

ANNUAL REPORT

2018



Rt Hon Harriet Harman QC MP
Member of Parliament for Camberwell and Peckham
Mother of the House of Commons



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Introduction

As I predicted in my annual report of 2016, the Prime Minister called a General Election in 2017. Though I was right in my prediction Theresa May would call an election, she was wrong in her prediction that she would increase her majority and “crush Labour”. As it turned out Labour did better than expected and the Conservatives did much worse. We had a terrific result in Camberwell and Peckham. Turnout was up from 62.3% in 2015 to 67.1%. Our majority was up from 25,824 (50.1%) in 2015 to 37,316 (65%) and our share of the vote went from 63.3% to 77.8%. There was genuine enthusiasm at polling stations where I met many people who'd never voted before. But, sadly, we are still in opposition and unable to halt the Tories cruel cuts to the NHS and Universal Credit.



The last year has seen a deepening of the problems that always come to Camberwell and Peckham with a Tory Government. The NHS has been starved of funds causing waiting lists to lengthen. Cuts to the council hits vital services such as care of the elderly and youth services. Cuts in the police leave local people feeling more unsafe. Inequality increases and crime rises. As part of the Parliamentary Labour Party, I challenge ministers on the practical impact their policies are having. Following the council elections this year, we've got a strong team of Labour councillors standing up for local people. But it will not be till we have a Labour government that we will be able to put the country on the path to greater prosperity, equality and fairness.



This year, the looming threat of Brexit hangs over everything in parliament. I fear it means our becoming an inward-looking, backward-looking country. And the greatest risk is to those regions and those communities who have least. Most MPs backed Remain but the referendum was a narrow win for Brexit, leaving a divided country, conflict within political parties, and a threat to the unity of the United Kingdom, to our security

and to our economy. I do not have a good word to say about Brexit but the path forward after the referendum result is not easy to see.

Having been Member of Parliament for Camberwell and Peckham since 1982 I have become the longest serving woman MP ever and am now “Mother of the House”. Last year I published my memoirs “A Woman’s Work”. I continue to press for equality and social justice and combat discrimination and prejudice whether it’s based on social class, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, age or disability.

Harriet Harman

Helping Constituents with their Problems

A major part of my work as MP for Camberwell and Peckham is helping constituents with a wide range of problems. In the last 12 months, I have, with my small but dedicated team, helped over **3,785** people, of which **1,236** have been in touch with me for the first time.



For further information about my work in the constituency please see my website www.harrietharman.org

Casework enables me to help thousands of my constituents as well as keeping me in touch with the everyday, as well as the exceptional, problems they face.

I first started doing advice surgeries in 1981 with Harry Lamborn, Peckham's MP when I became the candidate. At that time there was no doorstep campaigning between elections. Then, Harry did the surgeries on a Friday evening in the Town Hall on Peckham Road, with his wife Lil who was his secretary, taking notes. She brought with her to the surgery all his case files, in a big expanding folder. The assumption then was that people could come after their working day was finished. Few had phones and many were not confident writing letters

When I became the MP in 1982 I held advice surgeries in the Town Hall on Peckham Road on a Friday evening. But I then added a Tuesday morning advice surgery to make it easier for people with young children, or the elderly, who couldn't come out to an evening surgery.

There was no routine door to door campaigning between elections at that time. So the advice surgeries were a most important way for people to see their MP. I had one secretary who typed letters that I drafted by hand or dictated onto a dictaphone.

Over the years since 1982 much has changed both in the way people communicate and the response they want from their MP. And the Town Hall, the venue for my surgeries for more than 2 decades has closed and been moved out of the constituency to Tooley Street.

My aim is to ensure that I see my constituents and hear directly from them about their concerns and that I provide a good service for constituents who have problems they want help with. Now, the overwhelming majority of my constituents have mobile phones and use email and twitter. The patterns of work have changed so that there is no "normal working day or working week".

Most people now make first contact me by email (80%). Of the remainder, most make contact by phone or by letter. I ensure that every constituent making a casework query receives a reply from me within 10 working days, setting out what I have done, or will do on their behalf.

The House of Commons have increased the number of people an MP can employ and instead of one Secretary, I now have a Senior Caseworker and 2 Junior Caseworkers (as well as a head of office and a researcher.) On average my team deal with 90 cases every week. On my constituency visits I pick up problems from people who would not otherwise contact me.

For people who I need to see because they do not want to, or cannot communicate with me by phone or email, I use Cambridge House.

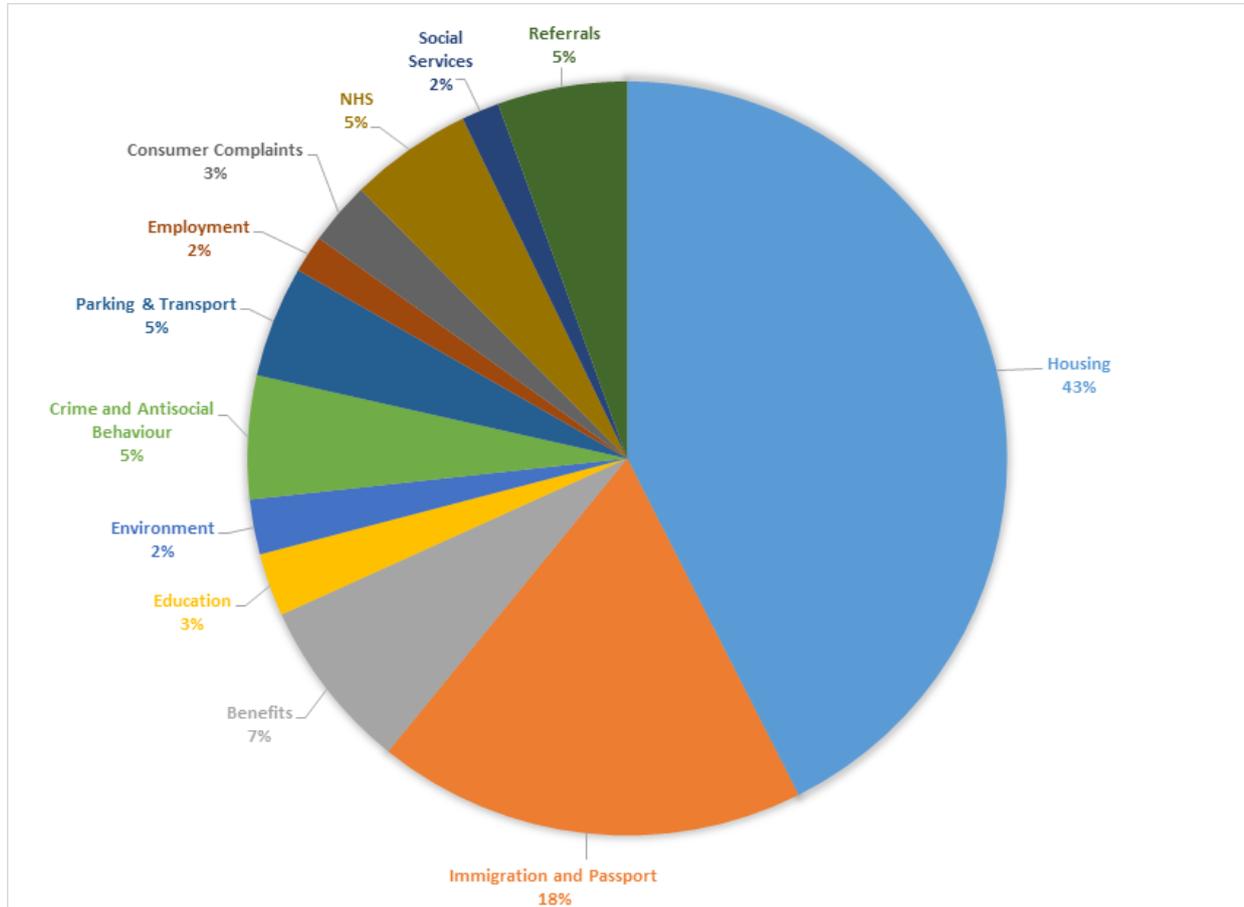
The way I do my casework has changed over the years, due to changes in the way people communicate, their working patterns, the increase in the number of staff I'm able to employ. But the objective of my casework is unchanged. It remains my responsibility to help people who find that they can't, for whatever reason, sort out a problem themselves and to do so sympathetically, efficiently and effectively.



Casework Issues

People seek my help for many different reasons including housing problems, immigration and visa problems and getting the benefits they're entitled to:

Breakdown of cases June 2017—May 2018



Often I am able to cut through red tape, challenge an injustice and make progress for a constituent. Here are some examples of people I've helped this year:

Constituents with immigration and visa problems

*Mr C from Camberwell contacted me because although he had won his appeal against the Home Office decision to refuse his Ghanaian wife a UK visa, over 3 months later the Home Office had still not sent his wife her visa. I wrote to the Home Office on his behalf and Mr C's wife's visa was delivered.

*A woman contacted me because her 15 year old daughter, who is Congolese, went on a school trip to Geneva and couldn't return home when she lost her biometric residence permit (BRP). Her application for a replacement permit was delayed. I urgently wrote to the Home Office and a replacement document was issued.

*A Peckham resident contacted me because she was due to travel to Jamaica with her baby son to attend her grandmother's funeral but his passport application was delayed. I made urgent enquiries with HM Passport Office and the passport was printed and dispatched on the same day.

*A constituent contacted me because though her husband's appeal for a visa to come here from Nigeria had been allowed by the Tribunal, 4 months on the Home Office had not issued the visa. I wrote to UK Visas and Immigration to ask that my constituent's husband's visa be issued without delay. This family are now reunited and are living happily in Nunhead.

*I was contacted by a Ghanaian student living in Nunhead who could not start his pharmacy degree course at university because he had not received his permanent residence card. I wrote to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and his permanent residence card was issued soon after and

he has commenced the course.

*A man from Peckham contacted me because he needs a kidney transplant but his sister who is a suitable donor, and who lives in Somalia has been refused a visa to come to the UK. I wrote to the Home Office to ask them to make a decision on the application quickly because of his poor health. His sister's entry clearance was refused and he is exploring with his solicitors what options remain open to him.

Constituents with housing problems

*A woman living in Nunhead with a young family contacted me as she needed to move because she was in danger from domestic violence. The council had turned down her application for a home exchange as one of her rooms was too small to be classed a room. I urged Southwark Council to reconsider their decision given the risks to the family's safety and I am continuing to support my constituent to find suitable accommodation.



*A group of Wandle residents who live on Camberwell Station Road came to see me because they faced continuous disrepair and security issues in their new-build homes. I wrote to Wandle to ask them to facilitate the setting up of a residents association, pay for an independent resident advisor and carry out a full audit of all of the properties. I will continue to support the residents.

*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. I contacted L&Q who reviewed their decision and allowed the family to stay.

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

*A father from Peckham living in a one-bedroom flat with his wife and their three children contacted me because his council flat is too small for his family and they have no chance of moving to a larger flat in band 4 on the council's housing register. Not only are they chronically overcrowded but they have been experiencing such severe Islamophobic abuse from their neighbour that his wife and children are too scared to stay at home while he is at work. I wrote to Southwark Council asking that my constituent's banding is upgraded to improve their chances of a successful bid and that the abuse be investigated. The family are still bidding for a suitable home and I will continue to support them through this process.

Constituents suffering delays for hospital treatment

*A woman in South Camberwell came to see me because Guy's Hospital told her the exploratory throat surgery she has been waiting for since September 2017 would be delayed until February 2018. I wrote to Guy's Hospital and asked them to bring the surgery forward. My constituent underwent surgery and her symptoms have been improved.

*A Nunhead resident contacted me because he was recently diagnosed with early onset dementia by his GP but is yet to be seen by a neurologist and therefore has not received the medication he needs. He underwent an MRI scan at Lewisham hospital in 2012 when his family first noticed his memory problems but he was not given his results and he faces further delays as his next appointment is not until August 2018. I am in contact with his hospital and supporting him to receive the prompt treatment he requires.

Helping constituents who've been victims of crime and anti-social behaviour

*A worried mother from Camberwell contacted me because her 19 year old son was stabbed 11 times in an unprovoked attack near his home and due to a lack of CCTV cameras in the area his attackers have not been caught. I wrote to Southwark Council to ask for CCTV to be installed given the violent nature of this attack and the council are now in the process of installing CCTV cameras on John Ruskin Street.

*A Peckham Rye resident contacted me concerned about the rise in anti-social behaviour and harassment she and her neighbours had been experiencing after flats nearby in Solomon's Passage were decanted and left empty. I wrote to Southwark Council and they are liaising with the Police to address and resolve this.

*A woman from Peckham came to see me wanting to move out of Southwark permanently for her family's safety because her teenage daughter has been exploited by local gangs and she fears for her life if she remains in Peckham. She is currently being considered for properties across London and I am actively assisting to expedite this process.

Helping constituents get the benefits they're entitled to

*A single mother from Peckham Rye contacted me because her Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) was suspended. She could not attend a work capability assessment as she was caring for her terminally ill mother. I wrote to the Department for Work and Pensions on her behalf and they have reinstated her ESA.



*A woman suffering with cancer living in temporary accommodation in Peckham contacted me for help because the government moved her onto Universal Credit and cut the amount of money she received. She gets £700 in Universal Credit but her rent is over £800 a month. I wrote urgently to the DWP and was contacted the next day to say that her claim had been reassessed and the amount she received increased.

*A Peckham woman suffering with several health problems contacted me because her Employment Support Allowance (ESA) had been stopped. She had 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 reinstated.

Helping parents get the school place their child needs

*A mother of a 15 year old boy who has mental health issues contacted me because she feels her son is not receiving the support he needs at school as he does not have an Educational and Health Care Plan (EHCP). He is often kept in isolation or given detention for misbehaving or inattention in his lessons. She applied for an EHCP in 2016 but the Council rejected the application because the school failed to submit supporting evidence as they didn't have a Specialist Educational Needs Co-ordinator in post. I have written to St Gabriel's College and Southwark Council to ask them to work together to ensure an EHCP is devised. The school has now provided more assistance to my constituent's son and he is now happy to go to school.



*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 previously. 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. I am continuing to support my constituent and her son to find a suitable school place.

*A mother of a disabled 10 year old boy from Camberwell, who attends a specialist school for the blind in Wimbledon contacted me because her son is happy and thriving in his current school but Southwark Council's Education, Health, Care Plan (EHCP) has concluded that he will have to change schools in September and have turned down her appeals on his behalf. I have been contacted by a number of parents dissatisfied by the placement of their child with special educational needs and am due to meet David Quirke-Thornton, Strategic Director of Children's and Adults Services for Southwark Council.

Work experience in the casework office

My casework office offers opportunities for local pupils to gain work experience. This year the casework team have been supported by a brilliant group - thank you!



Fire safety in tower blocks

The Grenfell Tower fire on 14th June 2017 was an unimaginable tragedy, with so many lives lost. Nothing can ever bring them back to their grieving families, and it is imperative that lessons are learned.

And for people in Southwark, Grenfell was a painful reminder of the Lakanal House fire in 2009, the same deadly "stay put" orders from the Fire Brigade and our collective responsibility to improve safety. It seems, once again, that those who ignored the Fire Brigade's instructions to stay put escaped with their lives. Those who abided by the instructions to stay in their flat were more likely to die. The Fire Brigade must learn lessons. I am calling on Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate to review training of brigade control officers to ensure operators are able to react to individual situations and are equipped to change the orders.



In the weeks following the Grenfell tragedy I met Southwark Council Leader, Peter John, Cllr Steph Cryan, Cabinet Member for Housing, Helen Hayes MP, Neil Coyle MP to urgently review fire safety and be sure that residents in the 54 council tower blocks in Camberwell and Peckham are safe. Southwark confirmed that none of their tower blocks are clad in the same material and agreed to my request to publish block-specific fire safety packs online: <http://www.southwark.gov.uk/housing/safety-in-the-home/fire-safety-information-packs>.

Southwark Council has two key legal duties: one is ensuring people are safe, the other is balancing the books financially. They must be able to do the first without jeopardising the second. But since the Tories took over in 2010 they cut Southwark's budget by almost half. It's time for the government to step up to the plate to ensure tenants are safe. As Southwark MPs Helen Hayes MP, Neil Coyle MP and I lobbied the Government to:

*Cover the costs of fire safety works in Southwark, including fitting sprinklers in tower blocks. The council must not be forced to take the money away from other important major works projects. Tenants in other estates have been waiting for important improvements, they shouldn't have to wait longer.

*Not charge leaseholders for fire safety work - about 20% of people in Southwark blocks are leaseholders and they already face considerable charges for planned improvement works.

*Carry out an urgent review of fire safety regulations, as proposed by the coroner in the 2013 Lakanal House fire inquest.

The Government must step up their response and commit to providing Southwark Council with the money it needs to carry out all necessary work. In Parliament this year I have repeatedly

pressed Ministers on this, including the Prime Minister, the Fire Minister and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

One year on from the tragedy it is unacceptable that some of the families and survivors of Grenfell are not yet in permanent homes and councils do not have the resources they need from the Government to keep people safe. My Labour colleagues and I will continue to back measures to ensure residents in Camberwell and Peckham and across the country are safe.

Ledbury Tower Blocks – August 2017

In the wake of the Grenfell tragedy the council's extensive tower safety checks revealed the worrying finding that despite being subject to so many investigations and reports over the past decades, the 4 tower blocks on the Ledbury Estate were not safe for their gas supply as the engineering work to strengthen the blocks in the wake of the 1968 Ronan Point tower block gas collapse in Newham may never have taken place before Southwark took over the blocks when the GLC was abolished.

The council turned off the gas supply to the blocks to ensure people's safety.

Ledbury residents faced severe disruption. Ledbury is a settled community where generations live together and help each other. Elderly residents are looked after by their children and grandchildren, grandparents look after the grandchildren while the parents are out at work. People work locally and their children are in local schools. I worked with the council to support families to move nearby and held an emergency mobile surgery at the Ledbury TRA Hall. People told me they had to take time off work to deal with their rehousing and lost money. One woman had planned to go on holiday as a treat for her retirement but didn't feel able to go.



The council worked hard to ensure that every resident was helped with temporary accommodation, permanent accommodation, hotels and given compensation for the costs they faced and Ledbury leaseholders were told they won't have to pay. The council have now installed a new heating system and put in extra fire safety measures but long-term redevelopment is needed. In Parliament and in writing I have repeatedly pressed the Government to give the council the cash they need to make the block safe. But the Government has evaded and obfuscated and made no commitment.

The council have commissioned an independent report to recommend what form the redevelopment should take. As part of this they are currently consulting all Ledbury residents to hear their views on the different options for the estate works.

I'd like to pay a big tribute to the Ledbury Tenants Association and their Chair, Jeanette Mason. Like so many tenants' reps, Jeanette works tirelessly, unpaid, for her local community. I'd like to thank the local councillors, Richard Livingstone, Evelyn Akoto and Michael Situ, Cllr Stephanie Cryan, Cabinet Member for Housing and the council staff who were on site and working 7 days a week.

In 2018 my constituency priority is the NHS

The NHS is of enormous importance to people and is rightfully one of Britain's and Labour's proudest achievements. But, as always under a Tory government, the NHS is now becoming one of local people's biggest concerns. Many are having to wait longer in A&E, operations are being cancelled and demoralised NHS staff are leaving in record numbers due to Tory cuts, mental health services cannot keep up with demand and it's harder to recruit GPs in hard-pressed inner London.

Backing King's College Hospital #2018 NHS constituency priority

King's staff are working hard 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide excellent care despite the pressure inflicted by government cuts.

I regularly meet the staff team and Chair of Kings to discuss what they are doing to improve

patient care. This year has been particularly hard. A & E staff have had to care for the victims of the terrorist attacks in Westminster and Borough Market, the Grenfell Tower fire and numerous stabbing and shootings as well as the growing number of older people who turn to A & E because they can't get the care they need at home. Across the board, demand for the amazing services at Kings is growing, yet the Government have been imposing unachievable targets for making "savings", i.e. cuts, so even as more patients are coming in there is less money per person.

You do not improve an organisation by cutting it to the bone. In the last 2 years, King's has already cut £80 million, double the average rate of other hospitals, and in 2013 took on 2 hospitals from an ailing trust to help out the wider NHS, the Princess Royal University Hospital and Orpington Hospital. Standards of care at King's remain very good, but we must ensure cuts do not take us back to the situation we had under the last Tory Government in the 1980s, when people routinely spent all night on trolleys in A and E. Years of Labour investment from 1997 transformed King's so that by 2010 it was meeting all of its main waiting time targets, but once again now:



- *In 2016/17 King's failed to meet the 4hr waiting time target in A & E, almost 1 in 5 patients were not seen within 4 hrs;
- *Last year at King's 928 operations were cancelled for non-medical reasons — 4 times as many as in 2009;
- *In every year since 2015 they've missed the key cancer target of starting treatment for 85% of cancer patients within 2 months of GP referral.
- *King's is regularly more than 100% full, with meeting rooms and storage space used for beds.

I am demanding the Government provides King's with the resources for a world-class major teaching hospital which is also at the heart

of a diverse community:

*I asked the Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt MP to come to the House and make a statement on 12th December on Lord Kerslake's resignation as Chair of King's. I thanked Lord Bob Kerslake for his work as chair, and protested that because of the cuts he felt he had to resign.



*I am insisting that the Government recognise that the problem at King's is not the leadership, or the growing number of patients, or the dedicated staff, the problem is the lack of money – I spoke in Parliament on 16th January in a debate on King's finances.

*I have met the new interim chair, Ian Smith, and am seeking a meeting with the new interim Chief Executive, Peter Herring.

I will continue to back measures to increase NHS funding, to scrap the government's unfair cap on NHS pay and halt privatisation. The Tories' record is disastrous, we desperately need a Labour government to ensure that patient care is protected and the NHS can improve.

Protecting our mental health services #2018 NHS constituency priority

South London & Maudsley is a pioneering organisation providing vital mental health and drug and alcohol abuse services in hospital and the community. But deep Tory cuts since 2010 have left the Trust with 112 fewer mental health nurses and a 23% staff shortage, with over 1,000 vacancies. Mental health services are essential in preventing children and adults reaching crisis point. Treatment delays cause suffering and end up costing the taxpayer more as the services have to deal with someone in crisis. I am backing Labour's call for the Government to ring-fence mental health budgets. I meet Dr Matthew Patrick, Chief Executive of South London and Maudsley NHS Trust (SLaM) to raise constituents' individual problems, discuss patient care, staff shortages and funding.

On 12th March 2018 I met 30 members of the cleaning & catering team at the Maudsley Hospital with their GMB Union representative, Nadine Houghton, to discuss concerns about their contracts. Many of them have worked there for years, some for more than 10 years. They are incredibly dedicated to their work and are very much part of the hospital team providing vital care to some of south London's most vulnerable people. Despite this staff told me:

*People doing the same jobs on the same wards are receiving different hourly wages and contracts.

*Some staff do not get London weighting.

*Some staff are not entitled to any paid sick leave.

*They can be docked 15 minutes' pay for arriving at work one minute late.



All of the team were clear that they love their jobs and feel very much part of the team supporting vulnerable patients, but they justifiably feel that the employment contracts they are given by ISS are not fair and equal between workers. I have written to and met ISS managers and they have agreed to meet with the senior management of the hospital, the cleaning team and GMB Union to find a way forward.

Difficulty in getting a GP appointment #2018 NHS constituency priority

A concern people in Camberwell and Peckham often raise with me is their inability to get a quick appointment with their GP. From May to August 2017 Healthwatch Southwark visited all 44 GP practices in Southwark, ran a survey which received responses from 39 Practice Managers, interviewed 50 receptionists, and talked to 550 patients about their experiences of GP appointment systems. Although the overwhelming response was positive about the care they get, nearly 1 in 4 people said they found it 'difficult' or 'very difficult' to see their GP. I am working with Southwark Clinical Commissioning Group, the council and Labour colleagues to help ensure people can see a GP when they need to and am calling on the Government to centrally collate and monitor data on GP waiting times.

Tackling serious youth violence

Youth knife crime and gang violence is a growing problem in Southwark and across London. There were 840 reported stabbings in the Borough of Southwark last year, up from 577 in 2015-16. Inevitably, when youth clubs, police and local authority budgets are cut there will be a rise in crime. In Southwark Tory government cuts have meant there are 24% fewer police officers now than there were in 2010.

This year I have:

*Joined the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Knife Crime established by Sarah Jones MP for Croydon Central which gives a national platform to those experiencing the tragic consequences of knife crime, seeks new measures to combat the resurgence in knife crime, focuses on identifying the underlying causes of knife crime and why some young people knives.

*Went out with The Lane Police team in Peckham town centre on 14th December 2017 to "Walk the Met" and



hear from local people & business owners about their concerns. The police are working hard despite the cuts.

*Called on the Home Secretary to give schools and police the cash they need to offer programmes that steer young people away from violence.

*Attended the emergency Violent Crime Summit with Mayor Sadiq Khan at City Hall on 10th April 2018. The Met Police Commissioner, Cressida Dick; the then Home Secretary, Amber Rudd MP; Deputy Mayor for Policing, Sophie Linden; London MPs; Assembly Members and council leaders came together to discuss what action needs to be taken to prevent more young people losing their lives to violence. While I welcome the Government's announcement of a new Serious Violence Strategy and Offensive Weapons Bill, the Government must urgently back this up with additional resources.



*Held regular meetings with Southwark and Lambeth Police Commander Simon Messinger and senior officers.

*Supported a local school applying for extra resources from the Mayor's Young Londoner's Fund to help support students vulnerable to being drawn into crime.



Another tragic fatal shooting of a local teenager



On Saturday 5th May 2018 17 year old Rhyheim Ainsworth Barton was shot on Cooks Road and later died. He lived with his mother and younger sister on the Brandon Estate. This was such a tragic loss of a young life. Rhyheim was the 12th teenager to be killed in London this year. No parent should have to worry about their child being safe in their local area and the police are doing everything they can to identify the perpetrators of this terrible crime and bring them to justice. On 8th May we held a community meeting at Rachel Leigh Hall with Rhyheim's mother, local residents; TRA Chair, Sheila Benjamin; Southwark Police; Southwark Council Leader, Cllr Peter John; Rhyheim's local MP for Bermondsey and Old Southwark, Neil Coyle; David Lammy, MP for Tottenham, who is playing a leading role in tackling youth crime in Parliament; local councillors for Camberwell Green and Newington wards and Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London. We are working closely together to demand extra resources from the Government for police and community groups to help prevent any more young people losing their lives to violence.

Demanding action on delays & overcrowding at local stations

Almost every day following the introduction of the new Thameslink Railway timetable people in Camberwell and Peckham have contacted me exasperated saying that the delays and cancellations have caused total upheaval in their lives. They've paid for their season tickets but they've been late for work, missed hospital appointments, their children have been late to school and suffered misery on their daily travel. And the overcrowding on the platforms and in the trains is dangerous.

And people's frustration has only been worsened by mishandling by Govia Thameslink Railway.

Though the new timetable fiasco has definitely exacerbated the problems, anyone who lives in Camberwell & Peckham will know that problems caused by Southern and Thameslink started well before this and trains have been cancelled, late or dangerously overcrowded from Denmark Hill, Peckham Rye and Nunhead every week for the best part of 3 years. The stations are now bursting - the number of passengers has doubled in the last 5 years - and people are at their wits end.

For example, before the May timetable change there were 3 direct trains from Nunhead into Farringdon every hour. Now there is just one an hour, which does not even come at the same time from week to week. "It's impossible to plan my journey to work" one man told me.

The Government admits the service is 'wholly unsatisfactory' but they need to get a grip on the situation and ensure there is some level of accountability of train operators. I am demanding they demonstrate some urgency in tackling this matter and, together with many other MPs, I am taking action to push them on this:

*I have scheduled a meeting with the Rail Minister, Jo Johnson MP, to protest delays and demand an urgent response.

*I have written to the new CEO of Govia Thameslink Railway to ask what they are doing to fix this rail disruption as soon as possible and compensate passengers.

*I am campaigning with Helen Hayes MP, SE5 Forum and Southwark Council to re-open Camberwell Rail Station which lies on the Thameslink Line. This would alleviate some of the pressure at neighbouring stations.

*I've met Network Rail to ask what steps they are taking to keep people safe on platforms. I welcome their commitment that both Denmark Hill and Peckham Rye stations are being prioritised in the top 10 stations for redevelopment. I am demanding the Government now put in the money to back this up.

Whilst the delays and disruption to people's lives are of course totally unacceptable, even more important is that this has now become a matter of public safety. People need answers about how the situation was allowed to get to this point, what the Government is doing now to sort it and what plans they have longer term to end the issues with this struggling franchise and ensure passengers get value for money from the service they pay for and need to be able to rely on.



In local news



Every month I write a comment column for the Southwark News in which I share my views with local people on a number of issues. In the last year I have written articles on fire safety in tower blocks, the EU Withdrawal Bill, Universal Credit, further education funding cuts, protecting NHS funding & waiting times, Kings NHS funding, mental health services and the rise in violent crime.



I also contribute regularly to the South London Press and have written most recently on the Windrush Generation, homelessness, the rise in knife crime and cuts to police budgets. All of these articles can be read on my website at www.harrietharman.org or you can catch up directly at www.southwarknews.co.uk and www.londonnewsonline.co.uk.

Tribute to Baroness Tessa Jowell DBE 1947–2018

We were all deeply saddened by the news that Tessa Jowell, former MP to our neighbours in Dulwich and West Norwood, Minister and Peer has died aged just 70, from a brain tumour. Her death is a great loss, above all to her devoted family, particularly David and her children Jess and Matthew. "The personal is political" - that old Women's Movement saying - was what Tessa was all about. Her focus on her children and step-children was the impetus for her putting parenting support at the heart of the Labour Government's Sure Start Children's Centres. Her way of judging eldercare services, when she worked in Birmingham Social Services, was simple - "either it's good enough for my mother or it's not good enough for anyone". She looked at public services from the point of view of the user and their family rather than the organisation providing them. Though commonplace



now, that approach was innovative then. She nurtured personal relationships to build support for projects she wanted to see happen - like the London Olympics 2012. Because everything she said or did politically was intertwined with the personal, she was more effective. She didn't follow the political rules of the day. She followed her personal instinct. But she was no softie. She was clever and tough. As MP neighbours for 23 years we worked on numerous campaigns together. Whenever we met local agencies such as, hospitals, schools, the Benefits Agency or the council she was unfailingly warm and courteous. But if they were misleading, uncaring or obfuscating she would be tougher than anyone - and forensic with it. She was a champion of the people in

Dulwich and West Norwood. But above all - for her constituents and for the country - she wanted to see Labour in government. And when we were, in 1997 she took her unique style and deep personal commitment into the heart of Whitehall. People will always remember her in Southwark. But also, when people remember the big figures in Labour 97-2010 Tessa will be one of them.



In Parliament

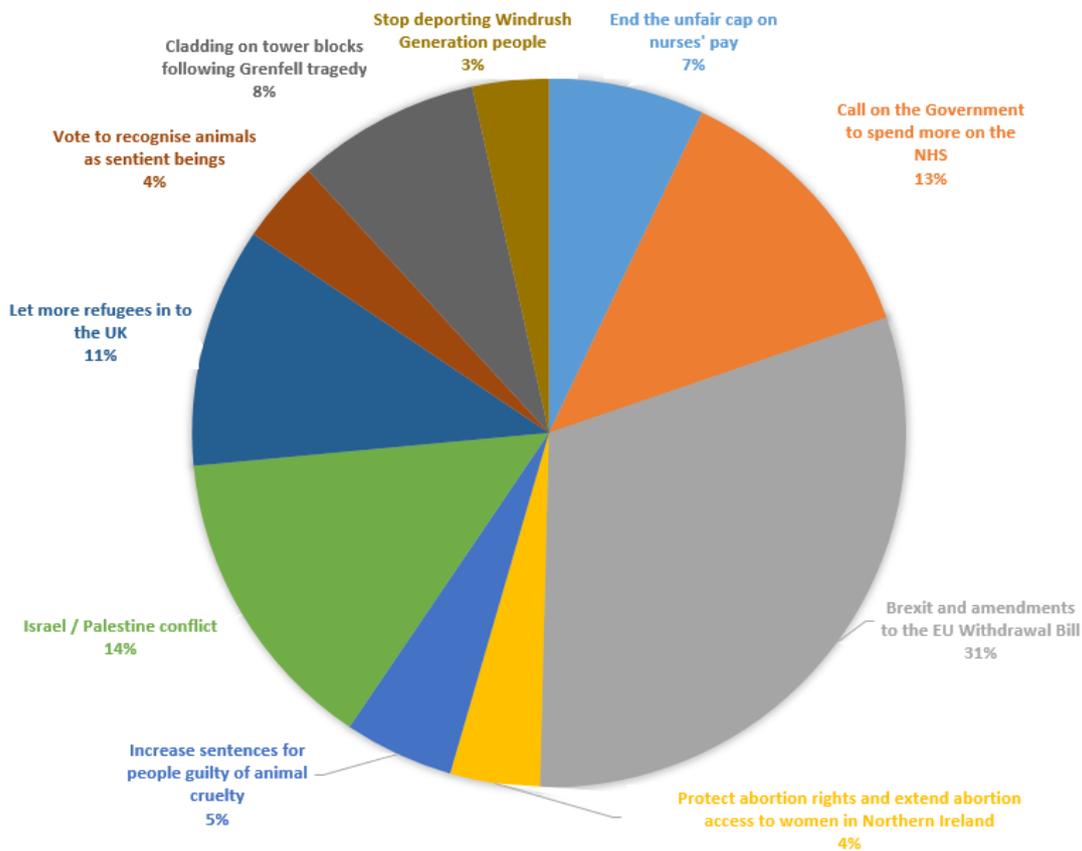


Representations from people in Camberwell & Peckham

The letters and emails I have received from constituents over the past year cover a wide range of issues of concern. Since June 2017, I've received 6,222 enquiries on over 700 separate issues.

Annual policy top 10

June 2017 - May 2018



Brexit

Like the overwhelming majority of people in Camberwell and Peckham, I wanted us to stay in the EU and indeed I campaigned locally and across the country for Remain.

Despite the strong Remain vote in Southwark, unfortunately the result of the Referendum was, by a small majority, to leave. Though this was deeply disappointing, we can't not take that into account.

Our campaign to Remain was branded 'Project Fear' but things are even worse than we predicted: labour shortages including in the NHS, food prices going up when people's wages are

stagnating, trade being hit when our economy is still struggling following the global financial crisis, not to mention the cost of holidays in Europe rising as the value of the pound plunges. With the arrival of Trump in the White House bringing the imposition of trade barriers and tariffs on steel, it should be clearer than ever to everyone that the closer we can stay to the EU the better.

Despite the Referendum rhetoric about “taking back control”, the Government have tried to take power from Brussels, not to give it to our democratically elected House of Commons but instead to grab it for Ministers.

The crucial vote in Parliament has been the “meaningful vote” amendment to the EU Withdrawal Bill. This is the amendment which would allow us to vote on whether the agreement the Government reaches with the EU is the best possible for the constituency and the country, ensure Parliament is in control of the Brexit process and remove the possibility that the Prime Minister can present a vote on the Brexit deal as a simple ‘take it or leave it’ vote.

Since 2016 I have consistently voted for Parliament to have a meaningful vote on the final deal, including backing Dominic Grieve’s amendment in December 2017 and in June 2018, when, facing the prospect of a humiliating defeat on this, the Prime Minister was forced to negotiate with her backbenchers and offer concessions. But the amendment the Government have put forward as a compromise is not good enough. Theresa May has gone back on her word and offered an amendment that takes the meaning out of the “meaningful” vote. Parliament cannot – and should not – accept it. In the face of deep government divisions it would have been better from the start for them to face up to the fact that Parliament’s involvement will make a perilous situation for our country better.

In Parliament this year I have repeatedly called on the Government to take action to combat the divisiveness of the Brexit issue. I moved an amendment which would give EU nationals who are living here, a right to remain in the UK. I protested in December when The Daily Mail and The Daily Telegraph singled out the Tory MPs who voted against the Government and called them traitors leading to their being subject to numerous death threats. When MPs in other countries are threatened with violence because of how they vote, we call that tyranny and fascism, but that is what is happening here. We have more contentious votes ahead of us, and there are people out there who are vulnerable to being incited to violence. 2 years ago our beloved colleague Jo Cox was killed. The safety of MPs is at stake here, and so, too, is our democracy. I urged The Home Secretary to call in the editors of the Daily Mail and The Daily Telegraph but this has yet to happen.

No country has left the EU before, and previously no country has turned its back on its largest trading bloc. I and Labour MPs are seeking to protect the country as best we can and we are backing amendments to enshrine in law a commitment to avoiding a hard border in Northern Ireland, to retain workers’ rights, environmental protections and the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

David Cameron will probably go down in history as the worst Prime Minister this country has ever had for calling, and losing, the referendum.

Chairing Parliament’s Select Committee on Human Rights

After the General Election, I resumed my role 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, Alex Burghart and I, and 6 Members of the House of Lords—Sally Hamwee, Margaret Prosser, former Lord Chief Justice Harry Woolf, Doreen Lawrence, David Trimble and Detta O’Cathain.

Joint Committee on Human Rights

					
Harriet Harman MP Committee Chair Labour @HarrietHarman	Karen Buck MP Labour @KarenPBuckMP	Baroness Hamwee Liberal Democrats	Lord Trimble Conservative	Baroness Lawrence of Clarendon Labour @DLawrenceOBE	Jeremy Lefroy MP Conservative @jeremylefroymp
					
	Mark Pritchard MP Conservative @mpritchardmp	Fiona Bruce MP Conservative	Baroness O’Cathain Conservative	Lord Woolf Crossbench	Baroness Prosser Labour

 HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

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, organisations and individuals to give us evidence in public, on the record and we hold inquiries on key human rights issues in the UK.

Over the past 12 months we have looked at:

- *The abuse of the human rights of people from the Windrush Generation who were wrongly detained,
- *Deaths in prison of people suffering mental ill health,
- *Protecting free speech in universities and how they balance the need to prevent discrimination and terrorist radicalisation,
- *Protection of the human rights of workers abroad who are working in the supply chains of UK companies,
- *and how in practice people can enforce their human rights.

We always try to hear direct from those who feel their human rights have been breached including people who are very vulnerable or have endured tragic loss.

*We brought 2 of the Windrush Generation to the House of Commons to give evidence about why they were locked up when they had done nothing wrong or been charged with any offence. We summoned new Home Secretary, Sajid Javid MP, and cross-examined him about why these people were detained when it was clear from their Home Office files that they had every right to be here. We are calling on the Government to immediately and fully compensate them for their financial loss and emotional distress. This has been a shameful episode and one which should cause the government to rethink how the immigration system, whilst clearly maintaining firm borders, respects and uphold human rights. I have asked the Home Office to release to all of the Windrush Generation who were wrongfully detained, copies of their Home Office files and asking what action the Government is taking to discipline or retrain immigration officials responsible for wrongful detention.

*We heard evidence from young offenders who have suffered from mental illness in young offenders' institutions. They told us about their fear when they were unable to phone their families, not getting medical appointments and getting no response from Prison Officers when they call for help. We heard from relatives of young people who'd tragically committed suicide in prison. We want to put into law a minimum ratio of prison officers to prisoners in each prison, a daily legal maximum of hours young offenders can be kept in their cells and the requirement for each detained young person with mental health problems to have a key-worker.

*We are conducting an inquiry into the enforcement of human rights. Human rights are worthless if they are not enforceable. We heard from 2 families who had a relative who died while under the care of the state - one in a police station and one in residential care. The state has a duty to protect the right to life of those in its care and to undertake a proper investigation when a life is lost. The families graphically explained how, without legal representation it was impossible for them to play their part in the inquest in a way which would prevent similar deaths. There is no public funding for bereaved families' legal representation while the authorities involved, the police, the health service, the social services, all had a full team of solicitors and barristers determined to prevent any blame being apportioned to the authorities in whose care the deceased was. We will be reporting our conclusions shortly and are looking at the impact of government legal aid cuts, whether only people who have money can access their rights, the ability of the legal profession to take cases to court and the resilience of the judiciary to withstand criticism from government in cases where it's the Government which is being accused of human rights abuses.

*In our inquiry into free speech in universities we heard evidence from campaign groups, student unions and student societies that there is a problem of inhibition of free speech on campuses. We found that the Charities Commission inhibits free speech by overly restrictive guidance and risk aversion. We found that though it is the most fundamental duty of government to keep us safe from terrorism, the Prevent Duty has a chilling effect, particularly on Muslim students, on what is perfectly lawful free speech. We found that though university administrators are committed to the principle of free speech, they make students seek approval to hold meetings, vet speakers and insist on complex application procedures. Student organisations are pulled in different ways and bombarded by conflicting guidance from the OFS, university authorities, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Charity Commission and Prevent. The new Minister for Higher Education, Sam Gyimah, has called them all together to

sort out a clear and coherent approach to free speech. And, in the meantime, to help students and unis with the forest of overlapping guidance, the committee has issued our own clear and simple [guidance](#). The right to free speech is fundamental. Unless it is unlawful, free speech should be allowed. Free speech within the law should mean just that.

Celebrating 100 years since women first won the right to vote on 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, violence, imprisonment and forced feeding. When you demand change and equality those who benefit from the status quo resist. To fight for equality is always controversial as it confronts convention and the establishment. Only persistence and solidarity delivers change. For each generation there is more to do. 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 supposed to be the husband and family. If a man beat his wife then the prevailing view was that she'd probably "brought it on herself." My generation of women 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. And the Government is cutting back on the childcare the Labour government built up - including tax credits to support childcare costs

*It's against the law to discriminate against part-timers. Yet women working part-time as they bring up young children are marginalised and undervalued at work.

*Fathers have the right to paternity leave but few can afford to take it.

*We have yet to get to equality in the home and equal sharing of responsibility for 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 domestic violence 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, outnumbered 2:1 by men in Parliament.

In this centenary year of the first women winning the right to vote, we must celebrate the advances previous generations have made. But we also must regather our strength and determination for further battles. The job's not yet done!



Mother of the House of Commons

In the debate to re-elect John Bercow as Speaker of the House of Commons on 13th June 2017, Theresa May announced that as Ken Clarke, the longest serving man MP is the "Father of the House" –as the longest serving women MP I am now "Mother of the House". This was then picked up and endorsed by Jeremy Corbyn, the Lib Dem leader, and Caroline Lucas. This is the first time there has been a Mother of the House and I am using my new role to continue to work on women's equality to:



*Tackle unequal pay

*Get the law changed to rule out women's previous sexual history being used as evidence in rape cases

*Tackle sexual harassment

*To introduce 'baby leave' (with a proxy vote) for the growing number of women and men MPs who have a baby,

*Call for a percentage of UK gross national income to be set aside for domestic violence refuges (like the % of GNI set aside to ensure proper funding for international development)

*and I am organising an international conference of women MPs from every country in the world as part of the centenary celebrations of the first women in the UK winning the right to vote in 1918.

Tackling Sexual Harassment



As the harassment that some parliamentary staff and journalists face in Westminster was exposed in October 2017, I tabled an Urgent Question to the Leader of the House, Andrea Leadsom, to press her to take action to ensure that Parliament and the Government deals effectively with complaints. It is a good thing that this has been exposed, as no woman—or man—who comes to work in Parliament should be subjected to unwanted sexual advances from those who are in a position of power over them and is long

overdue for all the parties to deal with. It is difficult for someone at the bottom of the system to make allegations about someone at the top. That gives those at the top impunity, of which some—few, but some—will take advantage. A young researcher would fear that if she made an allegation about an MP, her name would be plastered all over the newspapers and she would never get another job. We must have clear codes of conduct, complainant anonymity, independent investigation and decision-making about complaints and tough action when codes are breached. All the parties are reviewing their own complaints procedures and by the end of this sitting year Parliament itself will have a independent procedure to deal with complaints against MPs.

Gender pay gap —we've got the figures, now we need to close the gap

Thanks to Labour's Equality Act 2010, employers of over 250 people (public and private) from April this year had to publish annually the average hourly pay for their women and the average hourly pay for men. The gender pay gap is now laid bare. The reporting showed men are paid almost a fifth more than women, 8 out of 10 employers pay men more than women, and that this is the case in every sector, even sectors such as retail which depend on women's work. On 9th January 2018 and 18th April 2018 in Parliament I asked the Government to set out the action they are taking to narrow the gap. We need our Equality and Human Rights Commission to collate and publish this information by sector and by region so all employees can see how their organisation compares. And the EHRC must insist on strict targets. Unions will need to move the issue of pay equality up the bargaining agenda to do justice for their female members. The exposure of the persistence and extent of the pay gap angers women employees. But we must convert that anger into a determination for change. In order to ensure the EHRC are able to carry out this important task I am calling on the Government to reverse EHRC cuts of 70% so they are properly resourced to tackle pay discrimination.



MPs will now get “baby leave”

There are now more than 200 women on all sides of the Commons. Many of them are younger women who are having babies. And attitudes to fatherhood have changed. There is a growing expectation amongst men that they will share in the early hours/weeks of their new baby.

It's a democratic imperative to have women in Parliament. And it is a fact of life that women have babies. 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 have their vote counted at all times. A system of baby leave to square that circle is long overdue. Currently women MPs who are giving birth, or men MPs who want time with their baby, ask their Whips for a pair. An arrangement is then made with the Whips on the other side. While the MP is paired



Hansard records simply that they have not voted. The vote to which their constituency is entitled is not cast.

On 1 February 2018 Parliament debated & agreed my proposal to allow men and women MPs who have had a baby or adopted a child to vote by proxy - for another MP to cast their vote for them. The Procedure Committee then worked up detailed proposal and the next step is for the Leader of the House, Andrea Leadsom MP, to put the Committee's proposal to the House for agreement. With babies expected by Cat Smith MP, Laura Pidcock MP, Jo Swinson MP and Holly Lynch MP, and with very important votes coming up particularly on Brexit, it's vital that we sort this out quickly so no MP's constituents are left without a recorded vote simply because their MP is giving birth or caring for their new baby!

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.

Protecting funding for domestic violence refuges

Refuge provision is critical to the safety of women and their children fleeing domestic abuse. Yet since 2010 funding for DV refuges has been cut by 25%. I have made an Freedom of Information request to every local authority in England and Wales to ask them how much they have spent on DV refuges each year and how many refuges have closed since 2010, and will shortly be publishing a report. I am working with Dame Vera Baird QC, former Labour MP and Solicitor General and now Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner, and will table an amendment to the forthcoming Domestic Violence and Abuse bill to guarantee national funding for refuges to allow these vital services to grow and develop and prevent any more from closing. The government can't praise the sector whilst slashing their budgets to pieces.

Campaign to protect rape victims in criminal justice system

In January 2018 Dame Vera Baird QC and I launched a cross-party coalition to challenge the Attorney General and the Ministry of Justice over the prevalence of unfair questioning of rape complainants in court on their previous sexual history. This is the issue of the trial focusing not on what the defendant did, but on the woman's previous sexual history. It is based on the outdated notion that this is relevant evidence because if a woman had had sex with numerous men in the past, it would be likely to mean that she had agreed to sex with the defendant.

As part of this work I met the Rape Crisis South London team to hear about their vital efforts supporting victims of rape and sexual assault through the ordeal of trial. They told me it was difficult to support victims when they can't guarantee they won't be grilled about their previous sexual history. The fear of having this splashed across social media deters victims from reporting to the police or giving evidence at trial.

The law to stop this problem, Section 41 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999, is not working properly in courts up and down the country. Our campaign coalition of sexual violence support services, cross-party MPs, Peers and charities met in Parliament on 29th January 2018 to back the call on the Government to change the law.

Following the launch Vera and I met the Attorney General and Secretary of State for Justice, who have agreed to look again at monitoring how often this evidence is being admitted without proper applications being made in advance. This is not what women should have to put up with and it's not what Parliament intended. And it's not a fair trial if prejudicial irrelevant evidence is



used in court. The forthcoming Domestic Violence and Abuse bill presents an opportunity for change and we are working to achieve this.

Ethiopia visit – sexual health and maternal health provision

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, from 6th–11th November 2017 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.



You can read the full report on my website.

A note of thanks!

It is an enormous privilege to represent Camberwell and Peckham and to work not only in parliament but as part of our local team - our local councillors, Florence Eshalomi, our GLA member and the hundreds of local party and trade union members who actively work for local people.

I'd like to thank all our Constituency Labour Party officers and councillors for the hard work that they do arranging branch meetings and making sure that we are knocking on doors throughout the year.

Particular thanks to the Camberwell and Peckham CLP executive committee for all their hard work:

Chair: Ellie Cumbo, Secretary: Katharine Morshead, Vice Chair Membership: Michael Situ, Vice Chair Fundraising: Caroline Horgan, Campaign Co-Ordinator: Kieron Williams, Treasurer: Laura Alozie, Women's Officer: Catherine Rose, Equalities Officer: Youcef Hassaine, Youth Officer: Harjeet Sahota, Political Education Officer: Jack Taylor, IT & Training Officers: Malc McDonald and Richard Leeming, Affiliates & Supporters Liaison: Victoria Olisa, Auditors: Fiona Colley and Sunny Lambe.

And it's been an honour to work throughout the year with our local councillors:

Cllrs Barrie Hargrove, Cleo Soanes and Johnson Situ in Peckham, Cllrs Lorraine Lauder, Paul Fleming and Samantha Jury-Dada in Faraday, Cllrs Dora Dixon-Fyle, Tom Flynn and Kieron Williams in Camberwell Green, Cllrs Richard Livingstone, Michael Situ and Evelyn Akoto in Livesey (now Old Kent Road), Cllrs Fiona Colley, Sunil Chopra and Sandra Rhule in Nunhead (now Nunhead & Queens Road), Cllrs Ian Wingfield, Radha Burgess and Mark Williams in Brunswick Park (now St Giles Ward), Cllrs Peter John, Sarah King and Octavia Lamb in South Camberwell (now Champion Hill), Cllrs Jasmine Ali, Nick Dolezal and Jamille Mohammed in The Lane (now Rye Lane), Cllrs Gavin Edwards (now Nunhead & Queens Road), Renata Hamvas and Vikki Mills in Peckham Rye.

Congratulations to Jason Ochere in St Giles ward, Jack Buck in Faraday and Peter Babadu in Rye Lane on being elected for the first time!

A special note of thanks to outgoing councillors Mark Williams, Fiona Colley, Sam Jury-Dada and Octavia Lamb.

It's not an easy time to be a local councillor as the demand for local services grows and the government cuts the resources to our local council. But there has never been a more important time to have a strong and caring local council and despite the cuts Southwark Council is innovative and determined.

I'd like to pay tribute to my dedicated team of caseworkers Warda Hassan, Chloe Wright and Diogo Figueiredo who are caring and efficient on behalf of every local person who seeks my help and who are dealing with one of the biggest caseloads of any MP, my parliamentary assistant Rachel Smethers and Clare Gosbee for her outstanding leadership of the team and support for all my work.

For further information about my work in the constituency please see my website www.harrietharman.org