

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

December Report

23rd December 2021



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This is my December report 2021 in which I:

- share with you how I'm going about my work as MP,
- 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 the UK Health Security Agency.

Harriet Harman

Latest Covid guidelines

The Government has announced that England is moving to Plan B in response to the risks of the Omicron variant.

This means:

- Face coverings are required by law in most indoor settings.
- From 13 December office workers who can work from home should do so.
- From 15 December, certain venues and events will be required by law to check that all visitors aged 18 years or over are fully vaccinated, have proof of a negative test in the last 48 hours, or have an exemption.

I strongly encourage everyone who can to get their booster or first and second vaccines if they haven't already.



RIP Petra Srencova

On 12th December we received the tragic news that Petra Srencova, a resident of Camberwell and a nursing assistant at the Evelina London Children's Hospital, had been found dead in Brunswick Park.

Petra, originally from the Czech Republic, had not been seen since 28th November. She was reported missing on Friday 3rd December and I held a press call on 11th December in



Harriet Harman @HarrietHarman · Dec 13

RIP Petra Srencova. Deepest sympathy to her family. @BrunswickPkTRA @lb_southwark @CzechLondon @EvelinaLondon @GSTTnhs @MPSSouthwark @evenor23 @Alicemac83 @cllradorad @Jason_Ochere & Cllr Radha Burgess



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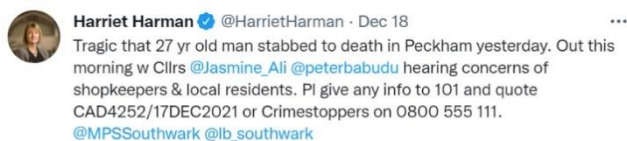
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Camberwell to raise awareness and encourage anyone with any information to come forwards. Petra's body was sadly found in Brunswick Park the next day.

I have been liaising with the Metropolitan Police throughout and continue to do so as they investigate the events that led to Petra's death. My deepest sympathies are with her family and friends at this very difficult time.



RIP Jobari Gooden – call for information that leads to capture of his killers

On Friday 17th December 27-year-old Jobari Gooden was stabbed to death in broad daylight on Choumert Road, Peckham. I visited the scene on 18th December with local councillors Jasmine Ali and Peter Babadu to hear the concerns of shopkeepers and local residents, and I have held regular meetings

with the Metropolitan Police to keep updated on their investigation. Crimestoppers are offering £20,000 for information leading to the capture of Jobari's killers. Anyone who has any information should call 101 and quote CAD4252/17DEC2021 or call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.



Standing down as your Member of Parliament at the next election

On Tuesday 7th December I announced that I will not stand to be the Member of Parliament for Camberwell and Peckham at the next election. It has been a great honour to represent Camberwell and Peckham for almost 40 years, and I will continue to do so until my final day as MP. Thank you to all those who have sent kind messages since my announcement.

7 Prime Ministers



1982 – 2021... #MOTH

8 Labour Party Leaders



1982 – 2021... #MOTH

6 House of Commons Speakers



1982 – 2021.. #MOTH

10 General Elections

9 June 1983	11 June 1987	9 April 1992	1 May 1997	7 June 2001
5 May 2005	6 May 2010	7 May 2015	8 June 2017	12 Dec 2019

1982 – 2021... #MOTH

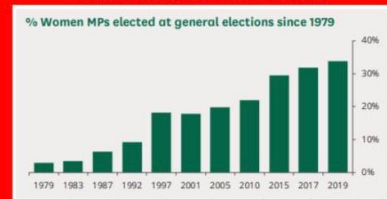
No of times spoken in the House of Commons

9,850



Nov 1982 – Nov 2021 #MOTH

% Women MPs elected at general elections since 1979



1982 – 2021.. #MOTH

'Mother of the House of Commons'

As longest-ever continuously serving female MP in the House of Commons, I was announced as "Mother of the House" by Prime Minister Theresa May on 13 June 2017.



1982 – 2021... #MOTH

Since 1982...

3 children
&
5 grandchildren



1982 – 2021 #MOTH

Then..



Now..



& until the next General Election

1982 – 2021.. #MOTH



Harriet Harman @HarrietHarman · Dec 7

After nearly 40 years in Parliament I won't be standing again at the next election. It's been a great honour to be an MP and to represent Camberwell & Peckham since 1982. I will do that with complete commitment and enthusiasm up until the last day! My email to C & P Lab members 📧

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Harriet Harman: a legacy of feminist leadership

"Trailblazer", "Glass ceiling smasher", "Inspiration" are just some of the descriptions of her being shared by Labour colleagues



Dear Member of Camberwell and Peckham Labour Party,

I'm writing

- *to let you know that I will not be seeking to be stand again as Labour's candidate for Camberwell and Peckham at the next General Election*
- *to thank you sincerely for having me as your MP since 1982*
- *to pledge to work energetically right up till the next General Election and*
- *to reaffirm my enduring commitment to, and belief in, our Labour Party.*

The Labour Party is now asking CLPs to choose their candidates so that we can step up our effort to win the next General Election. I'll be notifying Party HQ that I will not be seeking reselection. I feel I can leave the House of Commons now confident that Labour is gaining strength under the leadership of Keir Starmer and the new team he has appointed.

It has been an overwhelming honour to be Member of Parliament representing and working for the people of Camberwell and Peckham for nearly 40 years. It has been a complete privilege to work with local party members and our local Labour Councillors.

I'm proud to have, alongside you, played my part in getting Labour into government from 1997, and being a minister in that government. We doubled investment in schools, tripled investment in the NHS, brought in the National Minimum Wage, the right to civil partnership, established a network of Sure Start Children's centres, passed the Equality Act and so much more. Our priority must be to strive to once again have Labour in government to end the damage and division caused by the Tories and tackle new challenges like the climate emergency.

I entered the Commons as one of only 11 Labour women MPs in a parliament that was 97% men. Now there are 104 Labour women and across all parties women MPs are a "critical mass." But there remains much more to be done till women genuinely share political power with men on equal terms and until women in this country are equal.

I will leave the House of Commons with my feminism, my belief in Labour and my enthusiasm for politics undimmed.

I cannot thank enough all the local party members who, over the decades, have worked with me day in day out in the cause of improving things for local people. And I'm truly grateful for the backing of local party members when I served as Deputy Leader of the Labour Party and when I twice served as party leader. I have never, and will never, take that for granted. I'm deeply indebted to all those who over the years have served as my staff team helping me be the best MP I could be and making a huge difference to thousands of constituents by helping them with their problems.

When I was elected in 2019 I promised the voters I would serve as their MP with dedication and energy till the next election and I will do that, remaining active and diligent both locally and in the Commons.

I know you will now choose a candidate for the next General Election who will be dedicated to the local community, play their part in building support for Labour locally and nationally and make their voice heard as they continue to fight for equality.

*Best wishes,
Harriet*



December 2021

I don't usually get involved in Westminster gossip. It drains time and energy away from the important things I should be getting on with. Like the sad news that nursing assistant Petra Srncova aged 32 went missing at the end of November and was found dead in Brunswick Park last week. And the awful news that local man Jobari Gooden was stabbed to death on Rye Lane last Friday. So normally, thinking about other government Christmas parties would not be on my agenda.

But I have been growing increasingly frustrated with the reports of what's been going on in Downing Street. First there was the dreadful video of the Prime Minister's Press Spokesperson laughing about questions about their Christmas party. While people were suffering from the lockdown, relatives not able to attend loved one's funerals, the elderly in care homes isolated from relatives' visits, weddings postponed, families unable to be together at Christmas, and hundreds of thousands dying of COVID there was not much to laugh about. Everyone in Downing Street should have been regarding this with the utmost seriousness.

Yet not only did the leaked video show levity but also a sniggering disregard of the rules. I can remember that time so well as I and my family pored over the rules to see what we were allowed to do so we could help our children with the new grandchildren. And it's got worse with the reports of Christmas office parties in number 10 and a summer garden party in May when the rule was only to meet one other person outside. There, for all to see in the picture, was more than a dozen people. It adds insult to injury that No 10 are saying it was work. Who, at work has wine and cheese? Or has their wife at work with them unless it's a social event. The lying only makes it worse. And the trouble is that we need a government we can believe in at this difficult time.

Every individual has a role to play in obeying the rules to help not only themselves but others. Our hardworking NHS staff must be in despair at this evidence of the government breaking the rules. They are coping with fewer staff because of so many being off with COVID. We need everyone to take up the booster jab so that even those who get the virus don't end up in hospital. Government's cavalier attitude

certainly does nothing to persuade those who are hesitant about the vaccine. The fear is that trust in public health measures will diminish with the government's demonstration that they themselves disregard them.

Our restaurants, bars, and music venues are struggling as people cancel their bookings and the government fails to step forward with new furlough and financial support schemes. They face going bust while No 10 parties.

It's like Keir Starmer says, we've got the worst of all governments at the worst of all times. No wonder people are sick of them. I certainly am.

Ronald McDonald House Charities UK
@RMHCUK

Check out the lovely tree in our Camberwell House today! Along with the families, we had [@HarrietHarman](#) (MP for Camberwell and Peckham and Mother of the House of Commons) join us to decorate!
[#christmasready](#) [#camberwell](#) [#treedressing](#) [#rmhc](#) [#decorateindecember](#) [#charity](#)



12:00 PM · Dec 1, 2021 · Sprout Social

Visiting Ronald McDonald House Camberwell

It's very hard for parents of babies and young children who are being treated for serious conditions in hospital but who are far from home. Ronald McDonald House Camberwell provides a 'home from home' for families with a child at King's College Hospital. On 1st December I visited Ronald McDonald House to meet the families staying there and help them decorate their Christmas tree, including a House of Commons decoration! My thanks go to all the staff at Ronald McDonald House and my best wishes to everyone staying there for a happy Christmas.



[Harriet Harman](#) [@HarrietHarman](#) · Dec 1

Families need to be near child in hospital as essential part of recovery. Thanks to staff & supporters of Ronald McDonald House [@KingsCollegeNHS](#) [#Camberwell](#) who make that possible! And best wishes for Xmas 🎄 [@RMHCUK](#)



[Harriet Harman](#) [@HarrietHarman](#) · Dec 8

Busy Camberwell [@RoyalMail](#) delivery office. Experienced & committed team. Thank you and happy Xmas! 🎄 [@CWUnews](#)



Christmas visit to Camberwell Royal Mail delivery office

On 8th December I visited the Camberwell Royal Mail delivery office to talk to employees about how they were serving the local community this Christmas. Their work distributing Covid testing kits in particular is hugely important as we fight the spread of the virus. Every day Royal Mail services hundreds of thousands of

test kits on behalf of the NHS, playing a vital role in the national response to the pandemic. I thank them for their work and wish them all a happy Christmas.

Visiting Peckham Jobcentre

On December 8th I visited the Peckham jobcentre to hear from the DWP staff and to wish them a happy Christmas.

The Jobcentre staff work tirelessly to support people back into work and this has been particularly important in the last two years. The pandemic has caused a major increase in unemployment in Camberwell and Peckham.

There are 7,110 people claiming unemployment-related benefits, 70% more than before the first lockdown in March 2020. Camberwell and Peckham has a higher claimant rate than the national average and young people are particularly affected. Claimants have been hit by the Government's decision to cut the £20 uplift to Universal Credit, despite the fact that the pandemic continues, making families claiming Universal Credit up to £1,000 a year worse off.



Harriet Harman @HarrietHarman · Dec 8

No 'them and us' attitude from DWP staff at Peckham Jobcentre. Impressive care and support from @DWP team. Thank you!



2

11

41



Opposing the Government's Nationality and Borders Bill



Harriet Harman @HarrietHarman · Dec 7

The @HumanRightsCtte, a x-party cttee of MPs and Lords, reported that the #NationalityandBordersBill breaches human rights. My amends would guarantee lives of migrants are not endangered by Gov actions. I hope Minister @VotePursglove will accept them. My speech in parl 1/2



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The Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR), which I chair, has over the past two months conducted legislative scrutiny of the Government's Nationality and Borders Bill, including hearing from the government Minister.

The Committee has found that the Bill breaches the UK's human rights obligations, by allowing the Border Force to "pushback" unseaworthy vessels and automatically criminalising any refugees who arrive in the UK via non-official routes.

We drafted amendments to the Bill, which I tabled, that would have changed this and made the Bill human rights-compliant. I urged the Minister to accept my amendments but he refused and the Government voted against my proposed changes that would have guaranteed that pushbacks would not be used in a way which endangered lives at sea. You can read more about the JCHR's work on the Bill [here](#). I will continue to oppose this Bill and support calls for a compassionate, functioning asylum system.

My speech in full:

I rise to speak to amendments 96 to 100 and 102, which stand in my name and those of other hon. Members. They arise from the legislative scrutiny of the Bill by the Joint Committee on Human Rights.

I remind hon. Members that the Joint Committee is a cross-party Committee with half its members from the House of Commons and half from the House of Lords. We undertake legislative scrutiny of all Bills for their human rights implications. We have taken evidence on the Bill from many people—including the Minister, for whose evidence we are grateful—and we are advised by our own legal experts.

In our report, which we published on 1 December, we concluded that the proposed new measures to criminalise those who enter the UK without a visa or without leave will breach human rights law and the refugee convention; our amendment 102 would deal with that. We also concluded that there should be no immunity from prosecution if criminal offences are committed by border officials, particularly where they lead to loss of life; our amendment 100 would deal with that. I hope that the Government will accept both amendments.

Our amendments 96 to 99 would deal with the major issues relating to pushbacks. The Bill provides greater powers for Border Force to “board, divert and detain” vessels. The Government acknowledge that crossings are perilous; this debate takes place in the shadow of the 27 people who drowned in the channel. The Minister was clear in his evidence to the Joint Committee that he does not want Government action to be the cause of yet more lives lost. Of course not.

Our amendment 97 would circumscribe the new powers to ensure that they could not be used against unseaworthy vessels such as dinghies. Our amendment 98 would ensure that they could not

“be used in a manner...that could endanger life at sea.”

Our amendment 96 would ensure that they could be used only in a way that complies with international maritime law, which the Government say they want to comply with. The Minister said in evidence to us that that is the Government’s intention and that they would make that intention clear in operational directions—but if the power is in the Bill, so should the protections be.

Given the Government’s intention, what reason could they possibly have to oppose the amendments? The Government have a big majority and can whip to vote them down, but the amendments have been tabled by a cross-party Committee of both Houses, they have been expertly drafted by our legal counsel, and they represent what the Government say is their intention.

The Minister is new and enthusiastic in his role. He was very forthcoming in his evidence to our Committee, and he and I have spoken about the subject privately, for which I am grateful. I offer him a bit of advice: not to be the Minister who votes our amendments down just because he can, not to be the Minister who makes his Back Benchers vote against ensuring that lives are not endangered—that is not the right thing for him to do—and not to be the Minister who gives new powers to Border Force that cost lives at sea.

Our amendments allow for the new powers, but make them compliant with international law and make them safe. The Government have no reason to oppose the amendments, so I hope that the Minister will say to his colleagues and his civil servants that he wants to reflect on them because he does not want to stand in the way of putting the Government's intentions on the face of the Bill. If the Government do oppose the amendments, we will seek to press amendment 98 to a Division, but I hope that that will not be necessary.

Questioning the Lord Chancellor on his views on Human Rights

On 8th December the Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR) questioned the new Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for the Ministry of Justice Dominic Raab.

I challenged him about his previous comments on human rights and about calling feminists "the most obnoxious bigots". I interrogated him about his plans to reform the Human Rights Act. He committed that the UK will remain a party to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). On 14th December the Government published its consultation on proposals to reform the Human Rights Act. I welcome the commitment to the ECHR but am concerned about what impact the Government's reforms might have on people's ability to enforce their human rights under the Convention. I raised this with the Justice Secretary in the Commons on Tuesday, and you can see my question to him [here](#). The JCHR will scrutinise the Government's proposals carefully and report in full in due course.



Harriet Harman [@HarrietHarman](#) · Dec 14

Important that Justice Secretary [@DominicRaab](#) has reaffirmed Govt commitment to European Convention on Human Rights but he must not make it harder for people to enforce those rights. [@HumanRightsCtte](#) will scrutinise and report. My intervention in Parlt. today 📢



Evidence on forced adoptions in the 1950s, '60s and '70s



The right to family life is one of the most fundamental of human rights protected by the European Convention on Human Rights. There could hardly be a more dreadful breach of those rights than forcibly taking a newborn baby from its mother. And yet for

thousands of women in the 1950s, '60s and '70s, that is precisely what happened.

On 15th December the Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR) held the first evidence session of its inquiry into the adoptions of children of unmarried women in the 1950s, '60s and '70s. We heard from three academic experts.

The Committee was told how pervasive, coercive and cruel adoptions in that period were and how so many pregnant unmarried women were made to believe they were

the causes of a 'problem' that had to be fixed. There was nothing approaching consent in the way we would understand it today. You can watch the full session [here](#).

Next we will hear from the mothers and from adopted children. The JCHR will set the record straight about what was done to unmarried mothers and their babies. We will hold several further public evidence sessions in 2022 and you can read more about the inquiry [here](#).



Harriet Harman
@HarrietHarman

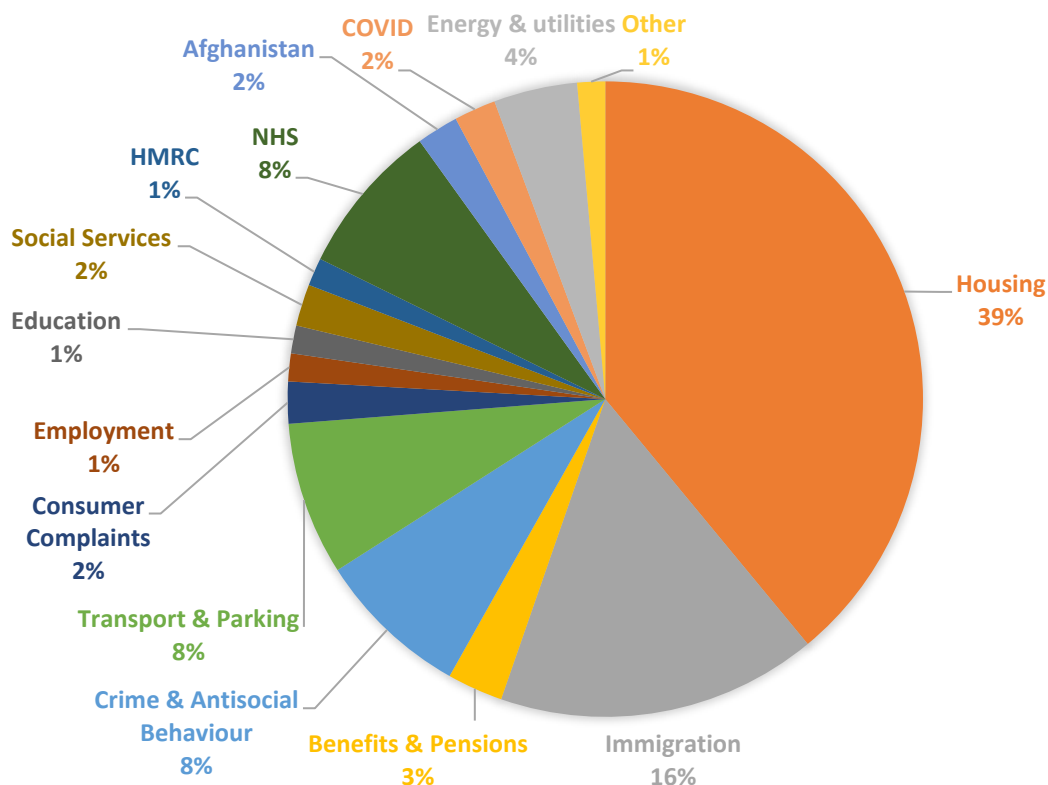
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"There were lifelong chaotic and catastrophic outcomes for women who experienced forced adoption. There cannot be a clearer example of trauma than a child being taken away from a caring mother & being told they were at fault for what happened" Prof Harold to @HumanRightsCtte

Constituency problems - update

My casework team continue to deal with problems including ongoing COVID-19 issues, and there continues to be an increase in the number of constituents seeking my help.

New cases breakdown – November 2021



In November I took action on **565** cases. Since the start of 2021, I have taken action on **7,603** cases.

This month I have recouped **£4,413.89** for constituents. Since the start of 2021, the total I have recouped for constituents is **£88,409.07**. 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:

- I previously reported on a man from Old Kent Road ward who I helped get £21,174.00 of backdated benefits owed to him by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). I then made further enquiries to the DWP on his behalf and as a result the case was referred to the Personal Independence Payment enquiry team to review. They found that my constituent was entitled to a further payment of £2,313.89 and this was credited to bank account, backdated to the date he made his initial claim in January 2014.
- A woman from Walworth wrote to inform me that her father-in-law, who lives in New Zealand, had recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer and that she and her husband were trying to get to New Zealand to visit him. But her passport had expired and the UK Passport Office told her that there were no appointments available until January. I urgently wrote to UK Visas and Immigration to request that they expedite her application on compassionate grounds. The passport office agreed and her application has now been fast-tracked.
- A single mother of four children from Queens Road asked me for help because her Child Tax Credits had been incorrectly suspended by HMRC since April, making her £300 per week worse off. HMRC had requested evidence to support her Child Tax Credits claim, including utility bills, and whilst she was able to provide bank statements and council tax bills she was unable to provide gas or electricity bills as she does not receive hard copy letters for them. I wrote to HMRC on her behalf and asked them to urgently deal with the problem. HMRC have since reinstated her Child Tax Credits as a result.
- A man contacted me on behalf of his parents whose bathroom in their home in Peckham had a persistent, substantial leak. He had previously contacted their landlord, Hyde Housing Association, who had sent contractors but had only carried out a temporary repair. My constituent was still struggling to arrange an appointment for a permanent repair as Hyde kept cancelling the appointments at late notice. I wrote to Hyde to request them to urgently undertake the necessary permanent repair for my constituents. Hyde have now carried out the permanent repairs and will be paying compensation to my constituents.
- A woman from Rye Lane emailed me for help with a compensation claim she was pursuing with Southwark Council after repairs were carried out in her property by a council contractor in a way which resulted in significant damage to her property and belongings. The Council claim handler concluded that a payment of £100 should be made but my constituent felt this did not come close to fully reflecting the damage, stress and inconvenience that she had been caused. I wrote to Southwark Council on her behalf to ask them to reconsider her claim and they made a revised offer of £1000 as a result, which my constituent has accepted.
- A couple living in Peckham contacted me for assistance because they had been trying since January 2018 to get their freeholder, Metropolitan Housing Association, to fix a serious roof leak. Metropolitan had closed their complaint without carrying out any repairs and so they asked me to refer their case to the

Housing Ombudsman. I referred the complaint to the Housing Ombudsman who agreed that there had been a service failure by Metropolitan, who have now repaired the leak and have awarded my constituents £1100 in compensation.

- A man from Camberwell contacted me earlier this year to let me know that despite having a valid parking permit he had received nine Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) from Southwark Council. I wrote to Southwark Council regarding this matter and received a response stating that the PCNs were issued in error, and the tickets have now been cancelled.

In November I received **554** emails from constituents on policy issues including:

- Nationality and Borders Bill - please stand up for women seeking asylum – I oppose the Bill and have spoken up against it
- Campaign to increase teachers pay – I support a fair wage rise for teachers
- Please make sure older people can afford to keep warm this winter – I support calls for a VAT cut on domestic energy bills for six months
- Sickle Cell Thalassaemia APPG and the Sickle Cell Society - Failures within the National Health Service for patients with Sickle Cell Disease – I urge the Government to respond to the findings of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia
- Please help protect London's public transport (TFL cuts) – I support the Mayor in his attempts to secure a fair funding settlement for TFL
- Will you protect our NHS from sleaze? – I will always stand up for and protect the NHS
- Aligning ambition and action post-COP26 – I support this campaign

Working differently!

I and my staff team are working remotely following changes to Government guidelines. 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.

Help and Support

Support and resources for British and non-British nationals who have been affected by the situation in Afghanistan from August 2021. Please click on link to information and advice:

- **[Support for British and non-British nationals in Afghanistan](#)**
- **[Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme](#)**
- **[Afghanistan - Foreign travel advice](#)**
- **[Support for veterans](#)**

Southwark Council:

- **[General information on Coronavirus](#)**
- **[Covid-19: What can you do to help](#)**
- **[Financial support for residents](#)**

- [Food access](#)
- [Coronavirus housing advice](#)
- [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 [bereavement support leaflet](#) 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:

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

Government business advice:

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

HMRC:

- [helpline for businesses and self-employed people who are concerned about their tax](#) 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](#)
- [Citizens Advice Southwark](#) 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
 - 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 [harriet.harman. mp@parliament.uk](mailto:harriet.harman.mp@parliament.uk)