In 2018 my constituency priority is the NHS

Emergency Violent Crime Summit with Mayor Sadiq Khan
The rise we’ve witnessed in deadly violence in London over the past few weeks has been traumatic and difficult for families and communities and our thoughts are above all with those who have lost loved ones in the violence which has tragically killed 10 teenagers in 2018. On 10th April I attended an emergency cross-party summit called by the Mayor of London with Met Police Commissioner, Cressida Dick; Home Secretary, Amber Rudd MP; Deputy Mayor for Policing, Sophie Linden; London MPs; Assembly Members and council leaders to discuss what action needs to be taken to prevent more young people losing their lives.

Violent crime has been on the rise since 2014 as the services that play a critical role in local communities - the Met Police, councils, youth clubs and schools - have been cut to the bone by 8 years of Tory cuts. In Southwark there are 24% less police officers than in 2010. This loss of community policing combined with cuts to after school activities is creating a dangerous situation where vulnerable children are out of school, with nothing to do and deteriorating self-worth, making them susceptible to grooming and gang targeting.

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.

Parents need to know that their children are safe. I have written to the Home Secretary calling for more funding for schools and police to help ensure that every primary and secondary school is engaged fully in tackling the rise in violent crime.

Gender pay gap —we’ve got the figures, now we need to close the gap
By 4 April 2018 every company and public sector body with 250 employees or more had to publish the difference in the hourly wages they pay men and women employees. Labour legislated for this gender pay gap reporting in the Equality Act 2010 and now the Government have implemented it. It’s important because what it shows is what women at work have always known but never had proof of before, that there is systemic pay discrimination against women at work.

- 8 out of 10 employers pay men more than women
- Men are paid more than women in every sector - even sectors such as retail which wouldn’t exist without women’s work.
- Why should women on the checkout at Tesco put up with £8 per hour when the men in the store room get £11.50.
- Women are paid less even in the trade unions whose job it is to negotiate for their women members. How can Unite champion equal pay for their members when their women employees are paid 30% less than the men.
- It’s nothing less than an insult to the women at the University of Liverpool that men get bonuses that are 90% than the women’s.

On 18 April I tabled an Urgent Question to the Minister for Women to ask the Government what action they are taking to build on the publishing of the figures and take action to close the gender pay gap.

We are no longer prepared to listen to any explanations, justifications or rationalisations. We’re not interested in excuses. The Government must now set stretching targets for each sector to narrow the gap and call in business and trade union leaders to ask them what they are doing. I pay tribute to all the women who are speaking up and campaigning for change. Equal pay for women is not only right but crucial, it’s the best way to improve life for low income families and end child poverty.

Government must urgently guarantee Windrush people’s status
Many of the thousands of British residents of the ‘Windrush generation’ and their families, who legally arrived in Britain from the Commonwealth prior to 1973, are facing enormous stress, anxiety and suffering as a result of the Government incorrectly identifying them as ‘illegal migrants’. The situation facing many of the ‘Windrush generation’ and their families is unacceptable, cruel and inhumane. Individuals who have lived, worked, paid taxes and raised families in this country for decades are being denied the right to workers to ask them what they are doing. I pay tribute to all the women who are speaking up and campaigning for change. Equal pay for women is not only right and just, it’s the best way to improve life for low income families and end child poverty.

On the 15th April, I wrote jointly with David Lammy MP and 140 MPs to the Prime Minister urging her to take swift action to make an immediate commitment to recognise and secure the rights of Commonwealth citizens. The Government need to get a grip on of the situation quickly, right the wrongs it has inflicted on the ‘Windrush generation’, apologise to those affected and make sure this does not happen again.

For further information about my work in the constituency please see my website www.harrietharman.org
A single mother ordered to repay £1,137 in child benefit and a penalty charge of £219 by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) came to see me to ask why she was not alerted that she was no longer eligible to claim when her income bracket changed. I have written to HMRC to ask for a repayment plan that takes into account her current outgoings and to consider waiving the penalty. I'm awaiting a response.

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 detentions for misbehaving or inattention in his lessons. She applied for a EHCP in 2016 but the Council rejected the application because the school failed to submit supporting evidence because they don’t have a Specialist Educational Needs Co-ordinator in post. I have written to the St Gabriel’s College and Southwark Council to ask them to work together to ensure an EHCP is awarded.

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 at Lewisham University Hospital and therefore has not received the medication he needs. He underwent an MRI scan at the same hospital in 2012 when his family first noticed his memory problems but he was not given his results and now faces further delays as his appointment is not until May 2018. I have written to Lewisham University Hospital and asked for his appointment to be brought forward.

A woman originally from Jamaica, who recently lost her mother to cancer contacted me because her sister, who still lives in Jamaica, applied for a visit visa which refused on 6th March 2018 but she did not know why. Without knowing why her first application was refused her sister’s chances of being allowed into the UK in time for her mother’s funeral on 10th April 2018 were low. I wrote to UK Visas and Immigration and asked for the decision notice to be sent to my constituent and for any subsequent visa applications to be considered urgently given the circumstances. The funeral went ahead as planned.

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 be 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.

Policy issues update
In March 674 Camberwell & Peckham residents wrote to me about policy issues. The top 3 concerns raised were:
1. Asking me to back the Refugee Family Reunification Bill. I am pleased that this has passed to the next stage and I will continue to support it.
2. Opposing the Saudi Crown Prince UK Visit—I was disappointed the Government refused to support this. I will continue to back measures to protect workers’ rights.
3. Asking me to back the Unpaid Work Trial Shift Bill—I was pleased the Refugee Family Reunification Bill.

You can find out more on the ‘Policy Issues’ & Letters to Ministers pages on my website.

Helping constituents with their problems
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