



Rt Hon Harriet Harman QC MP

**Quarterly Casework Report  
July—September 2015**

People seek my help for different reasons: their housing situation, immigration status, benefit entitlement and many other issues.

Over the years serving as the MP for Camberwell and Peckham I have helped many of my constituents to resolve a variety of different problems.

People either write to me, send me an email, telephone my office or come and see me and my team at my regular advice surgeries at Walworth Methodist Church on Camberwell Road.

**Advice surgeries**

We see the first 60 people to arrive at each advice surgery.

Advice surgeries are at Walworth Methodist Church, 54 Camberwell Road, London SE5 0EN.

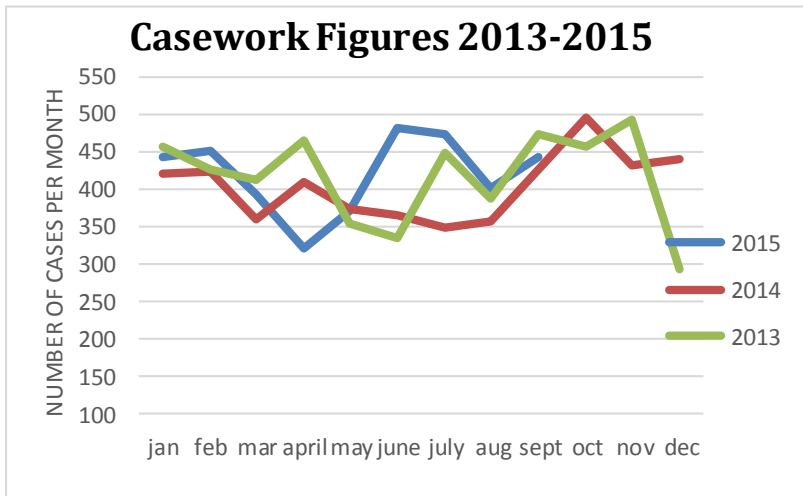
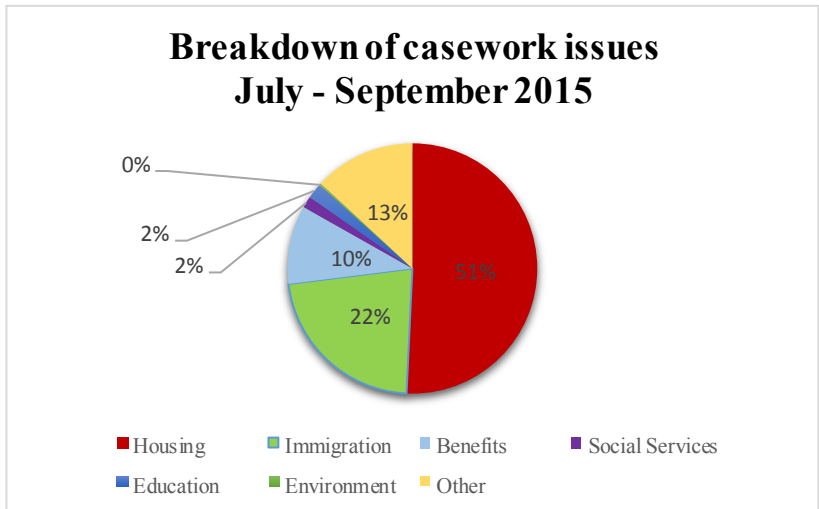
Friday 30th October (9am)

Tuesday 10th November (5pm)  
Friday 20th November (9am)  
Friday 27th November (9am)

Tuesday 8th December (5pm)  
Friday 18th December (9am)

You do not need to make an appointment as surgeries are run on a first come, first served basis.

In the last 3 months there were 8 advice surgeries, attended by a total of 252 people. (up 31% from the last quarter when 193 people attended)



## Casework Examples

Since 2010 I have taken up cases on behalf of over 10,000 people living in my constituency.

### **Southwark Council gives back overpaid rent money**

Ms D from Peckham has been a Southwark Council tenant for 30 years and lives alone. She has a number of illnesses including cancer, arthritis in the spine and she suffered a brain aneurysm. She had always paid a little bit extra towards her weekly rent over the years and was owed money from Southwark Council. The money would have helped towards her mother's outstanding funeral costs. Ms D initially contacted Southwark Council in February 2015 but felt she was not getting anywhere on this issue so she got in touch with me in August 2015 and I wrote to Southwark Council on her behalf. Ms D received her rent refund of £1500 which was paid into her bank account soon after I contacted Southwark Council.

### **Child benefit issued**

Mr O from Camberwell is a 57 year old single dad with three stepchildren and he receives income support. He applied for child benefit in November 2014 but did not hear anything from the Child Benefit Office for six months so he came to my advice surgery in May 2015. The delay was also holding up his application for tax credits. I wrote to the Child Benefit Office and Mr O was awarded child benefit and backdated payments totalling £1466.66 were paid into his account. The Child Benefit Office also apologised for not processing his claim sooner.

### **Electricity bills corrected**

Mr A felt his electricity account was not being managed properly by his provider Scottish Power. He paid his electricity bills monthly via standing order but they were never acknowledged and he was getting letters from Scottish Power saying he owed them money. I wrote to Scottish Power on Mr A's behalf and they apologised to him for the problems he experienced and admitted that his monthly payment plan had been deleted due to a defect on their billing system and his account reverted to quarterly billing which required full payment when bills were produced. Scottish Power reinstated Mr A's monthly standing order payments, all debt follow up was withdrawn and in recognition of the poor service he received, they made a goodwill payment of £20.

### **Tax miscalculation sorted**

Dr J contacted me in August 2015 about a letter she received from HMRC saying she had underpaid tax in 2013-14 by £6926.40. HMRC had also overstated her income by £29,914. I wrote to Lin Homer, Chief Executive of HMRC, who admitted that they had made mistakes. HMRC revised Dr J's tax calculation taking into account her correct pay for 2013-14 and said she had underpaid tax by £58.40. This underpayment was due to her employer using the wrong tax code for part of the year so HMRC did not ask her to pay it back. HMRC apologised for the poor customer service Dr J received when she had tried to call them up and have taken measures such as recruiting extra staff to improve their service for customers.



On Friday 31<sup>st</sup> July I signed ONE's 'Just Say Yes' campaign pledge to help end extreme poverty. You can sign online by adding your details at <http://www.one.org/international/take-action/sign-the-just-say-yes-pledge/>.