

BELL RIBEIRO-ADDY MP

Monthly Report, November 2020



Out of the frying pan, into the fire

It would be nice to think that the Government was willing to learn lessons from past failures but with the end of the second England-wide lockdown, we have now returned to the tiers system that led to us locking down again. History repeats itself first as tragedy, then as farce.

Of course, there's nothing funny about the deadly coronavirus, which has now claimed over 60,000 lives in the UK alone. Once again, people will die because of this Government's failures. Their record on combating coronavirus is one of abject and deadly failure. We have one of the worst per capita death tolls among advanced industrialised countries and we are already feeling the ill effects of a recession exacerbated by Tory mismanagement.

This is a reminder that there is not and ever was a trade-off between public health and the economy, because people are the most important element of any economy.

I opposed the latest measures not because I am against restrictions, but because the ones the Government keeps coming up with are inconsistent, ineffective and come with wholly inadequate financial support. Because the Government keep getting it wrong, we have become trapped in a cycle of lockdowns. The success of various vaccines comes as good news but with full immunisation still months away, we cannot pin all our hopes on this. If we are serious about containing the virus to save lives and protect our economy, then half measures won't cut it.

It is also really important to point out the Tories' sheer failure to deliver on their levelling up manifesto commitment here. The way they have treated some of the northern constituencies has been despicable, placing many of them in tier 3 with no added financial support.

All jobs and the economy of all our regions matter. This needs to be the argument Labour makes as we look to rebuild our foothold in Red Wall seats and expose the Tories' failure to deliver on their empty promises to people in these communities. With the double whammy of a recession and a Tory hard Brexit coming our way, everyone across the country will need all the support they can get.

I am consulting constituents on what they would like me to do in the event of a parliamentary vote on a Brexit deal.

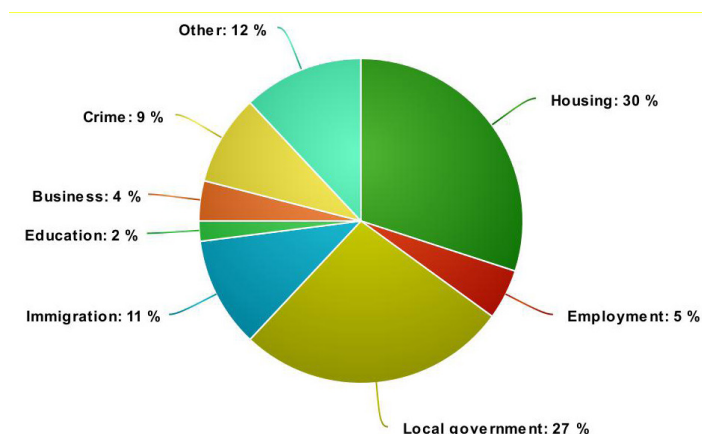
Please take a moment to [complete my survey](#)

Casework

I have had quite a heavy casework load this month, opening 121 cases, 85 of which have now been completed. As per usual, a large portion of these have been regarding housing and disrepair issues. However, I have also opened several cases regarding immigration and asylum issues, reports of crime, as well as education and business issues.

As we come to the last few weeks of this year and the Brexit transition period, correspondence was dominated by negotiations with the EU. At the time of writing, the UK and EU have still not reached agreement on a post-Brexit deal despite the promise from the Tories that we would have a deal. Another matter which dominated correspondence this month was the charter deportation flight which took place on December 2nd. I was pleased to raise an urgent question about this in the House and help to highlight the lack of due process that has characterised these flights. Whilst I am relieved that some of the men aboard the flight were removed after legal interventions, the flight sadly still went ahead.

On a local level, I received emails from constituents about the Windmill venue in Brixton which is at risk of closure during the pandemic. As a proud supporter of the arts, I also share concerns about the losses grassroots art venues have faced and I continue to call on the Government to ensure that financial support schemes will be in place for as long as venues must remain closed.



November Statistics

Staying in the EU

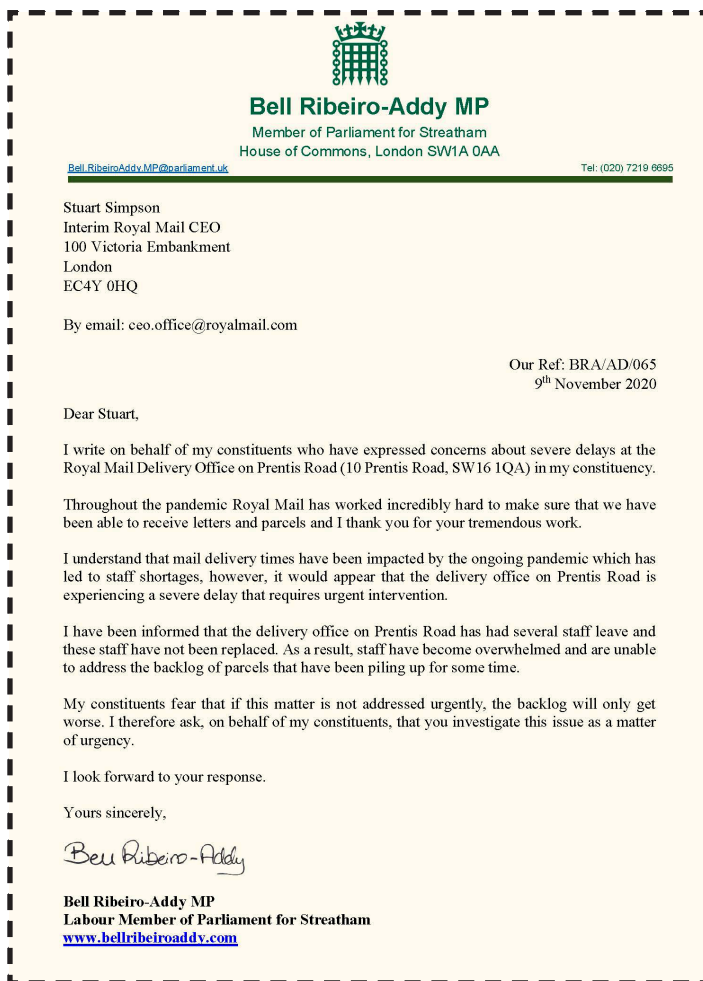
As we near the end of the Brexit transition period, I am receiving numerous emails about the vote on Boris Johnson's Brexit deal. The Government have dithered and delayed when it comes to negotiations. The oven-ready we were promised has been revealed as the cold turkey we always knew it was. Bringing this deal before Parliament at the final hour leaves MPs between a rock and a hard place – particularly those of us in strong remain voting constituencies.

I do not believe that Boris Johnson's Brexit deal will be good for Streatham or for the UK as a whole, nor can I allow for a 'No Deal' Brexit to take place without trying to intervene in some way. I am therefore consulting the people of Streatham on this issue and would greatly appreciate your input. You can complete the survey here: shorturl.at/ackLV

In the Constituency

Delays in Royal Mail Services

I understand postal delivery times have been impacted by the disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic to all our public services. However, multiple constituents have written to me about severe delays or, in some cases, deliveries going missing at the Prentis Road delivery office. This has been an ongoing issue for some time. I've now written to the Royal Mail CEO to get to the bottom of this. Given the evident backlog already, the company must address this issue without hesitation.



Streatham Christmas Card Competition

In November, I launched a competition for children in Streatham to design my annual festive greeting card. Open to anyone under the age of eighteen living or attending school in Streatham, entries can be hand-drawn or designed using computer software. I'll be publicising my favourite designs on my website as well as on my social media channels in the run-up to Christmas.

There's a range of prizes on offer and the overall winner will go out to people across Streatham as my official Christmas e-card.

The deadline for entries is 5pm on Wednesday 9th December. You can submit these via email on bell.ribeiroaddy.mp@parliament.uk, on social media (just make sure to tag me), or by post: Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA.

Please complete this **short survey** to let me know how you think I should vote on any **Brexit deal** brought before the Commons.

BELL RIBEIRO-ADDY MP's STREATHAM CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION 2020 OPEN TO CHILDREN OF ALL AGES

Get your entry in by Wednesday 9th of December for the chance to win some great prizes and have your design sent out as Bell's official Christmas e-card.



Remembrance Day 2020

Each year, on November 11th, we take the time to remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice during conflicts. This year's commemorations were a stark contrast to last year's and I hope that next year we will all be able to pay our respects together, as we usually do.

To commemorate Remembrance Sunday this year, I joined fellow Lambeth MPs, Florence Eshalomi and Helen Hayes at the African Caribbean War Memorial in Windrush Square. We must never forget the hundreds of thousands of Commonwealth troops who fought and died in both World Wars. I also laid a wreath at the Streatham War Memorial to honour the service and sacrifice of our armed forces, veterans, and everyone who gave their lives for our freedom.

I also paid my respect to those who have fought for our country during a Ministry of Defence (MOD) Questions, where I pressed the Government on their disastrous Overseas Operations Bill. This places a six-year limit on veteran's civil claims against the MOD, making it more difficult for veterans to bring forward claims against the MoD. Placing a time limit on veteran's path to justice seems is no way to honour our service personnel. That's just one of the many reasons I've urged the Government to reconsider this dreadful Bill, which would be damaging for soldiers and civilians alike.



I wrote about the dangers of the Overseas Operations Bill for [Labour List](#)

If you have any laptops to donate, please **get in touch with my office.**

In Parliament

Stop Deportations

I am sure most of us have heard about the mass deportation flight scheduled to deport up to 50 people to Jamaica on the day England comes out of lockdown. I am deeply concerned by the Government's increased use of mass deportation flights in the run-up to Brexit. Mass deportations are fundamentally wrong and have been known to bundle people out of the country without due process. As was the case with the flight back in February this year, many onboard will have lived in the UK since childhood and will not have any friends or family in Jamaica.



I was pleased to hear that 91 prominent public figures have written to airlines known to have previously worked with the Home Office to deport people, urging them to decline to operate the flight on the 2nd December and pause deportation flights to Commonwealth countries for the foreseeable future.

On the 30th November, I raised an Urgent Question in Parliament, calling on the Home Secretary to offer a statement on the scheduled mass deportation by chartered plane to Jamaica. Unfortunately, I did not receive a positive response from the Home Office Minister, who ignored my questions about whether those on the flight had received legal advice and proper safeguarding practices had been followed. I will continue to campaign against the use

of mass deportation flights and against this Government's hostile environment policies.

Watch a clip of my Urgent Question over on [Twitter](#).

Right to Food Debate

Ian Byrne MP was successfully able to secure a Westminster Hall debate on the right to food in legislation. Throughout the ongoing pandemic we have seen several reports of families with children struggling with food insecurity as a result of financial struggles. According to the Food Foundation, almost a fifth of households with children have been unable to access enough food, with meals being skipped and children not getting enough to eat. The number of uses of Trussell Trust food banks has increased since 2010 from 41,000 a year to 1.9 million.

I was pleased to participate in this debate and made an intervention about the need to engage with charities such as FareShare, who redistribute crops that would otherwise go to waste as a method of tackling food waste and food poverty. In a country with over 4.5 million tonnes of food waste each year, it is inexcusable that we have millions of people going hungry each day.

Women & Equalities committee

This month, the Women and Equalities committee has covered a range of issues, holding our final evidence session on the gendered economic impact of COVID19 and beginning our inquiry into reforming the Gender Recognition Act. We also interviewed the Government's proposed candidate Chair for the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, Baroness Faulkner, who the Committee decided to endorse. In addition, we held two joint sessions with the Petitions Committee on Black history and cultural diversity in the curriculum.

I have been able to participate in several oral question sessions this month, after having some better luck with the Oral Questions shuffle.

Women and Equalities Question on the Public Sector Equality Duty

During a Women and Equalities Questions, I raised a question about the recent EHRC report on the hostile environment. It is clear that the EHRC does not have the capacity to launch an inquiry into every piece of legislation that has had its compliance questioned. The Government must therefore take its own additional steps to ensure that future legislation is not mislabelled as complying with the public sector equality duty when it so clearly does not.

Watch my question on the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#)

Department of Work and Pensions Question on frozen pensions

I also had the opportunity to ask a question to the Secretary of State for the Department of Work and Pensions about frozen pensions. Over half a million UK pensioners overseas do not receive their full UK state pension. This is a result of the so called 'frozen pensions' policy pursued by successive Governments, which sees 4% of UK pensioners with their pensions frozen at the level they were at when they retired or left the UK. This includes UK pensioners in all Caribbean countries, except Barbados and Jamaica, and many other current or former Commonwealth countries such as Ghana and Nigeria. I pressed the Secretary of State on the Government's plans to end this unjust policy. Unfortunately, an answer was not forthcoming.

Watch my question on [Frozen Pensions](#)

Tuition Fees Debate

They say that your time spent at university is some of the best in your life. But for thousands of students across the UK, this has not been the case. This month, I participated in a debate on petitions calling for university tuition fees to be refunded.

A time that is supposed to be spent making new friends, exploring self-identity, discovering independent living and broadening academic horizons has instead been spent hauled up in dorm rooms, attending fresher's events over Zoom and running the risk of contracting the virus during face-to-face teaching. Many degree topics that rely on labs or practical classes are unable to run those lessons and students simply aren't getting the education that they need.

It is ludicrous to expect students to continue paying extortionate tuition fees when they are not receiving a full service. With any other service, if a customer was dissatisfied or something prevented them from receiving a service to the advertised standard, it would be reasonable for them to demand a refund, so why is it any different for students?

We cannot treat university education as a commodity in one respect and not in others. It is either a market commodity, in which case a refund can be requested for a poor service, or it is not, in which case it should be free. Charging individuals overall to pursue higher education is wrong at the most basic level, but to continue to charge them now is profoundly wrong.

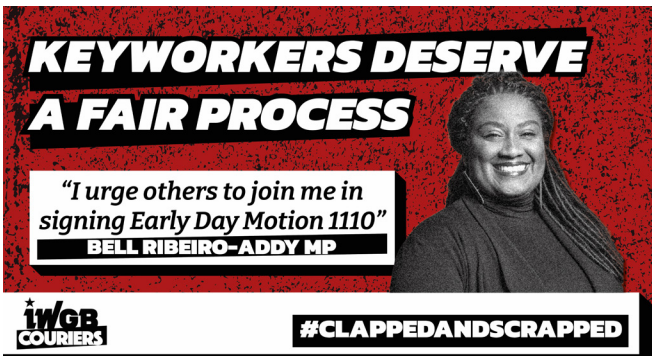


Campaigns

Lockdown restrictions mean I haven't been able to show my support for trade unions in the usual way, but I've been helping with several campaigns to protect our public services and the people who keep them running.



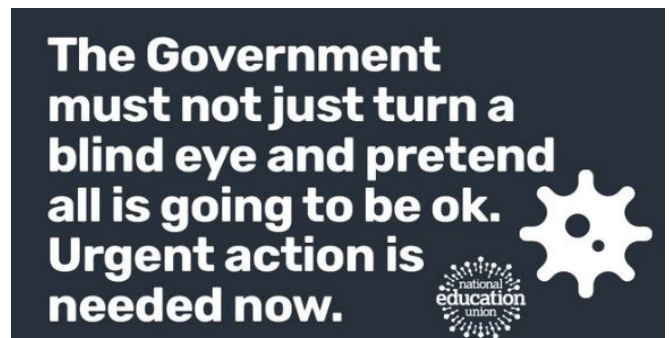
The Fire Brigades Union are campaigning to properly fund fire and rescue services. I pay tribute to the people delivering public and emergency services, who are already overstretched but now coming under even greater pressure. Years' worth of austerity measures has reduced our firefighters' ability to cope with everyday demands. Over the last ten years, the Conservatives have cut over 11,000 firefighter jobs and closed dozens of fire stations. The government must fund frontline firefighters, for now and for the future.



I was proud to back The Independent Workers' Union of Great Britain (IWGB) #ClappedAndScrapped campaign against unfair terminations of key workers by Deliveroo and Uber. It is appalling that key workers, who continue to work throughout this crisis are being subjected to unfair dismissal and stripped of their livelihoods. I also signed EDM 1110 to call for all app-based companies to end unfair dismissals by implementing fair dismissal processes, including a hearing before dismissal, and the right to appeal a dismissal with union representation.



Workers at BT, EE and Openreach have kept us connected throughout this pandemic and are now facing compulsory redundancies and worse terms and conditions. This is yet another case of businesses protecting their profits, not their loyal and hardworking members. I am proud to support the Communication Workers Union members in their action against this injustice.



Just before the country went into national lockdown this month, I supported the National Education Union's call for the inclusion of schools and colleges in the lockdown and the introduction of rotas at the end of the lockdown period. I would like to thank frontline teachers supporting our community and teaching our children during these difficult times. The Government has really lacked urgency when it comes to giving schools the guidance and support they need to cope with the ongoing disruption. With recent statistics released by the ONS showing the exponential rise of infections within school-age groups, it was self-defeating for the Government to impose a lockdown which ignored the fact that schools are a major vector of infection..

Stop the job loss nightmare

We have all been impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic in one way or another, facing a year of U-turns, cuts and uncertainty under this Tory Government. I was pleased to join Lambeth Coronavirus Support Group for Workers, Lambeth UNISON and People Before Profit to call for an extension to the furlough scheme and new measures that give everyone the protection they need to get through this crisis. No one deserves to be left behind during this crisis and I will continue to fight for better support for all at every opportunity.



Living Wage Week

On the 9th November, we celebrated Living Wage Week and the ongoing push towards fair adequate hourly wages of at least £10 an hour. There is no such thing as low-skilled work, just low paid work. We cannot go back to a situation where we undervalue the people we are currently praising as keyworkers. We know that our keyworkers are the ones getting us through the current crisis. But in the UK, a third of them earn less than £10 per hour. The government must increase the minimum wage to a Real Living Wage of at least £10 per hour. Everybody deserves at least a wage that they can live on. No worker, and least of all our key workers, deserve poverty pay.



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Median hourly wages for UK key workers:

Care worker - £8.10 p/h

Cleaner - £8.40 p/h

Food sector worker - £8.59 p/h

This week is an important reminder that we need to put an end to the scandal of key workers earning anything less than a real living wage [#LivingWageWeek](#)

ISLAMOPHOBIA AWARENESS MONTH

Islamophobia Awareness Month

November marks Islamophobia Awareness Month, which has come at a worrying time when the Tories have failed to deal with over 300 allegations of Islamophobia within their party and a Labour Muslim Network report outlining the discrimination faced by the Muslim community in ours. The Labour Party has a crucial role to play in rooting out racism across society. I was very happy to sign Early Day Motion #1164, Global Islamophobia, tabled by Apsana Begum MP, which calls on the Government to investigate the cause of rising hate crime, in order to instigate new policy to tackle it.

I also had the chance to address the [Lambeth Islamophobia Conference 2020](#) and discuss how we can move forwards locally and make the Labour Party a more welcoming space for Muslims.

British Overseas Territories Campaign

You may recall from my report last month that I met with members of the British Overseas Territories Citizenship (BOTC) Campaign to lend support to their efforts to change the British Nationality Act 1981 which currently deems children born outside of marriage before the 1st July 2006 to British Overseas Territory (BOT) fathers as illegitimate and doesn't allow them to inherit their father's British citizenship.

Not only is this law rife with inconsistencies and discriminations, it is also incredibly outdated; in 2020 we should not have laws that deem children born outside of marriage as illegitimate.

During a Home Office Questions this month, I pressed the Home Secretary on the Government's plans to bring about much needed change in the law. I was incredibly pleased to receive favourable response from the Home Secretary who stated that she will be making a statement on the matter in due course.

To continue to place pressure on the Government to make these changes, I have tabled an EDM, calling for an immediate change to the British Nationality Act. I am also working closely with the BOTC campaign and Members of the House of Lords to keep the pressure on the Government.

Sick Pay for All

The coronavirus pandemic has been a reminder that millions of people in the UK can't afford to take a sick day. It must be an impetus to change this. I was one of 30 MPs who called for the Government to increase Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) and extend this to all workers ahead of the Spending Review. Increasing SSP in line with the real living wage and extending it to all would have been an important way of slowing the spread of coronavirus as we await a vaccine and full immunisation.

Since the outset of the pandemic, the UK has become the country with the lowest level of sick pay in the OECD. Throughout the pandemic, our Government has been unique in its failure to understand the effectiveness of increasing sick pay. With a quarter of the UK workforce reliant on SSP and two million workers on short hours unable to access even this pittance, this is one of the many reasons we have such a high case rate and mortality rate, even compared to other advanced industrial countries.

Season's Greetings



As this is likely to be the final report I send of 2020, I would like to take the chance to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy Hannukah ahead of the festive season. This time of year is a season for hope, kindness, goodwill and family. So I'd like to say an extra special thank you to everyone in the local Labour family.

The Labour Party's biggest asset is the people like you who put in time and energy to try and make the world a better place. Thank you to everyone who has supported myself and the local party over the last year.

I know many of you have been active in the local community in spite of the difficulties of the pandemic. It has been particularly inspiring seeing members get so involved in Lambeth Mutual Aid groups and local volunteer services, not to mention the many who have written in to tell me about campaigns you have been supporting.

Finally, I would like to pay special thanks to all the local members who donated technology to my laptop donation drive.

Season's greetings!

Beu Ribeiro-Addy

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