



### In 2018 my constituency priority is the NHS

#### NHS under pressure

When Labour left government in 2010 King's College Hospital was rated by the Care Quality Commission as excellent and one of the top hospitals in the country. Now after 7 years of Tory government it is missing its A&E waiting time targets and a key cancer treatment target, there has been a fourfold increase in the number of cancelled operations, and it is in "special measures". This is not King's fault, it is the government's fault. [On 6th February in parliamentary health questions](#) I called on Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt, to step up to the plate and help King's by giving it the resources that it needs. You do not improve an organisation by cutting it to the bone. When I met with the new interim Chair of King's, Ian Smith, I stressed that he & his team will have my full support if they press the government to give King's the help it needs.



**I am meeting Matthew Patrick, Chief Executive of South London and Maudsley NHS Trust (SLaM), on Wednesday 14th March to discuss patient care, staff shortages and funding cuts.**

Ahead of this meeting please contact me at [harriet.harman.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:harriet.harman.mp@parliament.uk) to share your experiences—good or bad—of local mental health services, or those of your family and friends.

#### Centenary of women winning the right to vote - 6th February 2018

The spirit of the women who fought for the right to vote was rooted in the revolutionary belief that women were not second class citizens, not inferior to men and should not be subordinate to men. Their campaign was met with vilification and violence, with imprisonment and forced feeding. When you demand change and equality no-one says "oh that's a good idea, we'll change everything we've been doing for the past centuries". They resist. To fight for equality always was, and still is, to confront conventions and the establishment. And they fight back. It's only persistence and solidarity which makes change. For each generation there is further to go. The suffragettes won the right to vote. My mother, born in 1918 could vote. But when she was growing up women's exclusive focus was to be on the husband and family. If women did work it was only for "pin money" or they were women who hadn't achieved their "primary purpose" of marriage and children. If a man beat his wife then she'd probably brought it on herself. My generation - I'm now 67 - were determined to work as well as have children. But maternity pay and leave was rudimentary, pregnancy discrimination rife, part-time work undervalued, pay unequal and childcare non-existent. We have won the argument for change. But the battle now is to make that a reality:

- It's accepted that high quality affordable childcare is good for children and parents. But women, and men, are still tearing their hair out trying to get the nursery place they can afford for the hours they need.
- It's against the law now to discriminate against part-timers. Yet women working part-time as they bring up young children are completely marginalised and undervalued at work.
- Fathers have the right to paternity leave but few can afford to take it up.
- We have yet to get to equality in the home and equal sharing of child rearing.
- Domestic violence is recognised as wrong and a crime. But still 2 women every week are killed by a current or former husband or partner. And refuges are being cut.
- There are now more women MPs than ever before—208! 119 of which are Labour, but women still make up less than a third of all MPs and are outnumbered 2 : 1 by men in Parliament.



In this centenary year we must celebrate the incredible advances previous generations have made. But as we recognise the battles they fought and won we need to regather our strength and determination for further battles. We can't stop yet. The job's not yet done!

#### MPs will now get "baby leave" - 35 years too late for me!

On 1 February Parliament debated & agreed my proposal to allow men and women MPs who have had a baby or adopted a child to vote by proxy. We set the rules for maternity & paternity pay and leave for people at work. But for MPs there is no system at all. As more, and younger, women enter the House it is long overdue for the rules to catch up. The motion received cross-party backing & details are being worked up. Read more about the plans [here](#) and catch up with the significant debate [online](#).

## Backing campaign to protect local children

I was proud to speak at the launch of [Coram's 'respected & protected' pledge](#) in Parliament on 22nd January. MPs will work cross-party so every child is safe, supported and can get their rights.



## Sacred Heart Secondary School Visits Parliament

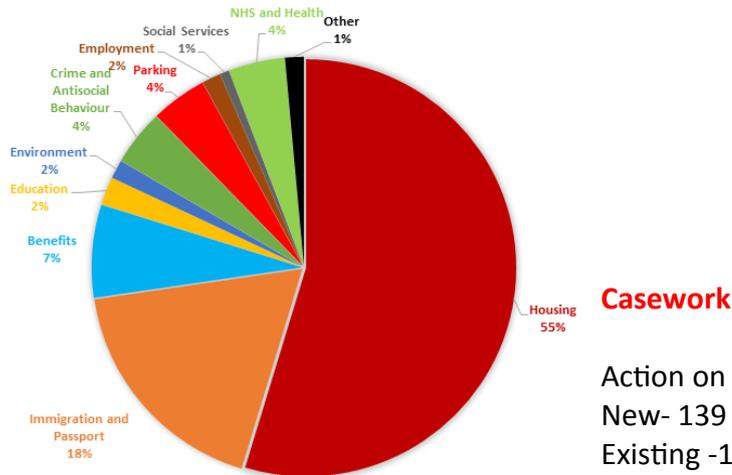
Great to welcome the lively 16-18 year olds from Sacred Heart to Parliament on 24th January. I am impressed with their academic achievements and motivation for the future.



## Demanding action on overcrowding at Peckham Rye & Denmark Hill stations

Peckham Rye is now bursting - the number of passengers has doubled in the last 5 years—and people at Denmark Hill face dangerous overcrowding daily. On 24th January I met Network Rail to demand urgent action to keep people safe on platforms and I welcome their commitment that both stations are being prioritised in the top 10 for action. I am demanding the government now put in the money to back this up.

### NEW CASES - JANUARY



### Casework

Action on 335  
New- 139  
Existing -196

## Policy issues update

In January 341 Camberwell and Peckham residents wrote to me about policy issues. The top 3 concerns raised were:

1. Their opposition to the government's EU Withdrawal Bill—I voted against the bill at 3rd Reading on 17 January.
2. They urged me to support Karen Buck MP's Homes Fit for Human Habitation Bill—I [spoke in Parliament on 19 January to express my full support](#).
3. Constituents calling for a UK ban on Hezbollah. You can see Labour's response on this issue [here](#). You can find out more by visiting the '[Policy Issues](#)' and [Letters to Ministers](#) pages on my website.

## Helping constituents with their problems

\*A freelance journalist who lives in Peckham Rye asked for my help in respect of his friend Alex, an Eritrean asylum seeker, who committed suicide in December 2017 aged 18. He has asked for the Coroner to include in his investigation the circumstances that led to Alex's death, including the lack of support he received. I have written to the Coroner and asked for my interest in this case to be noted.

\*A mother and her 15 year old son came to see me because he had been told he couldn't come back to school and had been taken "off roll" 3 months ago. He wanted to be back in school. I contacted his school to delve into the background on this. "Off-rolling" is a way of schools excluding or suspending pupils but with no process for the student to challenge the decision.

\*A woman came to see me because she needed an operation at Guy's to deal with serious breathing difficulties which had arisen after an operation on her throat at King's College Hospital and she had been given no appointment. I wrote to Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust and she has been given an appointment but not until 5<sup>th</sup> March.



\*I met a Syrian refugee who lives in Peckham. His disabled brother, wife and 8 children are living in a refugee camp in Iraq without access to the medical care his brother needs. The brother applied to the UN Deputy High Commission for Refugees 4 years ago for him and his family to be resettled either in the UK or elsewhere in Europe but his case has still not been decided. I have contacted the UN Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees.

\*A local doctor contacted me because she couldn't get the tax refund that she was due from HMRC. I contacted HMRC and they've now paid her £1500.

**Contact  
Harriet**

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

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

**Phone**  
0207 219  
4218