In 2019 my constituency priority is the NHS

Opposing the Government’s Brexit deal—15th January

Harriet Harman MP for Camberwell and Peckham

To 1,000s my constituents who’ve emailed re #BrexitVote - I will vote No to PM deal. Bad for econ, security, climate, rights. Then all options incl #PeoplesVoteNow @Keir_Starmer. No to #NoDealBrexit


Thanks to the hundreds of Camberwell & Peckham Labour members along with constituents who emailed me ahead of the Government's disastrous Brexit vote. The Government suffered the largest ever defeat in history—432 MPs voted against the Prime Minister’s deal. I voted against the deal because it would be bad for our economy, security, environment and workers’ rights. All options including a #PeoplesVote must now be on the table and I am working with colleagues across the House to use all mechanisms possible to ensure we prevent a catastrophic No Deal Brexit.

Government must tackle violence as a public health issue

Most of us who live in Southwark think it’s a great place to live. But there’s an issue which casts a shadow over our borough, and indeed our great city, and that is the increase in the number of murders. 2018 saw the highest number of people killed in London in a decade. Last year 132 people were killed. And for each one of the victims there are devastated parents, husbands, wives, children, friends and communities left behind. The causes of this rise in violence are complex and have been developing over a number of years. Eight years of cuts from the Tory government have undoubtedly made the problems worse. There has, rightly, been a big focus on the lives of young men lost to gang violence. But we must never lose sight of the fact that there also remains a persistent high number of women being killed by their husbands or boyfriends – domestic homicide. Read my Southwark News Column on what must be done to step up the Government’s response to prevent the horrific death toll getting worse.

Working to end indefinite detention—The Immigration Bill

Looking back to the Windrush scandal & ahead to the upheaval EU citizens face securing their status in the UK after Brexit, the Joint Committee on Human Rights is seeking amendments to the Brexit Immigration Bill to end the historic injustice of indefinite detention for non-criminal migrants. Currently when people are taken from their homes by the Home Office to immigration detention centres if they’ve overstayed their visa they don’t know if they’ll be in for a day, a month or a year. Our amendment, which has cross-party support & backing from Yvette Cooper MP, Hilary Benn MP, Andrew Mitchell MP, Dominic Grieve QC MP & David Davis MP, would put in place a 28 day time limit to end this suffering and uncertainty. It’s long overdue to end this historic injustice.

Threats and abuse against MPs is a threat to democracy:

Speaker's Conference Proposal

We all saw the TV clips of thugs shouting abuse in Anna Soubry’s face and blocking her way to parliament. Everyone agreed it was awful. Attacks on, and threats to, MPs are commonplace. Jo Cox was killed, Rosie Cooper could have been killed and others are threatened with death. Where MPs are threatened just because they are an MP that is an undermining of our democracy. We can’t have a situation where MPs are keeping their heads down, restricting advice surgeries or reluctant to go on public transport on their own. We need to look at how we balance the rights of demonstrators and the right of MPs to go about their work for which they were elected. As Mother of the House of Commons I am working with Father of the House, Ken Clarke MP, for a Speaker's Conference on protecting our democracy by guaranteeing the ability of MPs to go about their work without threat, harassment or violence.

Proxy voting for pregnant MPs must be implemented immediately

Labour MP Tulip Siddiq should not have had to choose between postponing her Caesarean to go through the division lobby in a wheelchair nine months pregnant, or losing her right to the crucial #BrexitVote. Parliament agreed proxy voting for #babeleave in February 2018 but the Government has refused to implement this. With more important votes coming they must urgently bring this forward. Watch my protest at the intolerable delay in the Commons
Helping constituents with their problems

Local councillor Evelyn Akoto contacted me because a De Montfort University student from Camberwell contacted her because she lost her passport and needed a replacement urgently so she could go to New York for a meeting and attend the United Nations General Assembly. I made urgent enquiries with HM Passport Office and their courier company, DX Group, and they delivered the passport 21 hours after she first contacted me.

A disabled man from Peckham with serious mental health issues contacted me because he was £280 worse off each month after being re-assessed by the DWP for Universal Credit. I took up his case urgently with the DWP and they have revised their decision and paid him £609 in back payments.

The solicitors of a detained Chinese man from Old Kent Road who were trying to postpone his removal to China contacted me for my assistance. I made urgent enquiries with UKVI and they deferred his removal. He is now back at home with his partner while his solicitors lodge an appeal.

A single mother with a young family, contacted me because she needed urgent help after suffering years of domestic violence. She wanted to be rehoused and I contacted the council to press them to intervene given the serious risk posed to their safety. She has now been rehoused.

Supporting families with autism

I’ve been contacted by an increasing number of people in Camberwell & Peckham who have a family member with autism and who need help getting the right support. As chair of Parliament’s Human Rights Committee I’m leading an inquiry into the Assessment and Treatment Units where some autistic young people are detained. I am very worried that parents’ concerns about whether the place their child is being held in is right for them are not being listened to. The Human Rights Committee will be publishing our report shortly.

Read my article here.

Ending the “50 shades of grey” defence in domestic homicide

Natalie Connolly was killed by John Broadhurst during what he claimed was “rough sex”. He blamed her for her own death and said she wanted his violence. He was charged with manslaughter and sentenced to only 3 years 8 months. I referred this sentence as ‘Unduly Lenient’ to the Attorney General in December. I’m very disappointed that he will not appeal the sentence. Men used to evade murder charges with the “nagging and shagging defence”. The 21st century version is the “50 shades of grey defence”. This cannot be allowed to stand and I’m seeking amendments to the forthcoming Domestic Abuse Bill.

Peckham Rye Campaigning

Lots of concerns from local people about safety due to overcrowded Peckham Rye station & trains on 2nd January. I’ll continue to urge Network Rail to take action. Thanks to CLP Chair, Dave Lewis & Cllr Jasmine Ali for organising!

Policy issues update

In December, 1,146 Camberwell & Peckham residents wrote to me about policy issues. The top 3 concerns raised were:

1. Vote against Theresa May’s Brexit deal & back a People’s Vote.
2. Oppose the Government’s rollout of Universal Credit.
3. Ask government to stop selling arms to ‘repressive regimes’.

In 2018 I was contacted 9,291 times by constituents on policy issues. Thanks to everyone who has been in touch.

December 2018 New Cases Breakdown

- Social Services: 2%
- Employment: 9%
- Housing: 51%
- Education: 4%
- Other: 7%
- Health: 8%
- Transport & Parking: 4%
- Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour: 4%
- Immigration: 10%
- Benefits & Pensions: 8%
- Environment: 2%

Action on 316 cases

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