



### Ethiopia visit

As part of my support for equality for women and for development, and because of the vibrant Ethiopian (and Eritrean and Somali) diaspora community in Camberwell and Peckham, on 6th–10th November I visited Ethiopia with Marie Stopes International and the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Development, Population and Reproductive Health to look at contraception, abortion and maternal mortality. Since the 2005 legalisation of abortion and the new Department of Health Strategy on Reproductive Health there has been a remarkable decrease in maternal mortality, decrease in unsafe abortions, fall in the fertility rate and fall in the number of women condemned to suffer fistula but challenges for women in Ethiopia remain, including:



- \*The prevalence of child marriage. Young girls who are married do not get the opportunity to go to secondary school. They are more likely to have babies at a very young age and suffer birth complications
- \*the large number of children each woman has which means their health suffers and they lack opportunities to study and work
- \*a patriarchal society which does not recognise the rights of women as equal to that of men
- \*prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation of girl children
- \*violence against women, particularly in the refugee camps
- \*the difficulty of reaching women in remote, nomadic, pastoral communities to ensure that they have access to contraception, safe abortion and safe delivery. I'm writing a report of the visit and will publish it on my website shortly.

### Tackling Sexual Harassment

For too long people working in Parliament, canvassing for local parties or in local government have been deterred from making complaints of sexual harassment for fear of being disloyal to their party or accused of "helping" the other side. The truth is that the tribal nature of politics has dampened down the ability to speak out. But this is starting to change. Because of the Weinstein scandal in the US more victims of harassment feel able to speak out. As the harassment some parliamentary staff and journalists have faced in Westminster came out, I tabled an [Urgent Question to the Leader of the House, Andrea Leadsom](#), to ask her to make a statement in Parliament on sexual harassment. I hope that parties can work together to set high standards and to support those who make complaints. As we work to put our own house in order we do so recognising that women are plagued by sexual harassment in workplaces and institutions up and down the country. This moment needs to be more than just sorting out politics, this needs to be the moment when we mobilise to stop harassment being a daily ordeal for women in the UK. This is about abuse of power. This is not a 'witch hunt', as some are saying, nor is it about flirting—it is about a small minority of men in positions of power, abusing that position to sexually harass and intimidate women at work. This has never been acceptable but now a light is being shone on it and this is a sea change opportunity for us to make the change which is long overdue. I will be working with MPs from all parties and organisations representing workers and employers in different industries including Unite, Rape Crisis, Equity, the CBI and the CIPD on a joint select committee inquiry into sexual harassment at work.



### Re-election as Chair of Joint Committee on Human Rights

On 8th November I was re-elected as Chair of [Parliament's Human Rights Committee](#). This is a cross-party joint committee made up of 6 MPs —Karen Buck, Jeremy Lefroy, Fiona Bruce, Joanna Cherry, Mark Pritchard and I, and 6 Members of the House of Lords—Sally Hamwee, Margaret Prosser, Harry Woolf, Doreen Lawrence, David Trimble and Detta O'Cathain.

It's all too easy to think that our human rights here are inviolable and it's only in other countries that there are human rights abuses. And some even use "human rights" as a term of abuse. But we have to remain vigilant and the role of our committee is to scrutinise the government to ensure that it upholds our fundamental human rights, including as the UK leaves the European Union. Our Committee has the power to call in government ministers and organisations to give evidence in public, on the record and holds inquiries on key human rights issues or breaches in the UK. Our first inquiry is looking at government policy to protect free speech in universities and how this balances with their requirements to universities on preventing radicalisation.

### RIP Frank Doran

I'm sorry I'm not able to attend the meeting tonight, I'm at the funeral of the former Labour MP for Aberdeen North, Frank Doran.

### Remembrance Sunday

Local people, Neil Coyle MP, Council Leader Peter John and I paid tribute to our armed services on Sunday 12 November at the war memorial on Borough High St.

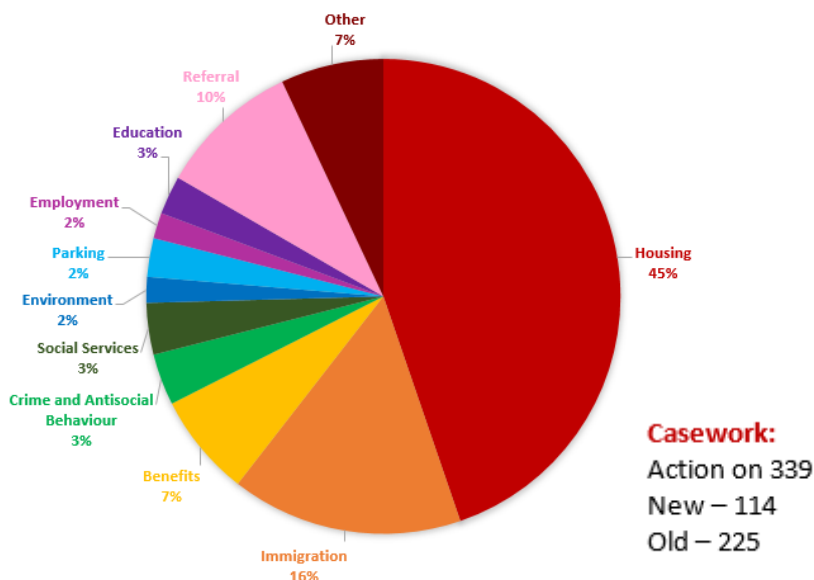


### Parking and traffic issues at St Francis Catholic Primary School

On 18th October I visited St. Francis Catholic Primary School to talk to parents on the school run and Headteachers Mrs Atkinson & Mrs Molloy about parking and traffic issues on Friary Road. It's a dead end street and parents drive down it making 3 point turns, sometimes mounting the pavement endangering children. I've written to Deborah Collins, Director of Environment & Social Regeneration at Southwark Council, to ask the council to improve signage and enforcement of yellow lines on Friary Road to ensure children are safe on their way to and from school.



### NEW CASES - OCTOBER



### Southwark Pensioners in Parliament

It was great to welcome members of the Southwark Pensioner Action Group (SPAG) to Parliament on 18th October to meet with Helen Hayes MP, Neil Coyle MP, the Mayor of Southwark, Charlie Smith and I. We discussed issues affecting older people locally including lack of affordable adapted housing, increasing NHS waiting times and Tory cuts to social care and the uncertainty people are facing because of Brexit.



### Helping constituents with their problems

Ms R, a mother from Peckham Rye, contacted me because she and her 19 year old twins were facing eviction as the landlord wanted the room back but they hadn't found another home to move to. I wrote to Southwark Council to ask for their help to prevent the family being made homeless. The Council housing team helped Ms R find a two bedroom property she was happy with in the private rental sector and made a one off 'incentive payment' to the landlord to encourage them to rent to the family.

Mr S who's lived in Peckham for 37 years contacted me concerned about people hanging out on the scaffolding erected on the site of a nearby redevelopment and there had been a rise in anti-social behaviour. I wrote to the Southwark Anti-Social Behaviour Unit to ask if the building site could be made secure from trespassers. In response Council staff visited my constituents to discuss their concerns over security and fitted a new alarm and blocked off the scaffolding.

A woman living in a council home in Livesey ward contacted me to ask for help sorting the serious leaks in her bathroom, toilet and kitchen. I wrote to Southwark Council and they carried out the repair work in the same week.

Ms L who lives on the Acorn Estate in Peckham contacted me because she and her neighbours' heating and hot water kept breaking down after the new heating system was installed this October. She told me many of her neighbours affected are elderly and disabled. I made urgent enquiries with the council's senior heating engineer. Contractors visited Ms L the same day and Southwark Council restored the heating to the Acorn Estate.



**Contact  
Harriet**

**Post**  
House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA

**Email**  
harmanh@parliament.uk  
**Online**  
www.harrietharman.org

**Phone**  
0207 219  
4218



@HarrietHarman

