

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

ANNUAL REPORT

2019



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Introduction

I am honoured to be able to continue as MP for Camberwell and Peckham following the 2019 General Election and will be completely dedicated to my constituents.

Labour's majority was 33,780. Our vote share was 71.3%. The turnout was 63.4%.

The message from voters was loud and clear - they wanted a Labour government and they feared things would go from bad to worse for them and their families with a re-elected Tory government. But we had a terrible National result and so have failed to deliver for them.

The Labour Party has started the vital process of rebuilding after our terrible General Election defeat and we are now in the process of electing our new Leader and Deputy Leader.

As we choose our new leadership team we must recognise the scale of our defeat but go forward with determination. I hope people will be voting to:

- Elect a leader who can lead an effective Labour Opposition to hold the government to account and who can convince the country that they are a credible Labour Prime Minister and that we are an alternative government-in-waiting.
- Speak up loud and clear, inside and outside Parliament, so that even if we can't win votes in Parliament, at least people will be able to see that we remain strong for them and confident in our Labour values.
- Make the changes that are necessary in our Party to enable us to win back those seats that we lost and win in those areas where, despite the evident chaos and hardship caused by the Tories, people would not support us and reach out to areas which we need to form a government.

My priorities locally will remain defending our NHS, including King's and the Maudsley, from Tory cuts, making sure tackling knife crime and its causes is high on the political agenda, fighting against climate breakdown, demanding proper funding for Southwark schools and Southwark Council and for the affordable homes local people so desperately need.

Harriet Harman

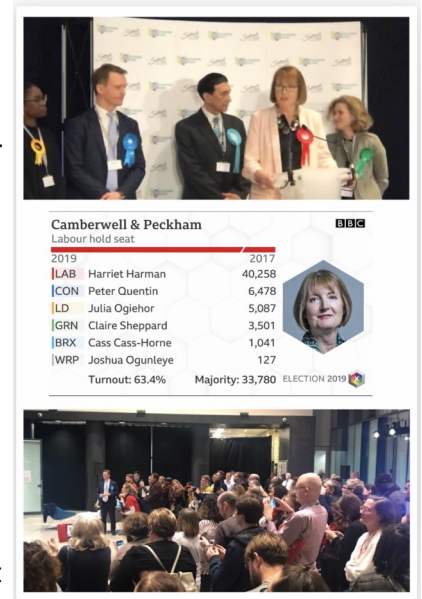
Helping Constituents with their Problems

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 **3,977** people, of whom **1,716** 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 in Peckham, 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.

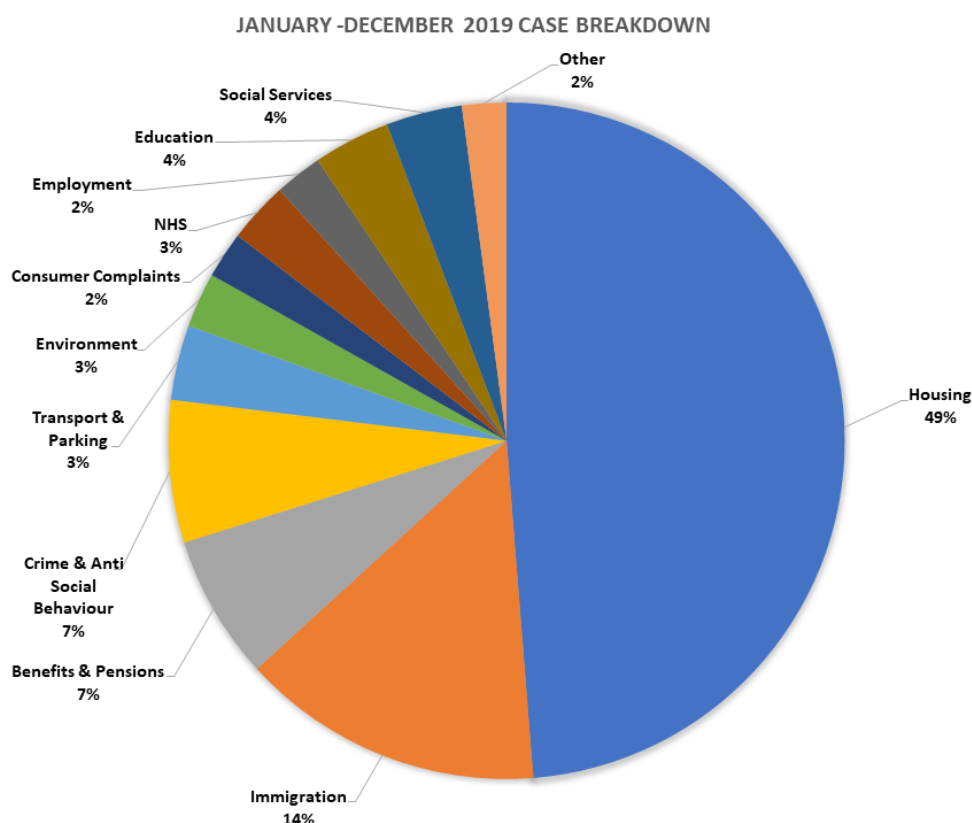
For people who I need to see because they do not want to, or cannot communicate with me by phone or email, I have advice surgeries at Cambridge House.

The way I do my casework has changed over the years. 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:





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 housing problems

- A Cossall Walk council tenant contacted me because his kitchen units were in a serious state of disrepair and despite raising the issue with Southwark Council on several occasions nothing had been done. I wrote to the council to ask them to undertake the work and they installed new kitchen cupboards shortly afterwards.
- A Wyndham Estate resident contacted me because his kitchen floor started to bubble up only a few months after his kitchen was renovated by the council. He reported the problem and contractors attended his home but the problem persisted. I contacted the council and asked them to carry out urgent repairs and compensate my constituent. All repairs have now been completed and compensation will be paid once a sum is agreed.
- A wheelchair user contacted me because she and her partner were going to be made homeless in 14 days, as their landlord was selling his property. I wrote to the council and they were given emergency temporary accommodation that met her access needs. The council is now working with them to find them a permanent home.
- Three Chabot Drive residents contacted me as their homes were being damaged by a leak that the council's contractors could not locate. I wrote to the council to ask them to investigate again. They traced the leak to a neighbouring building, fixed it and repaired the damage to my constituents' homes.
- A Camberwell man contacted me because the lease on his flat was due to expire and he could not afford to renew it. His family had been in the flat for 90 years and he was in fear of being made homeless. I contacted the freeholder, Southwark Council, and they've agreed he could stay in his home as a tenant.
- A Camberwell woman with cancer contacted me because she was made homeless after the council repossessed her landlord's flat while she was in hospital following complications post-surgery. Unbeknownst to her the flat had been illegally sublet. I urgently contacted Cllr Steph Cryan and my constituent was placed in emergency accommodation within 2 hours.

- A single mother living with her autistic child in a 1 bedroom Wandle property contacted me as she was being moved out while repairs were being done. She was moved into a 2 bedroom property and didn't want to return to a 1 bed. She says a permanent 2 bedroom home with a garden would assist her daughter's development. I contacted Wandle to ask for her to be permanently rehoused in a suitable property and they agreed to do so. She has now moved into her new home.
- 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 help given the serious risk posed to their safety. She has now been rehoused.



Constituents with immigration and visa problems

- An asylum seeker from Camberwell, originally from Guinea, came to see me with her foster carer in January 2019 as she was at risk of becoming homeless and losing her job, unless UKVI issued her Indefinite Leave to Remain before her 25th birthday in February. I wrote to UKVI and her Indefinite Leave to Remain was granted shortly afterwards.
- An Elmington Estate resident, originally from Nigeria, asked for my help because he wanted to return to Nigeria for his brother's funeral, but he didn't have his Biometric Residence Permit. He'd submitted his permit to the Home Office as evidence for his wife's visa application and it had not yet been returned and he could not travel outside the UK without it. I wrote to the Home Office to ask them to return his permit as soon as possible. He received it 7 days later and was able to travel as planned.
- A single mother living on the Aylesbury Estate who had been granted Leave to Remain until August 2022 contacted me for help because her Biometric Residence Permit had been delayed by 2 months and as a result she had lost out on a job offer. I wrote to the Home Office and asked that her BRP be sent out to her and she received it a week later.
- A single mother from Nigeria living in Camberwell contacted me because she had applied for Leave to Remain and paid the £2,297 fee to the Home Office but her application was refused a year later alleging 'non-payment of fee'. I wrote to the Home Office and they re-opened her application and confirmed it would be dealt with as a priority.
- A Peckham man from Bangladesh contacted me because his wife had been waiting for 6 months for her Biometric Residence Permit to be issued and that was preventing her from joining him in the UK. I made enquiries with UKVI and the BRP was issued 2 weeks later.
- A Russian woman living in Camberwell contacted me because she wanted to change her surname on her residence permit after she got married. She paid £800 for UKVI's one-day service but had still not heard back 51 days later. I wrote to UKVI and they issued her new permit within 2 days and refunded her the £800.
- Kidney Care UK contacted me on behalf of a Camberwell man with renal failure whose hopes of receiving a kidney from his sister were hampered as her UK visa expired before the scheduled surgery date. His sister had to return home to Algeria and apply to return. I asked the Immigration Minister to expedite the application, her visa was issued in 15 days and the transplant took place in May 2019.
- A Windrush Generation pensioner who submitted her first British passport application contacted me as she needed to travel to the US to visit her dying mother and she wanted her application expedited. I made urgent enquiries with HM Passport Office and her passport was issued in 48 hours. Her mother passed away before she could fly out but she was able to attend the funeral.



Helping constituents get the benefits they're entitled to

- A Denmark Hill Estate resident contacted me as he was £379 worse off each month on Universal Credit than when he was on Employment and Support Allowance and he was finding it hard to buy food and pay his rent and bills. I wrote to the DWP who made a backdated payment of £2,329.76 and he will get an extra £332.26 each month going forward.
- A man living in Rye Lane asked for my help because he and his family were facing eviction. His Housing Benefit had been suspended without him knowing so he had accumulated over £1,000 in rent arrears and he only discovered that when his landlord, Affinity Sutton Housing Association, sent him an eviction notice. I made urgent enquiries and he and his family are no longer facing eviction, his Housing Benefit has been reinstated and he has received a back-payment of £3,789.60.
- Perennial, the charity that supports people who work in gardening and horticulture, contacted me on behalf of a severely disabled woman who applied for Severe Disability Payment (SDP) in July 2018 and had not heard back from the DWP. I wrote to the DWP and they backdated her claim for SDP and credited £14,500.05 into her account.
- 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 revised their decision and paid him £609 in back payments.



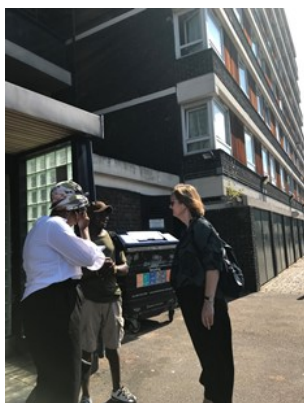
Helping constituents who've been victims of crime and anti-social behaviour

- The mother of a young man who was fatally stabbed outside their home in Camberwell last summer contacted me because she wanted to move home following the tragic loss of her son. I wrote to the council to ask them to help rehouse her and they have made her application a priority.

Helping constituents get the money they're entitled to

Since January 2019 my team and I have helped get Camberwell and Peckham constituents **£117,199.99** in backdated disability benefits, written off rent arrears and heating and hot water refunds/compensation. What lies behind this sum is hardship and struggle for local people wrongly denied the money to which they are entitled.

- A Rye Lane trader contacted me because Royal Bank of Scotland had mis-sold her Interest Rate Hedging Products. I made an enquiry on her behalf and she was paid £31,030 in compensation.
- A disabled woman contacted me because rogue tradesman had coerced her into withdrawing £15,000 in cash to pay for work to her roof that was never carried out. She felt that her bank had not done enough to support her as a vulnerable customer as they did not question the large withdrawals she was making. I wrote to Lloyds Banking Group, who own Halifax, and my constituent was refunded £15,000 and paid £500 in compensation.



Other cases to note

- A Camberwell woman contacted me because her daughter with autism had been refused a Blue Badge which she believed was unfair. I contacted Southwark Council and her Blue Badge application was approved.

Work experience in the casework office

Through my casework office, I offer opportunities for local pupils to gain work experience.



The NHS continued to be my top priority in 2019

Government must give King's College Hospital resources it needs to make necessary improvements

The Care Quality Commission has rated King's College Hospital as 'Requires Improvement'. While this is obviously disappointing it's no good the Government expecting King's College Hospital to improve at the same time as the hospital's resources are being cut. You cannot improve an organisation by cutting it to the bone.

This will require the Government to work with the new leadership team at King's to make the changes which are necessary and to commit to ensuring that the exceptional doctors, nurses and other staff at King's have the funding they need to deliver, and to tackle the staffing shortages. I will continue to do all I can to back them up.

Opposing King's College Hospital facilities staff transfer from NHS employment

King's consulted to transfer 130 employees from their Care, Estates and Facilities team and their services out of the NHS and into the trust's 'wholly owned' subsidiary, King's Facilities Management (KFM). The staff and their union, Unite, asked for my help to challenge the proposed changes.

Some of the employees had worked in the NHS for over 20 years. Their terms and conditions would have been undermined by the transfer, because their long service benefit would not have been protected in the same way as it is within the NHS.

At a time when the trust is in Financial Special Measures and there has been high turnover of staff, yet more restructuring could damage staff morale.

I wrote to and met with the Chief Executive, Dr Clive Kay, to register my objection to the proposed changes, in particular that these employees, many of whom who have worked for the NHS for decades, would no longer be NHS employees. I am pleased that King's will not be pressing ahead with these changes to staff contracts.

Defending people with autism and their families

Visiting people with autism at Maudsley Hospital

People with autism and their families should get the support they need, not face cuts. They need to be listened to, not ignored. They need the opportunity to get jobs that suit them, not be forced into unsuitable jobs and repeatedly sacked. Thanks to service users, staff and Dr John Cheetham, at the Maudsley for meeting with me.



It was inspiring to open the new Cherry Garden School building joining the children, dedicated staff and families! Thanks to Southwark Council for this wonderful new building.

Backing Southwark Independent Voice

The people who understand best and care most about a child or young person with special educational needs are their parents. I fully support Independent Voice Parents Forum, and the work of Cllr Jasmine Ali and all the parents involved.



I'm a member of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Autism and will continue to work across party in Parliament to improve support for children with autism and their families.



Launching the Southwark Child Mental Health Commission

Quality child mental health services is an equality and human rights issue. A child being able to get the support they need should not depend on how much money their parents have. All credit to Southwark Council for launching the new Southwark Child and Adolescent Mental Health Commission and insisting that 100% of children with mental health problems get the services they need. Thanks to Children's Commissioner Anne Longfield for her backing.



Tackling serious youth violence

Too many Southwark young people are dying violent deaths. We need leadership and more resources from government, and an end to the cuts.

Supporting the Brandon community grieving another young life lost to knife violence

The Brandon Estate community in Camberwell again faced grief and distress after 18 year old Clinton Evbota, a former resident of the estate, was stabbed to death in the centre of the estate on Grimsel Path on 10th October. Clinton was the third young man to be murdered on the Estate in just 18 months after Rhyhiem Barton, aged 17, was killed in May 2018 and Siddique Kamara, aged 23, was killed in August 2018. The morning after Clinton was killed I met up with the tenants' association chairs and talked to residents on the estate with Cllr Evelyn Akoto, Southwark Council Cabinet Member for Community Safety & local councillor Alice Macdonald. For families and the community who live on the Brandon this is not just a newspaper headline, this is their lives, and for Clinton's family, it's their worst nightmare.



It is vital that the longstanding demands of the tenants' association are met. They'd been asking for CCTV and for trees on the estate to be cut back. I wrote to the Council for these changes to be made. The TRAs are the heart of the community and know what's needed. Council action is important, but the causes of this horrific violence are complex and have been developing over years. Government cuts have hit every service. There are fewer after-school clubs and holiday playschemes, fewer support workers in schools and child and adolescent mental health services are under strain. These services are vital, especially for young people who are losing their way and are at risk of getting into trouble. In every area there should be youth clubs and services for young people to help tackle knife crime and problems such as mental ill-health and school exclusions.

Tragically Clinton was not the only young man from Camberwell and Peckham we lost this year. In June 2019 the community mourned 18 year old McCaulay Urugbezi-Edwards, who was fatally stabbed near Tiverton Street, SE1. After his murder I visited his father with Florence Eshalomi AM and Cllr Evelyn Akoto to express my condolences and we helped his family with rehousing and got counselling support for McCaulay's sister.



Following a stabbing involving 2 young people in February I visited Grosvenor Tenants and Residents Association for a meeting with the Chair, Chris Lacey, Camberwell Green ward Cllr Kieron Williams and ward police officers, Charlotte and Shane, to renew action on the community's safety concerns.

Together with [every London Labour MP I wrote to the Chancellor](#) to press our demands that the Government give the police the resources they need. This is a national crisis. [We are calling for an emergency committee](#) coordinated by No.10 to develop a clear vision for all parts of government, and actions for police, prevention programmes, youth centres, schools, councils and mental health services. It is time for Boris Johnson to step up and provide focus and leadership. I regularly meet Southwark Police Chief, Simon Messinger to discuss the local response.



Remembering Lakanal: 10 years on



There was a moving service at St Giles Church for the 3 women & 3 young children who lost their lives in the Lakanal House fire in 2009 and for all those affected by the tragedy. Thanks to Dave Lewis, Sceaux Gardens Tenants' Association and local councillors Ian Wingfield, Radha Burgess and Jason Ochere for their support to the community.

I raised fire hazards including cladding & hoarding, security grills & lack of sprinklers with the local Fire Commander in our regular meetings at Old Kent Road Station.



Demanding action on delays, accessibility and overcrowding at local stations



[Important news that Peckham Rye station is to get a lift.](#) Locally many have campaigned for years for safety & accessibility for wheelchairs, buggies, elderly, and people with restricted mobility. We need the work done soon.

I receive many emails and tweets from local people raising safety concerns about the overcrowding on trains at Peckham Rye and Denmark Hill stations. I have been working with Helen Hayes MP for Dulwich and West Norwood to urge Network Rail to take action.

It is very welcome that in October Network Rail secured government funding to move forward with plans to increase capacity at Denmark Hill and is working with Southwark Council and our local hospitals towards the desperately needed second entrance on Windsor Walk. We look forward to finding out when this long overdue work will start and when it will be completed.



I continue to work with the campaign to re-open Camberwell station.

In Parliament

Policy issues

- 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. In 2019 I received **10,925** policy enquiries, up **93%** on 2017, in large part due to the Brexit crisis.

2019 top 10 policy issues:

1. Oppose the Tories' hard Brexit: **3,179**
2. Speak up for our NHS and keep it off the table in future trade deals: **940**
3. Tackle the climate emergency: **751**
4. Extension of abortion rights to Northern Ireland: **333**
5. Support better welfare for farm animals: **332**
6. Oppose Boris Johnson's prorogation of Parliament: **235**
7. Protect our rivers from single use plastics: **231**
8. Call on government to end arms exports to repressive regimes: **230**
9. End homelessness: **192**
10. Raise the violence in Hong Kong: **138**

Brexit negotiations update

I'm grateful to all the constituents who have taken the time to write to me on the Brexit debacle. Like them, I opposed Brexit and I am very concerned that the Government's Withdrawal Agreement Bill removes protections for workers and Parliament's role in negotiations on our future relationship with the EU.

I voted to amend the Bill to include these commitments, including the right of Parliament to scrutinise and vote on the UK-EU future relationship. Unfortunately, these were defeated by the Government MPs and the Government's Withdrawal Agreement Bill passed its stages in the House of Commons.

I remain very concerned about the Brexit deal that the Government will implement. The deal explicitly rules out a new Customs Union and a close future relationship with the Single Market, which have been key demands of industry and trade unions. It is also now explicit that there will be new trade barriers with the EU and additional checks at borders. Commitments on rights and protections are now significantly weaker than in the original deal. Unanswered questions also remain on our future participation in security arrangements.

A difficult stage is yet to come; agreeing new relationships on trade, security and issues from data sharing to research collaboration and more. The decisions over our future relationship with the EU will have consequences for generations. I do not think this the time to lock Parliament out of decision making or diminish its role in scrutinising the Government and will do everything I can to hold the Government to account.

Fighting against climate breakdown

Greta Thunberg and climate protesters across the world this year have raised global awareness of the urgency of the climate crisis. Their action is a wake-up call to the Government and to all of us as MPs. We can see the science. It is now our responsibility to act.



Most of us are starting to change what we do day to day to minimise the harm we inflict on the planet, from reusable coffee cups, to recycling more, driving less or cutting down on food waste. But the good work of individuals, councils and charities will never be enough. This needs government action. Throughout the year I have backed action to prioritise tackling the climate emergency such as:

- co-sponsoring an Early Day Motion to demand the Government establish a UK Citizens' Climate Assembly to debate climate policy and deliver proposals to government.
- writing news columns calling for the Government to increase clean energy sources such as wind and solar power, ban single use plastics, invest in buses, walking and cycling to cut car use and make bus travel free for under 25s,
- voting for Labour's motion to make the UK Parliament the first in the world to declare a climate emergency.

Mother of the House of Commons

[At last Parliament has #babyleave!](#)

On 28th January 2019 MPs agreed to introduce the [proxy voting](#) system I had proposed for Members who've had a baby or adopted a child. [Tulip Siddiq became the first MP to vote by proxy](#)—at home with her new son Raphael! Since then 20 more MPs have used the scheme, including 11 men MPs. Parliament voted on 16th January 2020 to extend the scheme for another 6 months and I will be campaigning to make this permanent.

Urging Boris Johnson to bring back the Domestic Abuse Bill and properly fund it

After years of struggle on domestic violence I welcomed the important introduction of the new Domestic Abuse Bill, including vital measures to create a new definition of domestic abuse, a legal duty to provide DV refuges for women fleeing their homes, the new DV Commissioner and extending the Bill to victims in Northern Ireland. But what happens next is crucial. Boris Johnson has not been a champion of the cause of tackling domestic violence, but he must commit to taking the Bill forward, properly funded.



Domestic violence refuges recognised as public service at last

Ever since the first women's refuge, Chiswick Women's Aid, was created in 1971 by Erin Pizzey, women's refuges have been precarious financially, existing hand to mouth from year to year. The Government announcement of a new legal duty on councils to fund refuges is a very important moment as it marks the point at which domestic violence is recognised as not an optional issue but a national public policy imperative. Women in and outside the House of Commons have campaigned for decades for this. Now the Government must put their money where their mouth is and give councils the money they need to support women and children fleeing domestic violence.



[My speech in Parliament.](#)

[Read my Southwark News article.](#)

[Read my Huffington Post article.](#)

Campaigning to end the "Rough Sex Defence" in domestic homicides

In 2016, 26-year-old Natalie Connolly was found dead at the home she shared with her partner John Broadhurst in Staffordshire. She had 40 separate injuries including vaginal arterial bleeding, blunt-force injuries to the head, and a fractured eye socket.

Broadhurst was sentenced to just 3 years and 8 months for killing Natalie after the CPS dropped the charge from murder to manslaughter, in response to his claim the injuries were from "rough sex". He sprayed her face with bleach before leaving her at the bottom of the stairs, stepping over her lifeless body the next morning to have breakfast and clean the car, before calling the emergency services and telling police she was 'dead as a doughnut'.

I am working with the MP for Natalie's family, Mark Garnier, to add 2 new clauses to the Domestic Abuse Bill:

The first would mean that, if a man kills a woman, he cannot claim as a defence that she consented to the violence which led to her death. As it stands, he can make claims about her sexual habits which are unchallengeable, as she's not there to speak up against him. It leaves families absolutely distraught and, ultimately, it's a way of him avoiding responsibility for what he's done.

The second would ensure that the decision to drop the charge from murder to manslaughter in a domestic homicide case would have to be made by the Director of Public Prosecutions.



[Sign our petition](#) to stop men who kill their wives or girlfriends evading murder charges by claiming 'rough sex gone wrong'.



Chairing Parliament's Select Committee on Human Rights



Defending people with autism and their families

We regard ourselves as a society which respects human rights. But the brutal truth is that we are failing to protect some of our most vulnerable children and young people - those with autism and learning disabilities. The Panorama programme showing the taunting and abuse of young patients detained in Whorlton Hall hospital exposed this horrific reality.

As Chair of Parliament's Human Rights Committee [I summoned the regulator, the Care Quality Commission, to Parliament to answer why they had suppressed a critical inspection report](#) which found bullying and abuse at Whorlton Hall as long ago as 2015. They then published a report certifying it as "good". A regulator who rates as "good" an institution which is abusing vulnerable people is worse than no regulator at all. In doing so they shield abusers and fail to protect people. The CQC is no safeguard of human rights and these institutions need to be shut down and a new vigorous inspection system put in place.

Launching new cross-party coalition to end indefinite immigration detention

Most people don't realise that every year over 24,000 people are locked up in immigration detention. Accused of no crime, they're treated worse than criminals.

The decision to detain an immigrant is made behind closed doors by the Home Office. And detention can be indefinite. With no independence, scrutiny or accountability mistakes get made - as we saw with terrible consequences in the Windrush cases. So it is vital lessons are learned and the [Windrush injustices](#) are not inflicted on any of the 3 million EU nationals who are now to be subject to our immigration laws. The [Joint Committee on Human Rights](#) which I chair, is seeking to amend the forthcoming Immigration Bill to make the detention decision independent of the Home Office and to limit detention to 28 days. [Watch my speech](#).

I've joined the new All-Party Parliamentary Group on Immigration Detention chaired by SNP Alison Thewliss MP to protect migrants' rights. MPs from all parties are determined to introduce a time limit of 28 days and to end arbitrary indefinite detention.

As part of our campaign it has been a privilege to work with Windrush victims, MPs from all parties, Amnesty & Liberty to deliver a petition with over 100,000 signatures to the Home Secretary calling for [a 28 day time limit on immigration detention](#).

Government must end irreparable harm to children with mothers in prison



A child's right to family life should be a central concern when a judge is thinking about sending a mother to jail. Our Human Rights Committee inquiry found too often this is not the case. Judges often don't even know a defendant has a child. When a judge sends a mother to prison (80% for non-violent offences) they sentence her children to harmful separation. [Our report](#) calls for a change in the law so that when sentencing judges must consider the effect on children. It's wrong to punish children of non-violent women offenders. There are other ways to deal with crime.



UK must not become weak link for human rights in treaties post-Brexit

The Human Rights Committee published [our report](#) into human rights and trade post-Brexit. We were concerned that [human rights are not part of the consideration](#) in new free trade deals currently being negotiated by the Government. The Human Rights Minister told us he didn't even know if human rights were in the newly signed Israel-UK trade deal! Rights should not be an 'add-on' to international trade agreements, but be embedded from the outset. We are demanding Parliament's Human Rights Committee remit is widened so that we can scrutinise these agreements.

Threats to MPs are a threat to our democracy



Once constituents have elected an MP to work for them, that MP must be able to do so without threat or hindrance—it is a democratic imperative that MPs are safe and available to the public. The Police, Crown Prosecution Service and Parliament all urgently need to work together to respond to the rising death threats and abuse MPs are reporting [after Brexit](#). We undertook an [inquiry](#) into how to balance the right to free speech and protest, and the right of MPs to get on with their job. [We heard first-hand evidence](#) from MPs some of whom have been bullied into changing how they vote, others forced to move house.

Being part of a threatening mob in the street is a crime. But not if the mob is online. Threats to MPs on social media aim to silence them and undermine democracy. I called in Facebook and Twitter and challenged them on their slow response to taking down abuse. Just as football clubs pay towards matchday policing, social media companies should help pay the costs of policing the threats and [abuse that thrive on their platforms](#).

Protecting People's Right to Privacy in the Digital Revolution

Everybody needs to use the internet and apps for everything they need to do, including to apply for jobs or get the benefits they are entitled to. I led an inquiry into how we can protect people from human rights abuses as companies carry out extensive gathering of people's personal data through their use of the internet. It is unrealistic to expect individuals to protect themselves against risks to privacy and discrimination. It cannot be left up to the individual. People's right to privacy may exist on paper – but not in the online 'Wild West'. There has to be a strong, new regulatory regime laid down in the law. [Read our report and recommendations here.](#)



The Joint Committee on Human Rights consists of 12 members, 6 from the House of Commons and 6 from the House of Lords. Our work includes scrutinising every Government Bill for its compatibility with human rights and investigating human rights abuses in the UK. 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.

A note of thanks!

- 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 Jack Buck in Faraday, Cllrs Dora Dixon-Fyle, Tom Flynn and Kieron Williams in Camberwell Green, Cllrs Richard Livingstone, Michael Situ and Evelyn Akoto in Old Kent Road, Cllrs Sunil Chopra, Gavin Edwards and Sandra Rhule in Nunhead & Queens Road, Cllrs Ian Wingfield, Radha Burgess and Jason Ochere in St Giles Ward, Cllrs Peter John and Sarah King in Champion Hill, Cllrs Jasmine Ali, Peter Babudu and Nick Dolezal in Rye Lane, and Cllrs Renata Hamvas and Vikki Mills in Peckham Rye.

It's a difficult time to be a Labour 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 thank my dedicated and committed parliamentary team and casework team, Clare Gosbee, Rachel Smethers, Chloe Wright, Warda Hassan and Diogo Figueiredo.
- Thanks go to my efficient and hard-working 2019 General Election agent Katharine Morshead.
- I'd like to thank my fellow members of the Joint Committee on Human Rights and the committee staff.



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 the climate breakdown, the EU withdrawal Bill votes, the [scandal of single women being banned from IVF treatment in Southwark](#), cuts to care packages for children with autism and the rise in violent crime.



I also contribute regularly to the South London Press and have written most recently on the rise in domestic violence in London, campaigning to [save free TV licences for the over 75s](#), the problem of inappropriate housing for people with autism and cuts to police funding.



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.