



EU Withdrawal Bill will give Government power to bypass Parliament

The Government has no idea what they're doing on Brexit and hope to muddle through behind closed doors but Parliament's involvement would help improve the UK's perilous situation.

In politics, you often wish you weren't starting from where you are and that's how I feel about Brexit. In the Referendum I campaigned locally and across the country to stay in the EU. I even went on a Remain Campaign Bus with Tory PM David Cameron (which I never thought I would do!). Despite the strong remain vote in Southwark, by a small majority the result of the Referendum was to leave. I remain bitterly disappointed and concerned about this.

Our campaign was branded 'project fear' but it's even worse than we predicted: labour shortages including in the NHS, food prices going up when people's wages are stagnating, trade being hit yet further when we're still struggling following the global financial crisis, not to mention the cost of holidays in Europe rising as the value of the pound plunges.

Theresa May was supposedly against leaving the EU (though she didn't do much in the Remain campaign that anyone noticed) Now she is talking about leaving the EU without any agreement in place whatsoever. I and my Labour colleagues are highlighting the importance of protecting jobs, workers' rights, the environment and fairness for EU citizens who are so important to our NHS, construction industries and universities.

The Government want us to give them powers to bypass Parliament. Despite all the rhetoric in the Referendum being about "taking back control" - the EU Bill would take power from Brussels, not to give it to our democratically elected House of Commons but to Ministers with no accountability to Parliament.

Labour's Shadow Brexit Secretary Keir Starmer says this is "an unprecedented Government power grab" and with other Labour MPs I voted against it.

No country has left the EU before, or turned its back on its largest trading bloc. I and Labour MPs will be seeking to protect the country as best we can. David Cameron will probably go down in history as the worst Prime Minister this country has ever had for calling, and losing, the referendum

All-Party Parliamentary Group on Knife Crime

I have joined the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Knife Crime. The group, established by Sarah Jones MP for Croydon Central, had its inaugural meeting at the House of Commons last week. Knife crime is a major problem in Southwark, and is getting worse. There were 840 reported incidents in the Borough of Southwark last year, up from 577 in 2015-16. The APPG aims to give a national platform to those experiencing the tragic consequences of knife crime and seek new measures to combat the resurgence in knife crime. A particular focus will be on identifying the underlying causes of knife crime and why some young people decide to carry a knife.



Parliament must introduce 'baby leave' for MPs

I'm proposing a comprehensive system of leave and cover for women and men MPs who have a baby. You can read more about the proposal [here](#).

There are now more women MPs - 208 - and MPs are younger. So this issue is now pressing. Since 2010, 17 babies have been born to women MPs yet there is no system of leave. Women are in Parliament - that's a democratic imperative. Women have babies - that is a fact of life. The baby needs time with the mother, the mother needs time with the baby, fathers need to play their part in the family and the constituency needs to be properly represented at all times. A system of baby leave to square that circle is long overdue.



In the Commons on 14th September I asked Leader of the House, Andrea Leadsom MP to back this and she replied 'it is important that we do all we can to help resolve the matter'. The full response can be found [here](#).



The Speaker then said 'I should just tell the House that as chair of the Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion,.....I can say that we are fully seized of Harriet Harman's proposals relating to baby leave....We are committed to vigorously pursuing them with a view to an effective motion being brought before the House for its decision.' So I hope this will go ahead.

And our Deputy Leader Tom Watson has, at my request, pledged at Labour's NEC that he will work with the LGA and Labour groups for a baby leave system for councillors too.

Southwark Labour Borough Conference

Over 100 Labour members came to the Southwark Borough Conference to plan for the 2018 Council elections. I urged everyone to leave behind "anti-Blairism and anti-Corbynism" and all work together to strengthen Labour in Southwark as people face hard times under the Tory Government.



Labour North Women's event in Newcastle

Earlier this month I joined women from across the northern region to discuss 'the importance of women in politics'. It was great to join my colleagues Chi Onwurah, Cath McKinnell and Angela Rayner at the event in Newcastle.



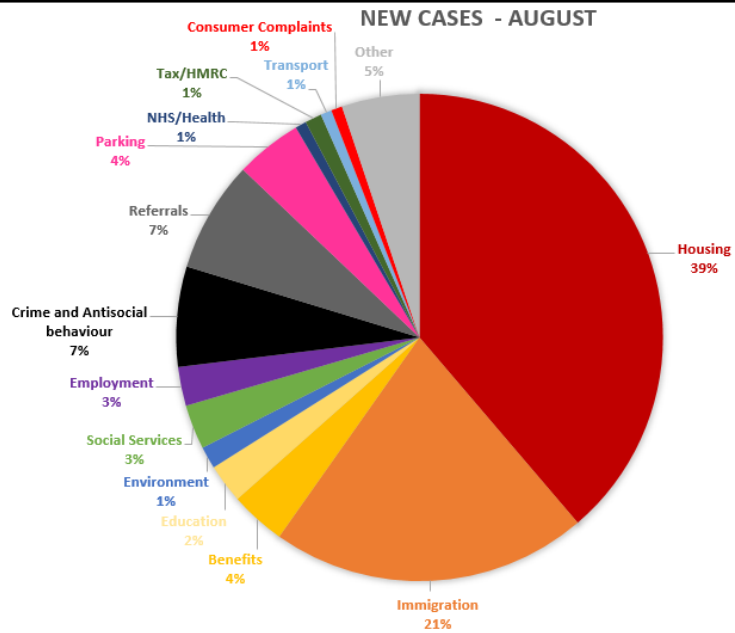
Southwark Policing update

Last week I met with Borough Commander Simon Messenger to discuss the Southwark and Lambeth policing merger and the threatened closure of police front counters. We also discussed at knife crime, gangs, sexual and domestic violence.



Casework August:

Action on 606 cases



Advice Surgeries

The latest of my surgeries included:

- *A woman concerned about her teenage son who went missing from home and who she believes was lured into and groomed by a criminal gang. I am helping her with the police and social services and I'm raising this issue with the APPG on Knife Crime and the APPG for Runaway and Missing Children and Adults.
- *A woman who, because of domestic violence was forced to leave her home and supportive family network in Sussex. I'm helping her safely return and to sort her Universal Credit and council tax payments.
- *A tenant in a flat in the Wandle Camberwell Station Road block, along with others in the block, has had problems with a lack of hot/water heating ever since she moved in nearly 3 years ago.
- *A British/Canadian couple of Nigerian origin who's daughter has won a scholarship to a boarding school but who has been refused citizenship. I've asked the school to take her so she doesn't miss school while the family appeal.



Constituency cases

- A Peckham woman suffering with several health problems contacted me because her Employment Support Allowance (ESA) had been stopped. She completed and returned a Work Capability questionnaire in time but was informed that it had not been received by the Jobcentre. I wrote to the Department for Work & Pensions and her ESA was soon reinstated.
- A Camberwell resident who had been placed in temporary accommodation with her four children by her landlord, L&Q while her home was undergoing major renovations, contacted me for help. She asked L&Q if her family could remain living in their temporary accommodation, which is also owned by L&Q, as her family were previously very overcrowded but they refused. I contacted L&Q who reviewed their decision and allowed the family to stay.
- A Nunhead resident contacted me concerning illegal dumping on a plot of land next to council garages on his street. I contacted Southwark Council who contacted the landowner and instructed them to remove the rubbish and secure the land to stop this happening again.

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