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Home Secretary and other ministers. We expect to make some proposals for further action later this year.

I play an active part in the Southwark Domestic Violence Forum, work closely with the Crown Prosecutors new National network of domestic violence prosecutors and am working as part of a team of ministers in the government drawing up a domestic violence Bill which will be introduced in the next session of Parliament. (which starts November 2003)

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Reported Incidents of Domestic Violence in Southwark	2391	2191	3052	2857	2878	3111

I have also been working with local organizations in Southwark on projects aimed to help victims of Domestic Violence locally. I recently was the keynote speaker at the launch of “Fones4safety” – a project where people donate their old mobile phones to help protect vulnerable people, especially victims of domestic violence. This is being organized by CRISP in partnership with Victim Support, Southwark Council, the Metropolitan Police, Elephant Links and the London Development Agency.



With Aterah Nusrat, Project Co-Ordinator for CRISP, and Ola Agbaimoni, Assistant Project Director for Elephant Links Partnership, at the launch of “Fones4safety”

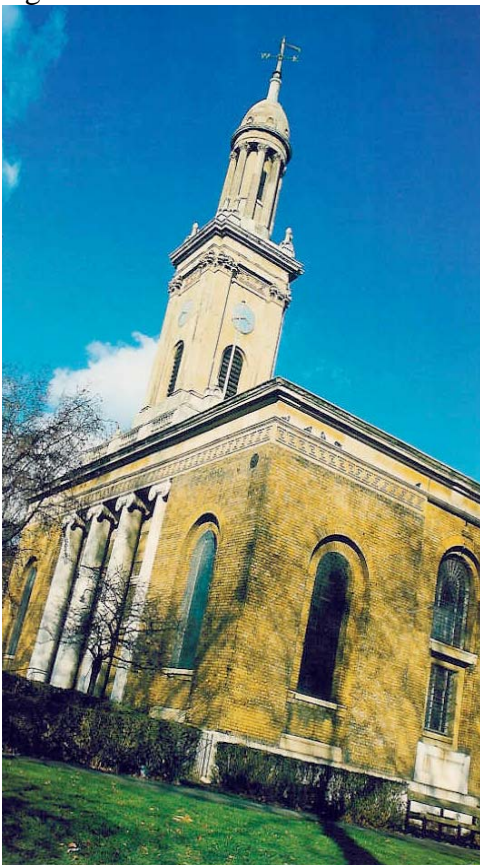
### *Extending opportunities in the law*

The legal profession remains drawn disproportionately from a narrow group that is mostly white and middle-class and the top of the legal profession is overwhelmingly male.

I am working with the Crown Prosecution Service to establish a CPS Law Scholarship programme which will sponsor CPS admin and clerical staff who want to become lawyers. They will have their fees for law degrees and law school paid and will have time off for their studies. This will help men and women who have no post-school qualifications become lawyers and will help a disproportionate number of ethnic minority people become lawyers and women who've missed out on studying and career opportunities and have returned to work after caring for young children.

### *Free legal advice*

The Attorney General and I have, over the last year, worked to support those lawyers who give free advice and representation to people who do not qualify for publicly funded legal services.



*St Peters Church, Walworth – the crypt is being converted for community use and I have organized free legal advice for them*

I arranged for free legal support for Consort Estate leaseholders who are challenging the council's charges for installing a new boiler system on the estate. Some of the leaseholders were faced with bills of £10,000 for an estate heating system when they would have preferred to install their own individual boilers.

I have also arranged for free legal support for St Peter's church in Walworth. Under their vicar, Giles Goddard, they are restoring the dark and dingy crypt to make it a vibrant space for community groups to use. I am a patron of this project. They need legal help to set up a trust to receive funds.

I very much rely on my Parliamentary Private Secretary, Mike Foster MP in my Solicitor General work. I would like to place on record my thanks to him for his work. He is MP for Hastings and a former solicitor.

**Solicitor General Questions – Extract from Hansard 28<sup>th</sup> November 2002 – in the House of Commons**

**35. Mr. Barry Gardiner (Brent, North):** If she will make a statement on the effectiveness of the Crown Prosecution Service in the London area. [82001]

**The Solicitor-General (Ms Harriet Harman):** I believe that CPS London is becoming more effective. We regard sustaining the improvement in CPS London as essential, as Londoners are entitled to the protection of a good criminal justice system. London is the focus for much serious crime, and the reputation of CPS London sets the reputation of the CPS nationally.

**Mr. Gardiner:** I thank my right hon. and learned Friend for her response, but there is a particular aspect of efficiency on which most Londoners—indeed, most of the national population—would like an assurance: that those who perpetrate hoax calls during the fire brigades dispute are being pursued with the full vigour of the CPS in London, with a view to prosecution.

**The Solicitor-General:** I can reassure the House that that is certainly the case. The Director of Public Prosecutions has issued guidance on charging in hoax call cases, which are being fast-tracked. I am not aware of any such cases in London, but in one case in west Yorkshire, a man is awaiting sentence for making hoax calls, and another man is being prosecuted in Staffordshire for making three hoax calls. A man has been arrested in Manchester, another is awaiting sentence in Cumbria, and an ongoing investigation is taking place in Lincolnshire. These cases are being taken very seriously, as the Prime Minister said on Wednesday.

**Mr. Andrew Dismore (Hendon):** My right hon. and learned Friend will know that I take a particular interest in the issue of racism within the Crown Prosecution Service. Can she tell us what progress has been made in tackling racism within CPS London, with particular reference to the staff and the prosecution policy?

**The Solicitor-General:** I welcome and endorse the stance that my hon. Friend has taken on the issue of race discrimination. It is very important that CPS London, and the CPS as a whole, is a fair and non-discriminatory employer that offers equal opportunities to all staff, both lawyers and non-lawyers. It is also very important that, whether dealing with defendants or victims, it adopts a non-racist and equal attitude. Since investigating the CPS, the Commission for Racial Equality has approved it as having proper procedures, which will be taken forward.



## 20 Years as Member of Parliament for Camberwell & Peckham

In October 2002 I celebrated 20 years as a Member of Parliament for Camberwell and Peckham. As part of the celebration I invited people from the constituency and



Parliament that I have worked with over the last 20 years to Westminster to celebrate with me. The evening gave me a chance to say thank you to so many people who have offered me help and support during this time. It has been a great honour to serve the people of Camberwell and Peckham, and I hope that I may continue to do so for many years to come.

*Above: with my constituents (L-R), Mr Effinmi, Yinka Oketori, Rafatu Akibu & Funmi Elesho*

*Right: With Gordon Brown who spoke at the reception to mark my 20 years as a Member of Parliament*



## Strangers Gallery Tickets & Visits to Parliament

I regularly arrange for groups of constituents, schools or other groups from the community to visit the House of Commons for a tour. I am also allocated two House of Commons Gallery Tickets every two weeks which I can give to constituents. If you would like me to arrange a visit please contact me parliamentary office

## My Constituency and Parliamentary team

I'd like to take the opportunity to place on record my thanks for the work of my parliamentary and constituency team. They do an excellent job in supporting me in my work in the constituency and in parliament. They are Alun Hayes – (till March 2003) Charlotte Smith and Dora Dixon-Fyle They are widely recognized as a fantastic team and are completely committed to their work.



*Charlotte, Alun and Dora at my reception to mark my 20 years as Member of Parliament.*

## Constituency visits



Opening Southwark College Nursery

It is extremely important to me that I am fully aware of the issues affecting my constituents. One of the ways I stay in touch with the issues is visits around the constituency. These include visits to schools, nurseries, estate walkabouts, neighbourhood housing offices, GP surgeries and many other community organizations.

If you would like me to visit your local school, estate, or community organization in Camberwell & Peckham, or would like to find out more about my visits, please contact my office at [harmanh@parliament.uk](mailto:harmanh@parliament.uk)



Walkabout on Tustin Estate with Minister Nick Raynesford MP, Cllr Anne Worseley, Frank Pemberton, Stephanie Elsy, Anne Sacks and local residents.

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