

BELL RIBEIRO-ADDY MP

Monthly Report, April 2021



Reflections on the local elections

Last week saw the largest set of local elections in UK history. I'd firstly like to say a massive thank you first and foremost to the local members who ensured that we re-elected our Labour Mayor and elected a Labour Assembly Member to City Hall to represent our area.

After a year of enforced separation, it was good to see so many local members out in person on the campaign trail, knocking on doors, handing out leaflets, and giving up your time to get out the vote. While the national picture is disappointing, we can take some consolation in a well-run and successful London campaign and other important gains and increased vote shares.

It's also worth restating that the devastating defeat in Hartlepool and crumbling vote share in councils in historic Labour heartlands are both part of a trend that goes deeper than any one individual.

Our job now is to reverse this trend, not to accelerate it. This means adopting a new strategy which recognises that for many of our voters, the choice isn't Labour or Tory, it's a choice of voting Labour or not voting at all. We need a progressive offer for twenty-first century socialism that inspires activists to get out onto the doorstep and inspires voters to go out to the ballot box.

We need to be a party that listens to constituents, respects all members, is resolute about our policies, and unapologetic about our principles. The country needs a Labour Government more than ever but we will not achieve this if we carry on down the path we are currently on.

I hope that we can reflect on what these results show about our offer over the past year and come together to make the necessary changes to bring about the deep social change this country needs.

In the Constituency

Not for sale: opposing the sell-off of local GP surgeries

This month, I joined local campaigners to oppose the sell-off of Streatham GP surgeries to American healthcare giant Centene. The protest was part of a national day of action coordinated by campaign groups and trade unions including Keep Our NHS Public, We Own It and Doctors in Unite. I was also delighted to see some familiar faces from Streatham Labour in attendance too.



Coverage of the protest in the [South London Press](#)

The sell-off of Streatham GP surgeries is part of a bigger programme of stealth privatisation which the government has been pushing through during the pandemic. Operose Health, a subsidiary of US-based Centene acquired London's largest healthcare provider AT Medics in October last year, taking over 49 GP surgeries and more than 370,000 patients in the Greater London area. Twenty of these are in South London and include three Streatham GPs – the Edith Cavell Surgery, Streatham High Practice and Streatham Place Surgery.

Placing GP surgeries in the hands of local partnerships is one thing, but this takeover would be a real threat to accountability. Our surgeries are simply not safe in the hands of far-off US healthcare giants like Centene, whose need to make profit for shareholders will always trump the quality of patient care. From PPE shortages to the failure of our privatised test and trace system, we've seen what happens when essential public services are sold off to companies for private gain, often to people with close ties to government.



You can sign We Own It's petition [here](#)

Nutrition on the menu at Woodmansterne

Woodmansterne Secondary are putting nutrition on the menu in an innovative and interesting way as part of their Chef Collaboration programme. I was lucky enough to get a taste for myself when I visited the school with Councillor Clair Willcox for an amazing school lunch prepared by top celebrity chef Jeremy Lee.



Prayer and protest at Holy Spirit Clapham

In the wake of last month's tragic events, I joined Church of the Holy Spirit Clapham for a service of prayer and protest to remember Sarah Everard and all the women we have lost to violence. Sarah's murder has only strengthened the resolve of our community to tackle gender-based abuse and discrimination in all its forms.



Walk-in vaccine clinics

Walk-in vaccination clinics have been playing an important role in our local vaccine rollout. Over the last few weeks, we've seen pop-up clinics at Streatham Library, the South London Islamic Centre, Brixton Tate Library, Stockwell Mosque, Streatham Place Surgery and Baldry Gardens. As the vaccine rollout continues, I'll be publicising these via my social media accounts. Please do keep an eye open and spread the word.

Surge testing success

Thank you to everyone who took the extra time to get a PCR test after multiple cases of the Covid-19 variant first identified in South Africa were detected in our area. Enhanced testing has now concluded, with 68,000 people coming forwards to take a test and help stop the spread of the virus. During this time, 113 cases of the variant were detected with the affected individuals identified and helped to self-isolate.

This is a great achievement which highlights the huge effort our council and community has made to stop the spread of the virus over the last year. It's also a reminder that local public health teams working on a fraction of the budget available to the outsourced national system have been far more effective at tracing and containing the virus.

ARE YOU AN EU NATIONAL LIVING IN LAMBETH?

TIME IS RUNNING OUT

**APPLY TO THE
EU SETTLEMENT
SCHEME NOW**

30
JUNE 2021



Need help, or more information?

Citizens Advice via Lambeth Adviceline
(0344 488 9625) or www.caml.org.uk

IRMO Phone:
07422 667327 or info@irmo.org.uk



Lambeth

101809 (A.218)

EU Settlement Scheme

Too many EU citizens are unaware they need register to regularise their status and protect their rights. With the June 30th deadline for the Government's EU Settlement Scheme fast approaching, all the evidence shows that too many people are falling through the gaps.

I'm particularly worried about some of the most marginalised EU citizens, such as older and disabled people, Roma communities, looked-after children and survivors of domestic abuse.

There is a very easy way out of the mess that is the EU Settlement Scheme: automatic settled status for anyone who was resident in the UK as of December 2020 and giving children who grow up in the UK a lifelong right to register for citizenship for free. I will continue to push the Government to do this. In the meantime, I am glad Lambeth Council has set up a scheme to encourage local registrations: <http://orlo.uk/3jYBW>

Save Streatham Hill Theatre

I'm pleased to be supporting the Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre campaign. Creating a local hub for culture, live arts and entertainment wouldn't just enrich Streatham's cultural offering, it would also bring important benefits to our local economy at a time when the High Street has taken an even deeper hit.

A study released this month suggested that revamping Streatham Hill Theatre has the potential to generate footfall, jobs and economic growth, adding over £70m to the local economy over 30 years.

Local ATM thefts

There have been a handful of ATM thefts in Streatham in recent weeks. Lambeth MPS are urging everyone to take extra care when getting cash out

- Do not use your mobile while taking out money
- Stand close and cover the keypad when putting in your pin
- If withdrawing cash, put your money and card away immediately
- Check your bank statements regularly so you can report unusual transactions

Welcoming businesses back into action

I was happy to be able to welcome Streatham's businesses back into action this month, visiting shops in Streatham Hill and Brixton Hill with Councillor Irfan Mohammed to meet small business owners and find out more about the challenges facing them as we unlock.



Throughout the crisis, it's been clear that the Government's approach to small business support has put smaller companies at risk. One of the biggest struggles for small businesses forced into closure is now the mountains of debt they face. Yet there's no flexibility in the repayment scheme, leaving many expecting to pay back whilst they are still in the red.

On top of the economic shock from the government's mishandling of the pandemic, many businesses in our area are now also contending with the impact of Brexit blue tape. One florist I spoke to highlighted the fact that flower prices have increased by 10-15%, leaving her in the difficult position of deciding whether to absorb the cost or pass it onto customers.

I will continue to stand up for small businesses in Streatham to ensure they get the support they desperately deserve.



Pushing back against pupil premium cuts

The Tories had to be shamed into feeding kids on free school meals during the holidays, now they're leaving more disadvantaged pupils behind. Schools in Lambeth are being left to shoulder a £680,800 cut thanks to the Government's refusal to update the allocation for pupil premium funding.

Analysis conducted by Schools Week shows that an estimated additional

102,000 children became eligible for free school meals between last autumn and January this year. However, the Government has now confirmed that as of April 2021, the pupil premium will be calculated based on the number of eligible pupils recorded by schools in their October 2020 census. Yet again, they are failing our children.

Financial Shielding

A new 'Financial Shield' pilot scheme to improve support for people with health and financial problems is being trialled across Lambeth and Southwark, including right here in Streatham. The pandemic has exposed the close connection between health and wealth. I'm glad to see this innovative approach to tackling debt and health issues simultaneously being tested in Streatham and the surrounding area.

We have long known that the stress of debt can be the cause of health problems, potentially becoming a vicious cycle which is near impossible to break. Working with local GPs and Primary Care Networks to socially prescribe support for debt management is an important part of a more holistic strategy to help people trapped in an otherwise unmanageable situation.



It's great to see an innovative new approach to tackling debt and health issues simultaneously being tested in my local constituency and the surrounding area. We have long known that the stress of debt can be the cause of health problems, potentially transforming into a vicious cycle which is near impossible to break.

By working with local GPs and Primary Care Networks to socially prescribe support for debt management, people suffering from these issues may be given the chance to get back on track. I look forward to seeing the results of this pilot.

BELL RIBEIRO-ADDY MP
Local Labour MP



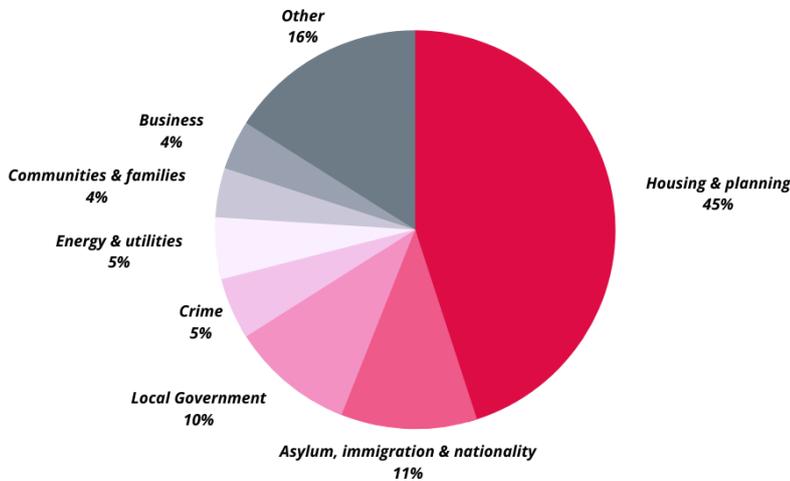
WWW.FINANCIAL-SHIELD.UK/



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Casework

Casework has been steady this month, during which I've opened 94 new cases and closed 73. As usual, these were overwhelmingly related to housing with immigration and local government cases also figuring prominently.



April Statistics

Correspondence

As the Parliamentary session drew to a close, I saw a drastic decrease in the number of correspondence emails from constituents. Of the emails I did receive, several of them expressed concerns about the Centene take over of 70 GP practices across England. I have also received a significant number of emails about Serco's Test and Trace contract, as well as the scandal that has been the Prime Minister's Downing Street refurbishment. As Israel pushes ahead with plans to evict Palestinians from their homes in East Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood, I've also been contacted by a number of constituents concerned about violence in the city.

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

The LTN's in Lambeth have now been in place for 8 months (since August 2020) and I continue to receive regular emails from constituents about them. This month, I met with Councillor Claire Holland, Florence Eshalomi MP and Helen Hayes MP to discuss Lambeth's stage one monitoring findings and the issues that constituents have been raising with us.

During this meeting, we discussed the issue of women's safety after several women have reported taxi drivers unwilling to drop them at their intended destination due to fear of breaking LTN rules. We also discussed the issue of traffic build-up on roads surrounding the LTNs. Lambeth are aware that this has been a particular problem for some of the LTNs, namely the Streatham Hill LTN, and are looking into measures that will ease traffic flow.

If you have an issue that you need help with, or know someone else in the constituency who may benefit from having their MP fight their corner, please email me at bell.ribeiroaddy.mp@parliament.uk with your full name, postcode and a brief outline of the problem you are experiencing. My team and I will be happy to try and assist you as best we can.

[Bell.ribeiroaddy.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:bell.ribeiroaddy.mp@parliament.uk)

In Parliament

Black Maternal Health debate

Thanks to the tireless campaigning work of Five X More, whose petition on improving maternal health outcomes for Black women secured close to 200,000 signatures, Parliament debated the issue of Black maternal mortality for the first time in its history this month.

According to the latest MMBRACE statistics, Black women are four times more likely, mixed heritage women three times more likely and Asian women twice as likely to die during pregnancy and childbirth. During the debate, I shared the story of my own pregnancy loss and echoed Five X More's call for the Government to set targets to address the ongoing racial disparities experienced by Black women in maternity care.

I was extremely disappointed by the Maternity Minister's dismissive response to Five X More's call for the Government to set binding targets to end this disparity, a call also echoed by the Labour frontbench. Still more so given the minister's own track record of blaming Black women for poor maternal health outcomes, while her Government refuses to commit to specific targets to end them.

This is part of a wider pattern, where the Conservatives seek to individualise systemic inequalities as a way of delegitimising struggles to end them.

Rather than addressing racism, the Government's latest report minimised the incidence of maternal mortality. This ignores the fact that the extreme disproportionality is the outcome of the other inequalities Black women face in maternal care and across society: from the fact that we are 80-83% more likely to experience a near-miss to the fact that we are 43% more likely to experience a miscarriage, 121% more likely to experience stillbirths and 50% more likely to lose a child to neonatal death.

Every woman deserves to be supported and listened to during one of the most vulnerable periods of our lives. I will continue to push the Government to address the shortcomings in maternal care that are allowing these disproportionalities to continue unchecked.



You can watch my [contribution to the debate](#) here

Responding to the Race Report

Last month the Government released its abysmal Race Report, which sought to deny the existence of structural racism and row back on the decades of important policy suggestion put down in review after review.

This Report has been criticised by a range of independent experts and organisations, from a UN Working Group on Human Rights to the Trades Union Congress, the British Medical Association, and campaigners from the Windrush Generation. At least 20 individuals and organisations quoted in the report have now distanced themselves from it and even the commissioners involved in drafting the report have criticised the Government for rewriting it to suit their own conclusions.

The Minister's response was completely inadequate and sought to deflect from the issue at hand. As I told her at the time, denial and gaslighting are core mechanisms of institutional racism.

Rather than substantively engaging with expert criticism and community concerns, the Government accuses anyone who raises objections of attacking the report in bad faith. The truth is that this is a bad faith report which seeks to give them an excuse not to do anything about the very real racism still experienced by people across UK society.

Standing up for Leaseholders in Streatham

Whilst the Government has now accepted the need to fund remediation work on some buildings, their decision to saddle leaseholders in buildings under 18m with loans means many people are still paying the price of the cladding scandal. The Government promised again and again that people wouldn't have to pay to remove dangerous cladding from their own homes. But this month, they stripped financial protection for leaseholders out of the Fire Safety Bill for the fifth and final time.

In doing so, they are holding individuals accountable for a systemic problem which happened on the Tories' watch and which their billionaire developer donors took every advantage of to push down costs and push up profits.

Just days before this vote, the PM's longest-serving aide quietly left his role amid the disclosure that he was on the payroll of two property developers. It's very clear who this Government really works for. I have consistently argued for a "polluter pays" principle when it comes to removing dangerous cladding and supported amendments to protect leaseholders in Streatham. With the Bill's passage into law, I will continue to stand up for this and campaign for the Government to ensure those responsible for the scandal are the ones who pay to put it right.

Trust teachers, not Tories

The Conservatives have never been the natural allies of the teaching profession, as we've seen during the pandemic, where teachers have been treated as fodder and schools treated as little more than glorified creches. The public sector pay freeze means they are also slapping the vast majority of teachers with a real terms pay cut after a decade where the average classroom teacher has seen their wages fall by £4,000 by the same metric.

This month, I was drawn for an education question and took the opportunity to push the Government on the looming recruitment and retention crisis in teaching. I asked them whether they would commit to addressing the problems faced by teachers and do away with the excessive scrutiny that sucks up unnecessary time and resources. We must ensure teachers are valued properly and have the support and resources they need to do their jobs.

Coverage of local opposition to [Pupil Premium cuts](#)

Taxation is a matter of social justice



Amendments to the Finance Bill 2021

New clause 8—Equalities impact assessment and distributional analysis of tax thresholds—“The Chancellor of the Exchequer must, no later than 5 April 2022, lay before the House of Commons an equalities impact assessment of existing income tax thresholds and a distributional analysis of—

- (a) the effect of reducing the income tax threshold for the additional rate to £80,000, and
- (b) the effect of introducing a supplementary rate of income tax, charged at a rate of 50%, above a threshold of £125,000.”

New clause 9—Equalities impact assessment of capital allowance super-deductions— “(none) The Chancellor of the Exchequer must, no later than 5 April 2022, lay before the House of Commons an equalities impact assessment of the provisions sections 9 to 14 of this Act, which must cover the impact of those provisions on—

- (a) households at different levels of income,
- (b) people with protected characteristics (within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010),
- (c) the Treasury’s compliance with the public sector equality duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010,
- (d) equality in different parts of the United Kingdom and different regions of England, and
- (e) child poverty.”

This month, I voted against the Government’s Finance Bill, which will only add to the crises of low pay, insecure work, rising poverty and inequality now facing us after ten years of austerity – not to mention Brexit and their shocking handling of the pandemic.

At the Bill’s third reading, I put down amendments to force the Government to publish an equalities impact assessment of their budget, something they refused to do for the second year in a row. Their refusal to do this on multiple occasions only makes everyone wonder what they’ve got to hide.

MPs should be able to properly scrutinise Government policy decisions with an eye on their potential impacts. We can’t talk about sexism, racism, ableism and poverty properly without talking about the economy.

Incentives such as the super deduction are biggest for large firms and the Financial Secretary to the Treasury has admitted that only 1% of firms will benefit this year, as the rest are within the annual investment allowance. There is no justification for treating the rich and big businesses to mouth-watering tax giveaways and reliefs, despite unclear evidence about whether this will actually create the investment needed.

This is one explanation behind the Government’s relentless recourse to dog-whistle politics and attempts to divide white working-class communities and ethnic minority working-class communities. These age-old divide and rule tactics will not paper over the shocking inequalities that have grown on their watch and deepened during the pandemic. The pandemic has pried open the wounds of austerity, which never truly healed.

Women and Equalities Select Committee

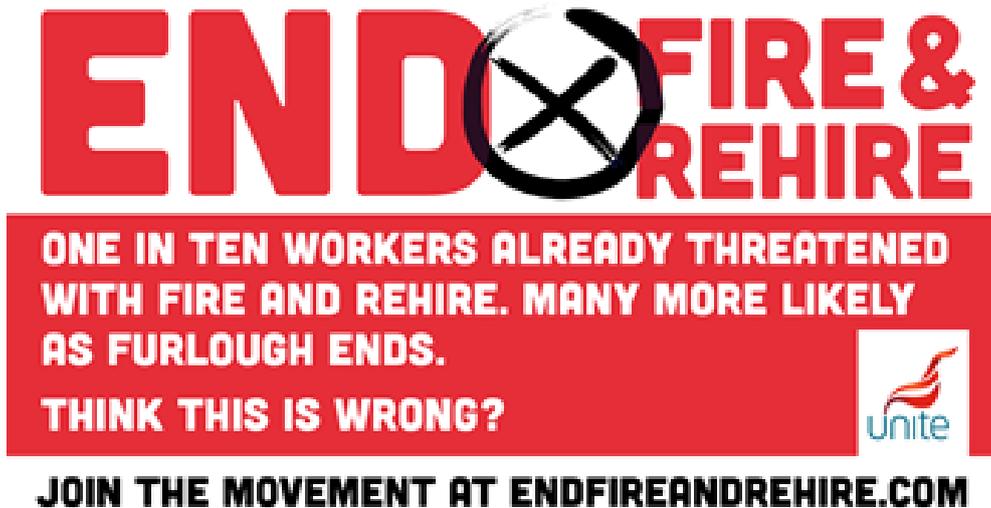
As part of my work with the Women and Equalities Select Committee, we began our inquiry into the role of the Government Equalities Office, as part of our core scrutiny role.

The Committee also began our inquiry into the cultures underpinning male violence against women where we have been looking at causes of male violence as well as steps the Government has taken/should be taking to tackle this.

Finally, the committee has begun taking written evidence to for our upcoming inquiry into the rights of cohabiting partners. If you’d like to submit evidence, you can this here:

<https://committees.parliament.uk/work/1196/the-rights-of-cohabiting-partners/>

Campaigns



END FIRE & REHIRE

ONE IN TEN WORKERS ALREADY THREATENED WITH FIRE AND REHIRE. MANY MORE LIKELY AS FURLOUGH ENDS.

THINK THIS IS WRONG?



JOIN THE MOVEMENT AT [ENDFIREANDREHIRE.COM](https://endfireandrehire.com)

End Fire and Rehire

Some companies have been using the pandemic as a smokescreen for rolling back pay and conditions for their workers. In the last month, British Gas has fired hundreds of engineers who refused to accept new contracts which would have left them to work more hours for less money.

When large, profitable companies like British Gas can push whole workforces onto worse contracts with no comeback, this drags down conditions across the sector, opening the floodgates for more of the same. Big companies shouldn't be passing the shock impact of the recession onto ordinary workers in order to protect or increase profits. That's why in the early days of the pandemic, I campaigned for the Government to insist on pausing dividends and share buybacks for companies in receipt of state support.

The pandemic has made it clearer than ever who does the really useful work that our society and our economy relies on. When workers stand up and make their voices heard, Labour representatives need to amplify them. We need to empower the ordinary workers who dug us out of the pandemic and will be the engine of our economic recovery, not those who insist on holding them back.

That's why I'm supporting the Unite Union's campaign to outlaw the practice of Fire and Rehire and stop companies from ripping up their workforce's hard-won terms and conditions.

Second-class citizens

A recent Panorama documentary has put the spotlight back on the hundreds of thousands of children being priced out of British citizenship.

Between 1983 and 2021, the fee to register a child as a citizen has grown at ten times the rate of inflation. Earlier this year, this particular fee was ruled to be unlawful in the Court of Appeal. This fee comes on top of sky-high visa fees and the ever-increasing NHS surcharge.

The exorbitant fees they are expected to pay just to be recognised as such reflects an immigration system which turns those born abroad, and those born to parents born abroad, into second-class citizens.

I've been working to highlight this situation in recent months, using my first ever PMQ to pin the Prime Minister down on a promise to look into it. I'm not holding my breath (particularly in light of the government's New Immigration Plan) and will continue pushing them on this.

Opposing the Tory crackdown on our rights

Marching against the Police Crackdown Bill on May Day

On May Day, I joined thousands of people in London to march against the disgraceful Police Crackdown Bill. In my address to the rally in Windrush Square, I made it clear that it's not just about this one Bill but a wider authoritarian drive.

The Tories are coming after hard-won rights like the right to protest and the right to vote. But in doing so, they are only strengthening our collective resolve to resist, with progressive groups of all stripes coming out to demand they scrap this particular Bill.

The fact that the power of protest forced the Government to shelve the Bill until a later date is a cause for genuine optimism. On International Workers' Day, we send a pretty clear message that we're not just going to roll over and allow them to take away these rights.



South London International Workers' Day Rally

Ahead of International Workers' Day, I joined local activists in South London to discuss the threat posed by the Government's Policing Bill and what we can do to stop it from passing. I'm heartened by the strength of local opposition to this Bill, which received a large amount of correspondence during its Second Reading back in March.

The Policing Bill is a draconian piece of legislation intended to try and crack down on the successful protest action taken by groups like Black Lives Matter and Extinction Rebellion over the last two years. Rather than legislating to try and address the issues protesters are raising, the Government has shown a strong preference for trying to legislate the protesters themselves out of existence. With the Bill returning to Parliament in the coming months, we'll need to keep up the pressure at a local and national level and keep fighting to ensure they shelve this Bill once and for all.

Five X More

I've been so proud to work alongside Five X More over the past month. Their petition calling on the Government to improve Black Maternal Health was signed by almost 200,000 people and led to the first ever parliamentary debate on the topic.

Ahead of the debate, I helped them to organise an MPs' briefing and a public meeting to raise awareness around racial disparities in maternity care and the solutions we need to eliminate these.

Workers' Memorial Day

Safety at work is a right, not a privilege. On Workers' Memorial Day, we remembered everyone across the world who has lost their life at work.

50,000 people die of work-related illness and injury in the UK every year, a number that is likely even higher this year. Today I'm thinking of the 15,754 people of working age who have died of Coronavirus in the UK and all the families who have lost loved ones too soon.

Workers in frontline occupations face increased exposure to the virus and increased likelihood of death. We must address the poor working conditions and low sick pay that have undoubtedly helped to fuel the UK's high COVID-19 death toll.

We cannot afford for the Government to keep blocking calls for a public inquiry into their handling of the pandemic.

Justice for Belly Mujinga

The 5th April marked one year since the tragic death of Belly Mujinga, a ticket collector at Victoria Station, who died just days after she was spat at by a member of the public. I joined Belly's family in a vigil to renew our call for a full public inquiry.

There are so many unanswered questions over her death, which would shed light not only on her individual circumstances but on how employers generally treated their workers in the early stages of the pandemic. I am glad that there will finally be an inquest into Belly's death. This is not justice, but it is a step on the path to justice.

Between 9 March and 25 May 2020, 213 transport workers died with COVID-19. Justice for Belly Mujinga is justice for them too.



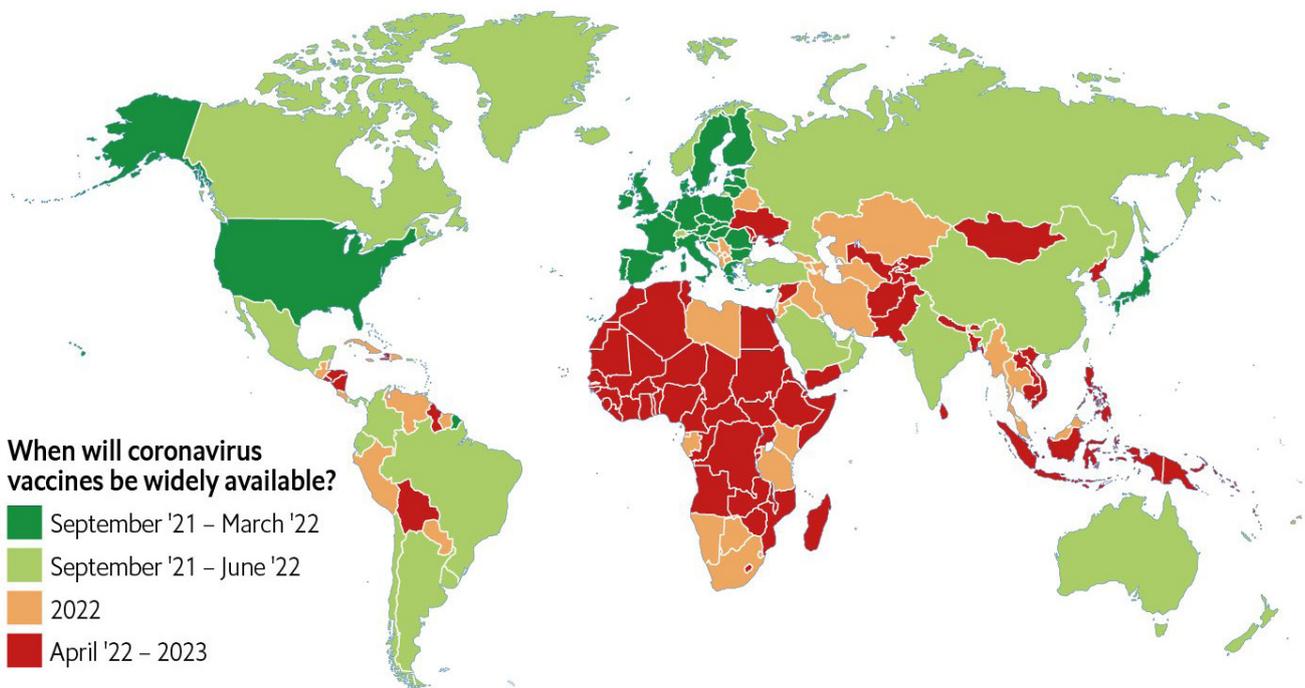
People's Vaccine

I've long pushed for the Government to support international calls to ensure pharmaceutical companies share life-saving vaccine technology, first raising this issue in Parliament on January 19th. The fact that we are in a position where we have to ask pharmaceutical companies nicely to share life-saving vaccine technology that was overwhelmingly funded by public money shows how fundamentally broken our system is.

The UK has signed deals for up to 569,000,000 vaccine doses - enough to fully inoculate our population four times over. Meanwhile, not a single patent holder has used the WHO's Covid Technology Access Pool (C-TAP) voluntarily.

Waiving the patent rights would kickstart the process of scaling up vaccine manufacture by enabling idle factories in countries across the world to produce additional doses for low-income countries. Now that the US has backed a temporary IP waiver, it's absolutely crucial that the UK doesn't stand in the way of this any longer. We will not end the pandemic unless we end vaccine apartheid.

Rich countries will get access to coronavirus vaccines earlier than others



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

Ending barriers to regularisation

With the publication of the Government's New Plan for Immigration confirming many of our worst fears, I met with several migrant justice organisations this month, including Detention Action, to talk about their concerns. They were all clear that these plans will not serve the Home Office's stated purpose of reducing trafficking and will only reinforce distinctions between 'good' and 'bad' asylum seekers. I also participated in a number of meetings about these concerns.

I was pleased to chair the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants' meeting about the launch of their latest report, *We Are Here*. The UK has one of the most complex routes to regularisation in Europe. The only people this really benefits are the people willing to exploit undocumented individuals blocked from taking up citizenship by deliberate barriers. I echo their call for new routes to regularisation based on 5 years' residence and work, and removing the barriers within the immigration system that cause migrants to become undocumented.

Pictures from the election campaign



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