Rt Hon Harriet Harman QC MP

Member of Parliament for Camberwell and Peckham Mother of the House of Commons

Coronavirus Crisis Parliamentary Report 10

21st January 2021



Early years settings open. Primary and secondary schools and colleges move to remote provision except for vulnerable children and children of critical workers. Most university students to move to remote learning.

LEISURE AND SPORTING FACILITIES

Closed, with limited exceptions.

Closed, with limited exceptions.

► ACCOMMODATION

ENTERTAINMENT

OVERNIGHT STAYS

Closed.

Closed.

EDUCATION

You must not leave, or be outside of your home or garden, except for a very limited set of exemptions e.g. to shop for basic necessities, exercise, go to work if you cannot do so from home, or to escape risk of harm.

MEETING OTHERS

You cannot leave your home to meet socially with anyone, except with your household or support bubble (if eligible to form one). Stay 2 metres apart from anyone not in your household or support bubble.

EXERCISE

You may exercise on your own, with your household or support bubble, or with one person from another household (when on your own). Stay 2 metres apart from anyone not in your household or support bubble.

BARS, PUBS AND RESTAURANTS PERSONAL CARE

Hospitality closed aside from sales by takeaway (until 11pm), click-and-collect, drive-through or delivery. Alcohol cannot be purchased through takeaway or click-and-collect from hospitality venues.

► RETAIL

Essential shops can open. Non-essential retail must close and can only run click-andcollect and delivery.

STAY HOME PROTECT THE NHS SAVE LIVES

Funerals of up to 30 people permitted. Weddings up to 6 people permitted in exceptional circumstances. Wakes and other linked ceremonial events of up to 6 permitted.

PLACES OF WORSHIP

Places of worship can remain open and communal worship is permitted, but you must not mix with those outside your household or support bubble.

► TRAVELLING

You must stay at home. If you do leave home for a very limited set of exemptions, you should stay local in the village, town, or part of the city where you live where possible. Do not travel abroad unless an exemption applies.

CLINICALLY EXTREMELY VULNERABLE

Shielding reintroduced across England. You should not travel to work, school, college or university and should limit the time you spend outside the home. You should only go out for medical appointments, exercise or if it is essential.

CARE HOME VISITS

Visits can take place with arrangements such as substantial screens, visiting pods, or behind windows. Close-contact indoor visits are not allowed. No visits will be permitted in the event of an outbreak but end of life visits are permitted in all circumstances.

For more information go to: gov.uk/coronavirus



You must not stay overnight away from home. Limited exceptions apply e.g. to stay with your support bubble.

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA 0207 219 4218 harriet.harman.mp@parliament.uk www.harrietharman.org.uk @harrietharman

This is my tenth report during the COVID crisis in which I:

- share with you how I'm going about my work as MP during this coronavirus crisis,
- hear from you if you agree with how I'm approaching things and
- what further issues you think I should be addressing.

I, and my office team, continue to help constituents and to raise issues with the government or with agencies if they do not appear to have them on their agenda. Where they are aware of problems but appear to be taking too long to solve them I am pressuring government to act more speedily.

I continue to support the public health guidance issued by Public Health England.

Hand Hannen

The vaccination against Covid is the only way out of this pandemic.



January 2021

It's nothing short of a miracle that scientists around the world, working day and night, have created a vaccine that can keep us safe from this deadly disease. It's already killed over 80,000 people so there's no time to waste.

It's right that the necessary rigorous trials and tests on the vaccine's safety and effectiveness were accelerated.

It is so important that the NHS ordered the vaccine well in advance so that we can be as sure as possible that we will have enough supplies to go round. We need as many people as possible to get the vaccine in order to save the lives of those vaccinated and also to stop the disease spreading. The virus spreads by making those with the disease highly infectious including by coughing.

The point about having the vaccine is not just to protect you, but to stop you passing on the disease to someone else, possibly someone who is more at risk because they are older or have health problems. People who refuse to have the vaccine because they think it won't affect them or because they think Covid's no worse than a bad cold are risking their health. But while people can take risks with their own health it's not right to risk the health of others.

Someone who only gets Covid mildly can pass it on to someone it kills. And someone who refuses the vaccination and then gets badly ill will take up a hospital bed which could be needed for a cancer patient.

Public health measures need us all individually to do something in order to make the whole community safer. But there are some people who worry that the vaccine isn't safe, as it was invented and approved so quickly and so are hesitant about taking it up. The vaccine has gone through exactly the same tests and trials as all previous

vaccines so there's no reason to fear. The scientists and medical experts are unanimous on this and if we're ready to take their word for it on drugs like paracetamol and other vaccinations like polio, I think there's no reason to mistrust them on this.

Southwark Council @lb_southwark

Today Cllr Akoto visited our new Covid rapid testing centre in Peckham. Book a test now if you don't have symptoms and you can't work from home bit.ly/ 2Krg13n



But for those people who are still worried, Southwark Councillor Evelyn Akoto who's responsible for Public Health in our borough is working to address this. She's particularly focusing on answering the questions of the black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. She's working with Kings College Hospital, with councillors in Lambeth and Lewisham as well as the many black nurses and doctors who are providing care locally and who have had no hesitation in having the vaccine.

I strongly back her work because if BAME people are less likely to have the vaccine they will be more likely to face the potentially deadly health consequences of getting Covid and that will widen yet further the dreadful health inequality which sees BAME people suffer worse health.

I'm over 70 and in the top 4 priority groups for the vaccine. I've been called for the jab and had no hesitation in having it. I want the awful death toll to end, for children to be back in schools, workplaces to open up, people to be able to see their families and businesses to be back on their feet. The only way to that can happen is for us all to be vaccinated. Like everyone who's being vaccinated I've breathed a big sigh of relief. I've had it for myself but for everyone else too.



Public Health England Vaccination rollout out MP briefing



Along with other London MPs I joined Professor Kevin Fenton, Regional Director for London for a Public Health England briefing on the rollout of the Covid-19 vaccination program.

The more of us who have the vaccine the safer everyone will be. So, when we have the vaccine we are doing something not just for ourselves but for our local community. We need all those who can be vaccinated to

do so in order to protect those who have those rare health conditions which mean they can't be vaccinated.

Constituency problems – update

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to bring new problems to people in Camberwell and Peckham and make many pre-existing problems worse. So there continues to be an increase in the number of constituents seeking my help. Those who already had financial problems are finding that the COVID-19 crisis only makes them worse. My casework team continue to deal with pre-existing problems as well as the new COVID- 19 problems. I have taken action on behalf of 5,309 constituents from 1^{st} March – 31^{st} December 2020.

So far since the start of 2020, I have recouped **£75,052.61** for constituents who have requested my assistance. This includes underpaid benefit payments, Coronavirus business grants for local business owners, waived HMRC penalties and compensation for errors and delays from housing associations and the Home Office.

Case summaries:

- A Camberwell woman contacted me on behalf of her elderly mother who had been staying with her throughout the lockdown period. She was unable to get her COVID-19 vaccine because she is only temporarily registered with a local GP surgery. She did not wish to permanently change her address. I wrote to the GP to explain the circumstances and to NHS South East London Clinical Commissioning Group. The constituent's mother has now received her vaccination.
- A resident from North Walworth requested my help with outstanding repairs needed to his property due to water leaking from the flat above. I wrote to Southwark Council to request that contractors carry out the necessary repairs and sort the leak. Council contractors attended the property and the leak was fixed. The Council have also agreed to compensate the constituent for the delay and the inconvenience caused.
- A Rye Lane business owner contacted me for help as she had not received any financial support throughout the first or second lockdown. She was concerned about the future of her business. I urgently wrote to Southwark Council to ask what support was available for her and Southwark Council has confirmed that she will receive the Local Restrictions Support Grant and in addition they will be discussing other forms of relief available .
- The North Peckham Tenants and Residents Association contacted me because residents of multiple housing blocks have been suffering repeated heating and hot water outages. I have urgently written to Southwark Council to fix the current problem and to then permanently resolve the repeated heating and hot water issues on the North Peckham estate.
- I was contacted by a hospital social worker on behalf of a Peckham family. The family required a property with a lift as their young daughter requires crutches or a wheelchair due to a tumour in her leg. They were living in a second floor flat with no lift. They had asked their housing association, L&Q Housing to move them but had not received a response. I wrote requesting that the family be rehoused and asked them to identify any other support that was available to the family. As a result, L&Q Housing have offered the family a three-bedroom wheelchair accessible property, which they have accepted.
- A Nunhead man wrote to me as he had discovered through personal circumstances that people with Down's Syndrome are often listed erroneously at their GP surgery as broadly having a 'learning difficulty', not specifically

categorised as having Down's Syndrome. As a result, some people with Down's Syndrome are not being identified correctly as a high-risk group and as a result will miss out on receiving their COVID-19 vaccine in the correct priority group. I have written to South East London Clinical Commissioning Group requesting that this matter is addressed.

- A Peckham man wrote to me asking for my assistance with his EU Settlement Scheme application. On submission of his application he had received a 'Certificate of Application' from the Home Office confirming they had received it. After ten months waiting he contacted me as he had had no response. I wrote to the Home Office on his behalf asking when a decision would be made and he has since received his EU Settlement.
- I was contacted by a Nunhead woman requesting assistance with her immigration status as she had applied for an EEA residence card as a partner of an EU citizen, but her application had been rejected. She was granted the right to appeal but her hearing date was delayed for months due to COVID-19. On appeal the refusal was overturned but she had not received her Biometric Residence Permit, preventing her from taking up employment. I wrote to UKVI on her behalf and she has since received her BRP.
- I have received emails from constituents living in SE5, SE15, and SE17 who throughout the coronavirus pandemic have experienced severe disruption to their postal service. These delays have included time-critical letters from hospitals and banks. I have written to Royal Mail jointly with Helen Heyes MP, Neil Coyle MP and Ellie Reeves MP. Many of our constituents are currently working from home or self-isolating. They need prompt postal deliveries to work, run their businesses, and to stay in contact with friends and family. We understand the difficult demands placed on Royal Mail workers at this time but are concerned they may not be receiving the support they need to carry out their vital work to the required standard. I will continue to monitor this situation closely and update you on any progress.



I have received **10,129** emails from constituents on policy issues between 1st March & 31st December, the majority relating to COVID-19. Other issues raised since my eighth report:

- Close the schools in January
- Support for visa free work permits for musicians and touring creatives
- Cancel the 2021 exams
- Support for amendment 13 of the Fire Safety Bill to bans leaseholders from bearing historic fire safety remediation costs
- Calls to increase support for hospitality industry as they lose out on their busiest trading time of the year
- Support for better living conditions for those seeking asylum

- Concern about the funding gap facing local services
- Support for Radiotherapy 4 Life "Support the #CatchUpWithCancer Campaign" to ensure cancer treatment
- Ensure parliament has a say in future trade deals

Government's review of employment rights

The Government have said that they will introduce an Employment Bill to provide for employment rights now that we are outside the EU.

The Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, Kwasi Kwarteng MP announced that the government are undertaking a review in the run up to a new Employment Bill.

Employment rights, such as the protections against working excessive hours, were hard fought for and remain very important. It is vital that they are maintained and not watered down in this Bill.

But there are also issues which need to be in employment and are not, as yet. I will be proposing for inclusion in the Employment Bill a raft of new employment rights for families. This will include:

 the right to statutory paid leave for a parent of a child of primary school age or under who is sick and cannot attend school or nursery



Harriet Harman @ @HarrietHarm... · 1d ···· And also Statutory Sick Pay should be for a parent who has to take time off when a child of primary age or under is ill. You can't leave them #sickhomealone

3 Len Duvall AM 🤣 @Len_Duvall · 1d

Statutory Sick Pay is set at a rate that none of us could reasonably live on, especially in London.

It should be raised from £95.85 to £380 to week, to match the London @LivingWageUK.



• the right for grandparents to share parental leave, as well as mothers and fathers.

Much of our employment legislation still relates to a labour market where fathers were the working breadwinners and mothers' work was considered marginal, the mother's primary duty being to be home with the children. Now most mothers work from when their children are young. And grandmothers were assumed to be retired and available for childcare of their grandchildren. Now many grandmothers are continuing to work because the retirement age has been increased and their income remains important to the household.

The law needs to reflect the modern reality in a way which enable parents to care for their children as well as carry out their work and for grandparents to support them.

I will be working with organisations such as Mumsnet and Unions and will build a cross-party alliance to make these progressive changes.

The impact of the Government's failure to deliver for the creative industries.

The Government must return to negotiate urgently and guarantee rights of the fantastic UK creative professionals to continue touring and working in the EU without restrictions. The industry is vital to the UK and to many Camberwell and Peckham residents.

I have written to the Rt Hon Oliver Dowden the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to urge him to reverse the exclusion of creative professionals in the UK from the visa-free work agreement signed with the EU. Here's the text of my letter:

Dear Oliver,

Re: Touring creative professionals after Brexit

I am writing on behalf of the many of my constituents who work in the creative industries and are deeply concerned that because they are not included in the list of self-employed workers benefiting from visa-free travel to the EU for work purposes their work will suffer, and to ask you to return to negotiations with the EU in order to include musicians and creative professionals in the visa-free travel agreement.

The arts are a huge UK success story. Our musicians, actors, dancers, and all other creative professionals are respected worldwide for their expertise and ability. Our arts and culture benefits from the cross fertilisation of the interaction between UK and EU artists. The free flow of artists between the EU and the UK enables our artists to work abroad and EU artists to enhance our cultural environment. Not only are the arts a huge export industry, but they represent the best of the UK on the world stage. I



Harriet Harman 🧇 @HarrietHarman

My letter to @OliverDowden @DCMS. Govt must return to negotiate urgently & guarantee rights of fantastic UK creative professionals to cont touring and working in the EU w/out restrictions. Industry is vital to UK & many Camb & P'ham residents.

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| 28 th January 2821 | Yours sincerely, |
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am proud that my constituency of Camberwell and Peckham is home to so many of these talented individuals.

A third of the UK creative industry is self-employed. After a year in which they have been put under unprecedented pressure, with the closure of live venues and other difficulties brought by Covid-19, this further blow risks pushing many professionals out of an industry they have contributed so much to.

In the current situation, touring artists would have to adhere to the immigration rules of each individual EU state they worked in. The delays and added layers of bureaucracy this would bring could put tours and overseas performances at risk, reducing artists' ability to earn a living and thrive. The requirement for musicians and other performers who bring equipment to pay for and fill out a carnet is another burden, which could result in substantial extra costs for small bands touring the EU, in many cases making it unviable.

I urge you to reverse the exclusion of the many fantastic creative professionals in the UK from the visa-free work agreement signed with the EU, otherwise those whose livelihoods rely on being able to tour internationally will suffer as a result of our departure from the EU. I also ask that you agree to the request of my colleague the Shadow Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Minister, and place all correspondence between the UK and the EU on this matter in the public domain through the Library of the House of Commons.

Yours sincerely,

Rt. Hon. Harriet Harman MP

Regular Covid MP update with Kings College Hospital

During the pandemic I have met regularly with Professor Clive Kay, Chief Executive, and his team at Kings College Hospital. There are many challenges facing the staff and critical care departments due to the soaring Covid admissions, the demand for ICU beds and the number of staff off sick or self-isolating and rolling out vital Covid testing & vaccinations. Staff and patients are depending on the local community



complying with the lockdown restrictions in order to help ease the intense strain and pressure on the hospital at this time.



Huge pressure @KingsCollegeNHS. Staff & patients now depending on absolute community compliance w lockdown. That's one of the best ways we can show respect for their extraordinary work. Thanks to all Kings staff & to senior management for briefing MPs today.

13:49 · 07/01/2021 · Twitter for iPhone

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After dreadful indecision, the government has ordered that schools should be closed except to those children who are vulnerable or whose parents are critical workers.

Covid infections are rapidly increasing. In Southwark, 1 out of every 20 people are Covid positive. Rising infection is followed by more people going into



hospital and sadly, rising deaths. With the worst yet to come, Kings is already badly overstretched so we all have to do what we can and play our part by doing everything possible to try and avoid getting Covid.

After dreadful indecision, the government has ordered that schools should be closed except to those children who are vulnerable or whose parents are critical workers

(such as those working in the NHS). Though regrettably delayed, this is the right decision.

But for those children who are at home, their education is still of huge importance. Even where schools are providing great lessons online, children need supervision and that is a big challenge for parents who often are having to work from home. There needs to be recognition by employers of the difficulty for parents who are supervising education at home.

There should be huge respect for what teachers and all school staff have been doing throughout the pandemic. The rules have been changing from week to week. Cleaners have been working throughout the day, school kitchens providing home meal packages as well as in-school lunches. Staff have been teaching children at home online as well as the children who are in school. Heads have had to reassure anxious parents, reorganise the school, comply with Covid safety procedures, cope with the instability of teachers being off work either because they or someone they've been in contact with have got Covid and keep children enthusiastic for their learning despite the disruption.

So many people backed the demand for children who are eligible for Free School Meals to get food vouchers during the holidays, that the government had to back down and agree. But right now there are many children who are eligible for Free School Meals who are not in school and not getting the healthy daily meal that their family can scarcely afford. We need food vouchers for all children on Free School Meals who are not in school and especially when it comes to half term and the Easter holidays. It shouldn't take Marcus Rashford to, once again, force the government to do what's right. And it shouldn't be left to schools to make up and deliver food parcels.

For children who are not in school, we must ensure that all have access to laptops or iPads and decent broadband. It's just not fair on children where there's one laptop between 3. Or where the child has to try and engage in lessons from a mobile phone, or where there's unsuitable or unaffordable broadband. The government knows which schools are in deprived areas and knows from Ofsted inspections that heads are competent financial managers. They should not make heads jump through hoops applying for laptops which are too few and are delayed for a basic educational necessity which the government should pay for.



@HarrietHarman this morning about the challenges facing schools and parents at this time #makingadifference #gettingchildrenconnected #remotelearning

10:59 · 13/01/2021 · Twitter for iPhone

The government has rightly opened the public purse to finance businesses so they survive the lockdown and pay for employees who are laid off. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer has not taken the same approach to schools where schools have been expected to conjure funds out of nowhere and eat into their reserves to pay for Covid necessities. Heads and their staff have been working since last March to shield their pupils from Covid's disruption. They need to be given the resources their pupils need especially in the Southwark communities who struggle financially. As things are going now, schools will be punished by being left with deficits and that will be a disgrace.

Hearing from Camberwell and Peckham Headteachers

Schools are continuing to do their absolute best during these Covid times and I am continuing to meet with them regularly. I've thanked them for their extraordinary



Headteacher **Susannah Bellingham** Brunswick Park Primary School







Head Teacher **Catherine Warland** St John the Divine Church of England Primary School



Executive Headteacher **Tim Mills** Angel Oak Academy

Headteacher Helen Ingham Ivydale Primary School and Children's Centre

work and have talked to them about the individual challenges and issues facing their schools.

During this 2nd lockdown period I've been asking for the headteachers frank assessment on how the delivery of online learning is working and I have offered my help in conveying the reality to The Secretary of State for Education and the Schools Minister. Especially about the adequate resources to support children's online learning at home.

Labour is urgently calling on the Government to address the digital divide:

- Provide access to a device for every child who needs one
- Provide internet access for every child who needs it, through rapidly expanding the Get Help with Technology programme
- Work to remove data charges by "zerorating" educational websites and where possible ensure school digital delivery is



exempted from mobile and other data packages, to stop mobile data charges from pricing disadvantaged families out of education

- Redeploy officials to help identify and meet technical support needs
- Work with schools and pupils to deliver a guarantee of minimum contact time with teachers

Opposition Day Debate: Universal Credit cut – 18 January 2021

I voted to stop the £20 cut in Universal Credit.

"That this House believes that the Government should stop the planned cut in Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit in April and give certainty today to the six million families for whom it is worth an extra $\pm 1,000$ a year"

357 Conservative MPs chose to cut support for families in Camberwell and Peckham in the midst of an economic crisis in a vote to stop the planned cut this week.

Families in Camberwell and Peckham deserve support during this crisis, not cuts. Labour are demanding that they put families and our economic recovery first. #CanceltheCut

The Joint Committee on Human Rights heard from witnesses about the human rights implications of long lockdown in mental health units and prisons and care homes.

Following on from the Committees inquiry <u>'The</u> <u>Government's response to Covid-19: human rights</u> <u>implications'</u>, we have launched an inquiry into <u>"The</u> <u>Government's response to Covid-19: human rights</u> <u>implications of long lockdown".</u>

- You can watch the session from 13 January here
- Inquiry: The Government's response to covid-19: human rights implications of long lockdown
- You can find more information about the work of the Joint Committee on Human Rights here



+ 19,000 Camb & P'ham families have to rely on Universal Credit. I'm voting to stop Govt axing vital £20 increase. #CanceITheCut



Our session about the human rights implications of #COVID19 long lockdown in mental health units, care homes and prisons has now started.

Is the right to family life being sufficiently protected?

Watch here parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/b9...

During the session the Committee raised problems covered in our previous inquiry, including the detention of young people who are autistic and/or have learning disabilities and the rights of the children of mothers in prison. We heard from witnesses whose right to a family life (Article 8 ECHR) has been personally affected by the long lockdown in these settings, as well as campaigners.

- John, husband of a care home resident
- Helen Wildbore, Director, Relatives and Residents Association
- Matt Clifton, Chief Executive, bemix
- Alison, mother of young person detained in an Assessment and Treatment Unit
- Alexis Quinn, Rightful Lives a human rights, learning disability and autism support organisation
- Sarah Burrows, Children Heard and Seen an organisation to support families of people in prison.

Working differently!

I and my staff team are continuing to work remotely. I remain enormously grateful to my dedicated team who are diligently continuing to help my constituents, supporting

my work as an MP and as chair of the Human Rights Committee. They have overcome technology issues and made their homes into their offices to continue their work.

Coronavirus Help and Support

Southwark Council:

- General information on Coronavirus
- Covid-19: What can you do to help
- Financial support for residents
- Food access
- <u>Coronavirus housing advice</u>
- Covid-19: Support and information for businesses and employers
- Southwark COVID-19 community grants
- Voluntary sector help and advice on Coronavirus
- Impact on council services
- Advice on potential coronavirus related scams

Bereavement support:

• The government has published a <u>bereavement support leaflet</u> to help those who have lost a loved one. The leaflet shares information to help bereaved families, friends, or next of kin make important decisions during this national emergency, sets out what to expect next, and signposts the extra help and support that is available.

Citizens Advice – Benefit advice:

<u>https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/coronavirus-check-what-benefits-you-can-get/</u>

Government business advice:

- <u>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-</u> employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19
- Government's Business Support Helpline on 0300 456 3565, Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm.

HMRC:

- <u>helpline for businesses and self-employed people who are concerned</u> <u>about their tax</u> due to COVID-19.
- 08000 241222, Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm.

Domestic violence help and support:

- Solace Women's Aid Advice Line 0808 802 5565
- Monday Friday 10am 4pm. Additional 6pm 8pm on Tuesdays.
- Email: advice@solacewomensaid.org

Mental health help and support:

• Lambeth and Southwark Mind

07871 940 763 - 8am to 3pm Monday, Tuesday and Thursday

• **Samaritans** - 116 123 - 24/7

Legal advice

- Southwark Law Centre
- <u>Citizens Advice Southwark</u> has resumed drop-in sessions from 9.30 am to 4.00 pm 5 days a week at:
 - Peckham 97 Peckham High Street, SE15 5RS
 - o Bermondsey 8 Market Place, Southwark Park Road, SE16 3UQ
 - Walworth 6-8 Westmoreland Road, Walworth, SE17 2AY





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Let me know your views at <u>harriet.harman. mp@parliament.uk</u>