

Harriet Harman - MP for Camberwell and Peckham

Monthly Newsletter - April 2013

Dear Friend,

Attending the verdict of the Lakanal House Fire Inquest

After almost four long years and several weeks of distressing testimony, the Lakanal House fire inquest finally ended on the 28th March. I attended the hearing at Brixton Town Hall, along with representatives from Sceaux Gardens TRA, to hear the jury give their verdict. The Coroner has made over 30 recommendations including fitting sprinklers in older high rise buildings and reviewing procedures for fire risk assessments. I am determined to see these reforms implemented and will be convening a summit of the key agencies in six months time to assess their progress.

Peckham Food Bank— more people seeking emergency food parcels

The rising cost of food combined with static incomes, high unemployment and changes to benefits means more and more people are relying on food banks. In 2012, PECAN supported 3,000 people and this year, they expect to double the number. When I visited them on the 21st March, I talked with local residents who explained the difficulties they are facing, and I met the Director, Chris Price and the volunteers who run the programme.



Giving evidence to the Culture, Media & Sport Committee

I was invited to give evidence to the DCMS Select Committee on the 16th April as part of their short inquiry into the regulation of the press. I said that politicians have now set up the framework for a new system of independent press self-regulation, that the status quo is not an option, and that I hope newspapers will enter the new system. I also said I hope the Recognition Panel, the part of the new system to be incorporated by Royal Charter, would be set up as soon as possible.

Challenging Nick Clegg at Deputy Prime Ministers Questions

In last month's Budget, the Chancellor announced a mortgage scheme to help home buyers but true to Tory priorities, it's available for people buying second homes up to the value of £600,000 and can even be claimed by those who are not domiciled in this country. I challenged Nick Clegg— that this is a second home subsidy at a time when the Tory-Lib Dem Government is introducing a bedroom tax on council tenants.



People's Policy Forum in Birmingham

Over 1,000 people braved the snow and ice on the 23rd March to attend the Labour Party's People's Policy Forum in Birmingham. It was a really good day, and Carrie and David Grant from 'Pop Idol' and Kate Walsh did a great job chairing the event.

Labour Party backs arts under threat — Our arts and creative industries are hugely successful. But the arts face great challenges. Government support, essential to nurturing the arts, is now seriously threatened. I was therefore delighted to launch this high profile event on the 21st March to bring together a variety of artists, members of the creative industries, Labour Party supporters, and senior members of the Labour Party in a celebration of the arts and a reaffirmation of the resolute relationship between Labour and the artistic community.



Yours

Harriet

Welsh Labour Conference and Older Women's Commission meeting in Llandudno

—The Commission is looking into the pressures faced by a new generation of older women, whose lives are very different from those of their mothers. On the 22nd March, I spoke to a meeting of the Commission before the Welsh Labour Conference in Llandudno. I also heard from Labour councillors and council candidates from across Wales about the challenges they are facing in local government.



The Labour Party in Cornwall — On the 27th March I met with local Labour Party members at the Unite offices in St Austell who will be standing as candidates to ensure that we have more Labour candidates than ever.

Local Elections Launch!

Labour launched its local election campaign on the 8th April. I was in Derbyshire at Somerlea Park Community Centre to speak about how important it is for people to have a Labour council to stand up for them and protect and improve vital local services.



Camberwell & Peckham casework success stories - Mrs A is disabled. Her daughter is her carer and stays overnight with her children 4-5 times a week. She was told she would be charged for 2 extra bedrooms. I asked the council to reconsider and they now accept that she needs the extra room. Mrs B lives in a 1 bed flat which was wrongly assessed as a 2 bed. The council said it would take 6 months to change the records. I wrote to the council and they amended the records without charging Mrs B extra.

See my latest quarterly casework report on www.harrietharman.org

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**MY ADVICE SURGERIES ARE NOW AT
Walworth Methodist Church 'Clubland'
54 Camberwell Road, SE5 0EN**



Fri 19 Apr 9am
Fri 26 Apr 9am

Fri 3 May 9am
Tue 14 May 5pm
Fri 24 May 9am

Tue 4 Jun 5pm
Tue 28 Jun 9am

Tue 9 Jul 5pm

Getting to Clubland: Bus Routes: 468, 148, 171, 45, 68, 176, 12

Casework Update April 2013

Since my last monthly report:

- I took action on 372 cases
- Including 125 new cases
- 2 Advice Surgeries
- 90 people attended surgery
- Average reply time: 9 days

