

BELL RIBEIRO-ADDY MP

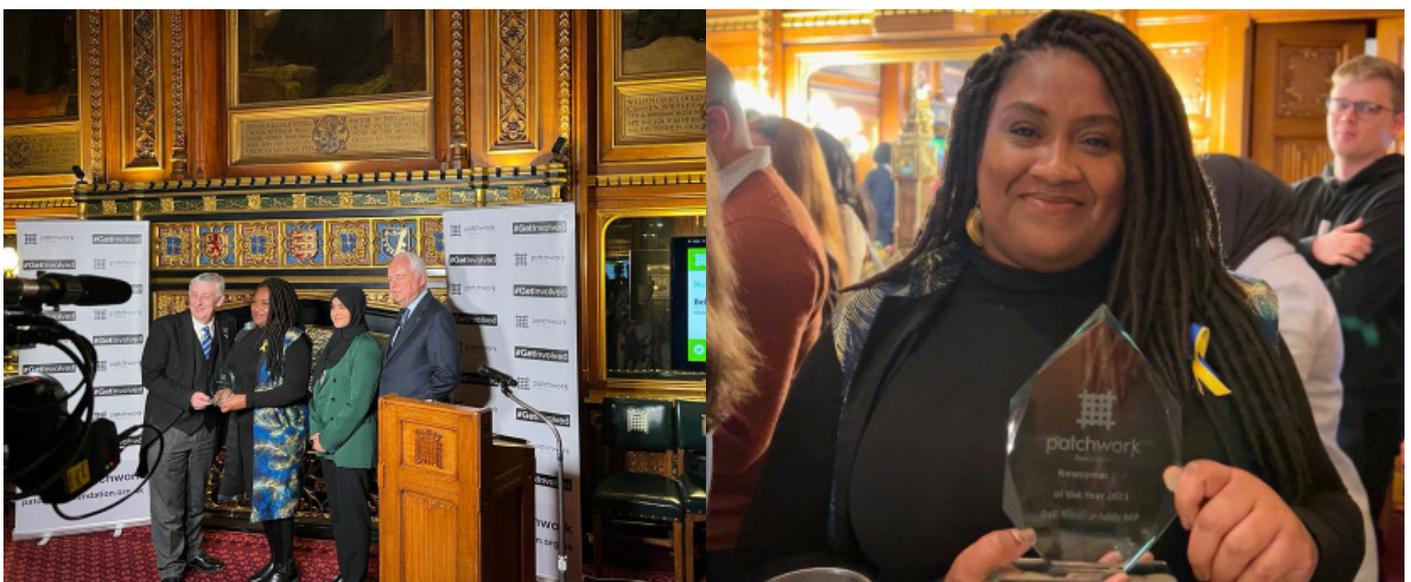
Monthly Report, March 2022



Standing up for Streatham: Patchwork Awards 2022

It was an honour to receive the Newcomer MP of the Year Award from the Patchwork Foundation last month. Having the chance to represent my home constituency in Parliament has been the privilege of a lifetime. It's not been an easy time to come into the job, so thank you to everyone once again for their hard work and support: from my team to the wider Streatham community, local charities, youth services, faith groups, local Labour members and frontline workers in our schools, care homes, NHS, and emergency services.

It's been a privilege working with everyone to stand up for Streatham so far. I'm proud of what we have achieved together already since 2019; whether it's delivering laptops to schools in need, giving newly arrived refugees a warm welcome or pushing the Government on scandalously high citizenship fees. If we can do all this under the challenging conditions of the pandemic, I'm really excited to see what we can achieve next. Massive congratulations also to my Labour colleagues Ian Byrne MP, Zarah Sultana MP and Abena Opong-Asare whose hard work was also recognised with well-deserved Patchwork awards.



Coverage in [South London Press](#), [Brixton Buzz](#) & [Brixton Blog](#)

Click here to [watch my speech](#)

In the Constituency

Helping Residents with Housing Repairs

I joined Streatham Hill councillors Liz Atkins and Rezina Chowdhury out on the Leigham Court Estate to check in on residents with longstanding disrepair issues. Residents are very frustrated by delays in addressing these problems and are now campaigning against Wates, the contractor in charge of repairs after repeated failures to get things in hand. They have my full support.

I've written to Wates, who offered to meet with me but have subsequently gone very quiet. Wates took over from Mears in July 2021 but so far, residents have faced the same issues in getting repairs attended to: from missed appointments and poor communication. It's vital that contractors are held to the highest possible standards to ensure residents get the level of service they expect and deserve. I'll keep fighting for this.



Careers Week at Michael Tippett College

Thank you to Michael Tippett College in Balham for hosting me during this year's National Careers Week. It was good to discuss the importance of work experience in helping young people gain confidence and skills and the need for employers to adjust for pupils with special educational needs. I'm signed up as a disability confident employer and would encourage other employers to do the same as a starting point.

Happy Birthday Community Tech Aid

It's hard to believe it's already been two years since Community Tech Aid began collecting and delivering vital technology to people in Streatham. It was an honour to team up with them for our Laptops for Learning initiative, which helped deliver more than a hundred devices to local schools over the course of lockdown. I'm so proud to be their patron as they expand and go from strength to strength. The root causes of digital exclusion are poverty, inequality and underinvestment. With a Tory government presiding over the worst living standards crisis in living memory, their work is more important than ever.





Win for GDST teachers

As GDST teachers at Clapham and Streatham High School entered their third week of strike action at the start of March, I joined them to talk to parents at the school. We discussed how, in opposing attempts to downgrade their professional status, they are taking action not just for themselves but for the students they teach. While parents were understandably concerned about disruption to their children's education, many understood the wider issues at stake here and were receptive to what teachers had to say.

Thankfully, after six days of nationwide strike action, teachers at GDST successfully won an end to the threat of fire and rehire, the right to stay in the Teachers' Pension Scheme and an enhanced pay offer. A good result for National Education Union members who stood together and for teachers across the UK.

Crescent Centre Grand Opening

It was a pleasure to head over to Clapham Park for the grand opening ceremony of the Crescent Centre, Lambeth's new learning disability resource centre. It's really good to see our Labour Council working to double capacity to support people with learning disabilities in spite of savage Tory cuts to local government funding and similar services overall. Disabled people have been hit harder by the pandemic than any other group and let down badly by the Government. Let's keep working to ensure people have the support they need and break down the barriers they face across society.



Better Transport for Streatham

This month, I expressed my support for local efforts to keep the fast train between Streatham Common and Victoria. I wrote to Southern Railway to discuss what more can be done to keep this service and keep the faster travel times for commuters in our area. With rail fares rising yet again this month, it's getting harder and harder to justify asking commuters to pay more and more money for less and less service. Yet this is precisely what the Government continues to do.

Hosting Commonwealth Parliamentarians

This month marked Commonwealth Day, when we celebrate the huge contribution that people from the Commonwealth have made to our country and also grapple with the darker side of that history. I'm a firm believer that we need a full and unedited understanding of our country's exploitative past if we are going to build fruitful future relationships with former Commonwealth countries that are based on mutual understanding and respect. In particular, we mustn't forget that the atrocity of slavery is intrinsically linked to the racism many of us still face today.

I was happy to host a delegation of Commonwealth parliamentarians in the constituency to discuss some of the challenges facing our countries. I gave them a grand tour of some iconic local landmarks and highlighted some of the work we've been doing in Streatham and Lambeth. As the world responds to climate breakdown and the ongoing global pandemic, international co-operation on the major challenges we face is more important than ever.



An Honest Discussion about Lambeth Past, Present and Future

While the Tory Government's response to calls to address racism remains denial and gas-lighting, our Labour Council is doing the right thing and starting an honest conversation about our area's links to the transatlantic slave trade - led by Councillor Sonia Winifred. Stage one of their consultation has identified several sites honouring figures associated with the Transatlantic slave trade. For the next stage of this process, they're consulting on how we should reimagine these sites for the 21st century. Public spaces should celebrate our diverse borough rather than honouring those who profited from slavery.

Coverage on [BBC News](#) and [Huffington Post](#)

On the Local Election Campaign Trail

I've been hitting the campaign trail hard in the run-up to local elections, getting out onto the doorstep to listen to residents about their ideas for improving our area and discuss how our local Labour party is hoping to build on our achievements in local government to date. In the last month, I've been out with our brilliant local candidates for St Leonard's, Clapham Common & Abbeville, St Martin's, Brixton Rush Common and Brixton Acre Lane, talking to voters in these wards and making the case for returning Labour representatives to power.



Brixton Rush Common



St Leonard's



Brixton Acre Lane



St Martin's



Clapham Common & Abbeville



Canvassing in Clapham Common & Abbeville with Sadiq Khan

Building a Safer Streatham

I joined Streatham Action again this month for their first in-person meeting since the start of the pandemic. It was good to hear what the issues were from local residents and talk about improving women's safety locally, boosting community confidence in the Police and the urgent need to address the deeper social causes of crime. Together, we will build a safer Streatham for everyone.



I was also in touch with local police this month about the worrying shooting outside Streatham Common Sainsbury's, which left a man hospitalised. With investigations are ongoing, they're urging anyone with relevant information to call 101 quoting crime reference CAD 6831/2 Mar or to call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 if they wish to remain anonymous.



Hosting the Lambeth Clergy in Parliament

I was very happy to host the Lambeth clergy in Parliament with my MP colleagues Florence Eshalomi and Helen Hayes. Local faith communities played an important role in the local response to Covid and provided extensive support to people in Streatham. It's always good to catch up with them to discuss the challenges that lie ahead for our community.

Celebrating International Women's Day with New Vision 4 Women

During the pandemic, incredible women in our area have been supporting the local community in so many ways. It was a privilege to join the inspirational New Vision 4 Women for an awards ceremony recognising some of them on International Women's Day. The fantastic team of volunteers at New Vision 4 Women, headed up by Nighat Khan, ran some fantastic initiatives during the pandemic including a laptop loan scheme and Zoom wellness sessions. They're helping women with everything from parenting to financial management, health, wellbeing and employment and building a mutually supportive community in the process. I'm proud to support them in their work.



Walk Her Home: Remembering Sarah Everard and all the Women Lost to Male Violence

It has been a year since the murder of Sarah Everard at the hands of a serving police officer. Sarah's kidnapping and killing at the hands of a serving police officer struck fear into the hearts of every woman in the country, but particularly women in our community. I still remember the horror I felt when news of her disappearance first broke.

So many women wrote to me in the aftermath expressing similar feelings, telling me that they had walked the exact same route that Sarah had just over a year ago and that they no longer feel safe walking in the constituency late at night. This should have been a turning point in our struggle to eliminate violence against women. No one should feel afraid to walk alone in their area that they live.

This month, women from across our community came together to march from Clapham to Brixton in memory of Sarah Everard and all the women and girls who have been lost to or suffered from male violence. I was unable to join the Walk Her Home gathering in person due to another prior commitment but I sent words of support to be read out at the Clapham Common band stand.

We will not tackle violence against women until we address the institutional misogyny and culture of impunity among the people entrusted with prosecuting it. Women have to be able to trust the police if the police are going to do their job. Cressida Dick's departure will be meaningless if she is not replaced by someone who recognises the wholesale failings within our police services and is committed to overhauling them. And we need a comprehensive statutory inquiry into the issue of institutional misogyny within the Met.

But we also need to think outside policing if we are going to overcome the misogyny that runs right through our society and address inequalities and service cuts which empower men to commit abuse. Education is really important. In a recent survey, half of school pupils reported receiving no sex education during lockdown, whilst exposure to misogyny online increased. We need to do so much more to ensure that our children are learning the right lessons about care and consent, and that young men and boys in particular are not learning the wrong ones from our wider culture. And as I said in Parliament this month, a government serious about tackling violence against all women and girls would also be reversing cuts to survivor-centred services.

We owe it to Sarah and all the women lost to male violence to keep demanding social, economic and political change to build a world where women can live free from the threat of male violence.



I also spoke during an Opposition Day debate on **Violence Against Women**

Better Support with Dementia

It was great to hear from Alzheimer's Society advisers Tracey and Basia about the situation facing dementia patients during the pandemic and how I can better support people in Streatham. We talked about the necessity to keep testing free for care workers and people in care homes alike and the need for wider reform of our whole social care system. This meeting has only furthered my belief that the Government's social care plan falls short of what our community needs. It only strengthens my commitment to fight for a social care solution that meets the needs of dementia patients and everyone else with unmet care needs.



They pointed out the staggering statistic that one in four people who lost their lives to Covid had dementia. Approximately 1,900 people live with dementia in our borough. By 2030, it is predicted that this number will increase by 44.6% to 2,680. The NHS estimates that about 610 people living with dementia in Lambeth are undiagnosed, with diagnosis rates dropping from 81% to 67.3% since the start of the pandemic. I'll be pushing the Government on this.

They also drew my attention to Lambeth Dementia Action Alliance (DAA), a local vehicle for organisations and individuals to work together to make Lambeth a more dementia friendly community, where people living with dementia are understood, respected and supported, and confident that they can contribute to community life. They are currently looking for someone to chair this vital group. If you'd be interested in this role, please email tracey.wells@alzheimers.org.uk for an informal chat.

Streatham Swimming Club

It was lovely to join Streatham Swimming Club at Granton Primary School for their annual awards ceremony last weekend to recognise the fantastic achievements of young swimmers and the huge efforts of the local volunteers who keep the club going.



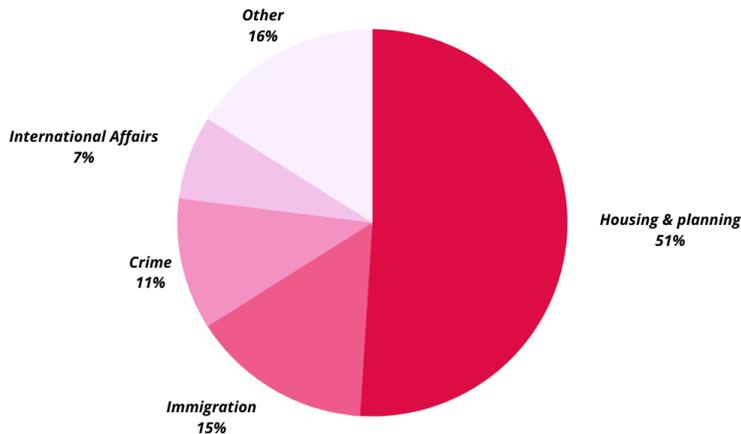
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Casework

Casework volumes remain high, with housing disrepair cases comprising the majority of these. Constituents continue to face issues with the Home Office regarding immigration and asylum, with many experiencing delays in their applications, and others expressed issues with asylum accommodation. This month, my team and I have also been attempting to help a handful of constituents trying to help Ukrainian refugees via the Homes for Ukraine scheme. A notable number of constituents have written to us raising concerns about crime-related issues in the last month.



March Statistics

Correspondence

With the current cost-of-living crisis getting worse by the minute, it was no wonder that constituents have written to me to push the Government to U-turn on their disastrous National Insurance rise.

The Nationality and Borders Bill made a return to Parliament this month for its ping pong stage. Lord Alf Dubs once again tabled an amendment to fix family reunion and open safe routes for unaccompanied child refugees to join family here in the UK. Many constituents wrote to me asking me to support this amendment. As ever, I did, but unfortunately the Government did not.

With the Health and Care Bill also returning from the Lords, I had dozens of emails asking me to support amendments to keep access to telemedical abortions, tackle the NHS staffing crisis and further amendments that seek to address the shortcomings of this Bill.

Other top issues this month included: requests for me to back the Green New Deal bill, correspondence on Child Q, access to cash in Streatham and calls to keep the fracking ban.

Congratulations to Streatham Hockey

Congratulations to Streatham Hockey, who took home the National Ice Hockey League Division One title after securing a convincing double victory on the competition's final weekend, ending a thirty year trophy drought!

In Parliament

Urgent Question on Police Brutality

This month, the Met apologised to a child they strip-searched two years ago after wrongly suspecting her of carrying cannabis. She was on her period and did not have an adult present. But we've had apologies before and it's taken two years to even wring this out of local Met leadership.

In Parliament, I secured and led an Urgent Question asking the Government how they plan to address these issues and prevent these kind of abuses from happening again. There is no apology that could atone for the perverse and racist degradation of Child Q, only action to ensure no child has to endure what she went through again.

This comes as the latest in a long string of racist and misogynistic incidents within the Met. The first step in addressing an issue is admitting it exists. I was therefore disappointed that the Government chose to delay justice by suggesting it was unclear whether this was a one-off or part of a bigger pattern. They continue to refuse to acknowledge institutional racism in policing, let alone spell out a plan to address it. In the same week they did this, we got a clearer picture of the scale of this issue.

An FOI request revealed that the Met strip searched 5,279 children in the past 3 years – nearly 5 children a day. 75% of the children strip searched were from ethnic minority backgrounds. 16 of them were aged 10-12. What's it going to take for acknowledgement that what happened to Child Q is not an isolated incident but part of a structural problem.

It's not just that these issues exist, it's that those in a position to do something about them are reluctant to discuss and expose them. This month, the Daniel Morgan inquiry concluded that "the MPS has often shown a reluctance to examine, admit and learn from past mistakes and failures", another reminder that we will not address these issues without improving accountability and transparency in policing.

That's why Labour Black women MPs issued a joint statement calling on the Home Secretary to appoint a new Met Commissioner who acknowledges the depth of this issue and will take proportionate action to address it and restore confidence in the police, which is at an all-time low.

I was also pleased to see that the High Court ruled against the Met Police's decision to try and shut down the Reclaim These Streets vigil that took place a year ago this week in memory of Sarah Everard. The Government should take heed and drop its Policing Bill, which would give the police new powers that undermine our right to protest. The disgraceful scenes we saw that night of officers kettling and bundling women to the ground as they tried to make their voices heard must never be repeated.

Statement on Child Q Investigation

We wish to place on record our collective shock and indignation at the report of a 15-year old black girl being subjected to a strip-search by police whilst at school.

Both the police and school should be places of safety for young people, which makes this incident all the more reprehensible. As black women, this story is particularly resonant because the sad reality is that this could have been any of us in our youth. We stand in support of the victim and her family at this difficult time.

No parent would ever send their child to school expecting them to be strip-searched. That this could happen highlights the deep biases that are still present in parts of our institutions, as well as the work that needs to be done to ensure that police treatment of young people is both proportionate and sensitive.

There are clear and serious safeguarding issues arising from this case that must be addressed, but we must not ignore the part that classism, sexism and racism have likely played in violating the rights of this young girl.

Sadly, this is the latest in a series of grave revelations about the unacceptable behaviour of serving police officers. The Home Secretary must put ending the scourge of institutional racism and sexism in the Metropolitan Police at the heart of choosing the next Commissioner, and urgently restore the principle of policing with consent.

Watch me leading the [Urgent Question on Child Q](#)

Spring Statement

Ahead of the Spring Statement, I called on the Government to reverse the planned National Insurance hike. Research from the New Economics Foundation found that since the last election, disposable incomes have fallen by £110 for the poorest 50% and risen by £3,300 for the richest 5%. The National Insurance Hike is yet another regressive tax which will disproportionately hit the finances of all but the very richest households. A Government that cared about spreading the burden of the economic pain we are now feeling would be drawing up proposals for a wealth tax. But not this party of the rich.

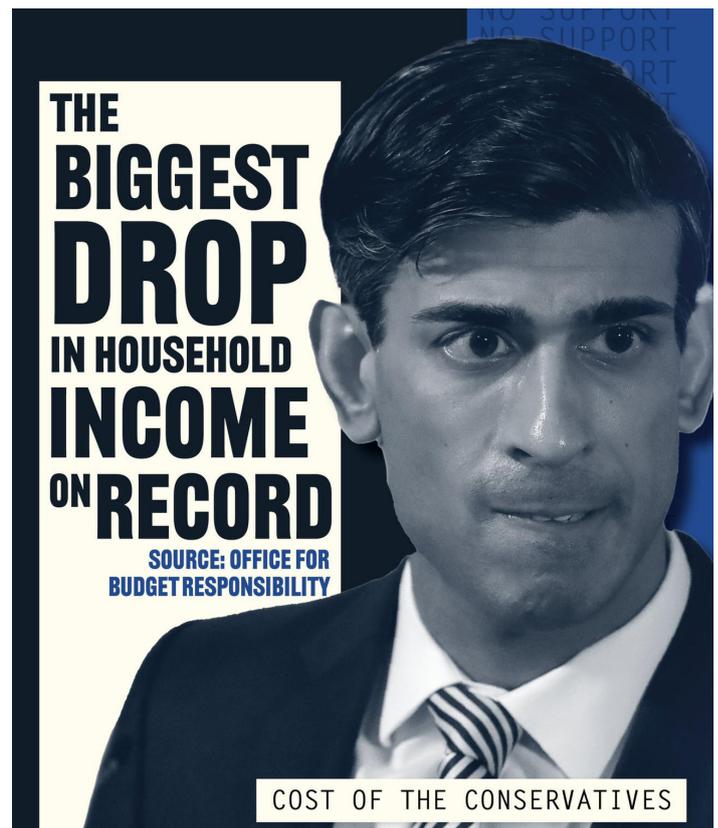
I also reiterated my calls for a windfall tax on the excess profits of energy companies benefitting from the price hikes that are immiserating everyone else and for significant boosts to public sector pay, minimum wage, benefits and pensions, that keep pace with inflation as an absolute bare minimum. I wasn't holding my breath for any of this but even so, the Government completely failed to offer support that matches the scale of the crisis we are now facing. The headline is that we are on course for the biggest decline in living standards in living memory.

It cannot be stated often enough that real terms cuts to public sector pay, pensions and benefits will leave millions of people confronting a cost of living crisis with even less money in their pockets. People on benefits could see living costs rise by 10% over the next financial year. Benefits are rising just 3.1%. Also buried in the small print of the Chancellor's announcement was the fact that tax cuts announced will largely be shouldered by students as a result of Government changes on student loan repayments.

Government tax breaks will mostly benefit the wealthier half of society. Increasing NIC thresholds offers some help to those earning £9-£12.5k but the main beneficiaries are those earning £45k+ who will see back over £3k. According to IPPR analysis, the Spring Statement amounts to an average of just £120 in extra support for the poorest 20% of households, while the richest 20% gain an average of £480.

A £330 saving for the average earner doesn't come close to making up for the likely energy bill increases facing the average household by October this year, let alone the fact that pay is failing to keep pace with inflation. Cutting fuel duty isn't about helping individual motorists either. A 5p cut means putting petrol prices where they were just weeks ago. It's just an excuse for the Government to look like they're doing something instead of taxing the companies making record profits from sky high energy prices.

It's hard to find words that do justice to the inadequacy of this month's Spring Statement, which is condemning millions more households to suffer poverty. Nevertheless, the richest MP in Parliament, who happens to also be the Chancellor of the Exchequer, did send several very clear messages. Firstly, if you're already struggling to make ends meet, you're now on your own. Secondly, protecting profits is more important than protecting people. Finally like the last ten years, those with the narrowest shoulders will bear the biggest burden.



Race Action Plan

I had a chance to respond to the Government's action plan in Parliament this month, expressing the frustration many people feel about their decision to use the widely discredited Sewell Report as a basis for this. A report that starts from the premise that institutional racism does not exist is not going to tackle the long-acknowledged problem of institutional racism or eliminate the racism experienced at the hands of the police by too many communities.

Speaking out against the Government's [Race Action Plan](#)

International Women's Day Debate

In this year's International Women's Day debate, I argued against corporate feminism and for a feminism that embraces women in all our diversity. We have to keep demanding true equality for women of all classes, all races and all nationalities. When companies tweet out something nice about gender equality once a year while presiding over huge gender pay gaps year after year, that's not feminism, it's cheap PR. They're not contributing to the struggle for women's equality, they're holding it back.

It's also crucial to restate that a feminism that doesn't demand full equality for all women is not feminism at all. We need an intersectional feminism that recognises the need to address racism in tandem with gender inequalities and amplify the voices of women of colour in our movement. We have to keep demanding real feminism. That means action instead of lip service and real equality for women of all classes, all races and all nationalities.

Speaking in the [International Women's Day](#) debate

Labour Opposition Day: Opposing Violence Against Women

This week, Labour also held an opposition day on the broader issue of violence against women. There is a clear consensus that the Government must do more to tackle this. In the debate, I called on them to address institutional misogyny in policing, reverse cuts to specialist services for survivors and ensure boys aren't learning the wrong lessons in school and from culture more widely.

Calling for action on [violence against women](#)

Opposing the Rollback of Reproductive Rights

During the pandemic, 86% of women in southeast London chose to access telemedical abortion care ahead of in-person services. At home early medical abortions halved waiting times and reduced the risk of women being pushed into using illegal or unsafe methods to end their pregnancies. Government plans to scrap telemedical care for early stage abortions would have been a massive rollback of reproductive rights.

I'm glad MPs from across the House ultimately voted to overturn plans to get rid of them later this year. Scrapping this safe, effective and accessible form of abortion care would have been a blatant attack on the right to choose. In the run up to the vote, I tabled an Early Day Motion opposing the Government's unscientific and poorly evidenced proposal to get rid of them.

View my EDM supporting [telemedical abortion care](#)

Standing With Ukraine

Solidarity With Ukraine

The ongoing situation in Ukraine has been at the forefront of all our minds and the parliamentary agenda this month. I was proud to sign the UK book of solidarity for Ukraine, which will be sent to Ruslan Stefanchuk, Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada, the Ukrainian Parliament. I've also called on the Government to offer meaningful support to Ukrainian refugees displaced by the Russian invasion. Our Government has loudly talked up the prospect of war but when it comes to helping the people affected by it, they've gone very quiet.



Economic Crime Bill

I supported the Government's Economic Crime Bill sanctioning Russian oligarchs and pushed them to go further. Long overdue already, this Bill has been rightly criticised as shutting the stable door after the horses have bolted. The Government's refusal to close loopholes leaves some oligarchs exempt to sanctions and gives others ample time to sell up (rather than the 28 days called for by Labour). The Tory Party has taken £1.9m of Russian money since Boris Johnson entered 10 Downing Street. Now they're letting oligarchs off the hook.

Supporting Ukrainian Refugees in the Hostile Environment

If only the Tories were as eager to take in Ukrainian refugees as they were to take in Russian money. It will surprise no one who has closely observed their immigration policy over the last decade that we are struggling to quickly and compassionately provide safe passage to Ukrainian refugees. These problems are systemic and reflect a situation where the Home Office has been redesigned to shut people out, not welcome them in. The positive response we're seeing to Ukrainian refugees is very welcome. It needs to mark a turning point where we elect to build an immigration system built on compassion and solidarity for all refugees and accept the need to help our fair share of people seeking safety.

People in Britain have opened their hearts and homes to people forced to flee Ukraine. But the Government's response to refugees from Ukraine and elsewhere fails to match public generosity. Successive governments have built a system which denies basic rights and respect to refugees. Supporting refugees should be a government's legal and moral obligation, not something to be left to the goodwill of individual citizens. As the late Tony Benn said, "the way the government treats refugees is very instructive because it shows how they would treat the rest of us if they thought they could get away with it". In this month's debate on how the UK can help the Ukraine, I urged them to change course before people see them for who they really are.



Watch my call for [better support for Ukrainian refugees](#)

Stop Doing Business with Human Rights Abusers

Finally, it's crucial that as the Government looks to make up the shortfall from Russian oil and gas, they don't overlook other countries' human rights abuses. It would be rank hypocrisy to divest from Russian oil and gas only to ramp up reliance on oil from Saudi Arabia, an authoritarian regime which continues to invade and bomb its neighbour. The solution to the energy bills crisis isn't licensing new oil and gas and begging dictatorships to sell us more fossil fuels. It's taking overdue steps to insulate homes, taxing energy super profits and taking energy into public ownership to accelerate the shift to renewables.

Nationality and Borders Bill

It's been heartening to see the outpouring of support and solidarity for Ukrainian refugees following Putin's invasion. So it was doubly heartbreaking to watch the Tories line up and vote through the most draconian features of a Bill which will criminalise people for seeking safety, including Ukrainian refugees. The Tories built a system which denies basic rights and respect to refugees then turned round and acted surprised when we failed to help people fleeing Ukraine. They know exactly what they've done by voting this through. They don't even stand with Ukraine, let alone other refugees.



Standing up for P&O Workers and a Better Deal For All Workers



This month, I've been standing with RMT members fighting back against P&O's mass sacking of its workforce earlier this month. This came ahead of a Labour Opposition Day in which I voted to reinstate the 800 unjustly dismissed P&O workers, withdraw P&O's government contracts, ban fire and rehire and strengthen workers' rights. As usual, the Tories voted to let companies keep trampling workers to protect profits. The cost of living crisis has been made immeasurably worse by the erosion of workers' rights and the fact that 40% of people have seen real terms pay cuts since the banks caused the last financial crash. We must demand a better deal for workers.

Opposing the Police Crackdown Bill

This month, the Tories reinserted a number of draconian amendments to their Policing Bill, like provisions to crack down on "noisy" protests. Concerted resistance from Peers has killed off some of the worst features of this Bill and they voted this particular amendment down again this week. But whatever final form this Bill takes, attacks on the right to protest and minoritised communities are already baked in. I fought tooth and nail to prevent this bill passing, joining protesters in the streets to try and stop it and tabling amendments to reverse some of its most discriminatory provisions. When it eventually passes, it falls on everyone who values civil liberties to stand together and build a movement even this Government can't ignore.



Campaigns



Stand up to Racism: UN Anti-Racism Day March

Every year on the 20th of March, we come out together to march against racism. As the Government continues to pretend that the institutions they are in charge of are not driving unequal outcomes across society (see my above section on their “Race Action Plan”) this more important than ever. I joined Stand Up to Racism to highlight how they are driving through policies which will make the racism faced by Black, Asian and ethnic minority communi-

ties worse, not better. I spoke out against the onslaught of racist policing which is the background behind the strip search of Child Q. I also reiterated my call on the Government to welcome all refugees, not just those it is politically advantageous for them to welcome, and to condemn the racism faced by African and Asian people fleeing Ukraine.

Watch my [Anti-Racism Day Speech](#)



Remembering Belly Mujinga

Last weekend, Belly Mujinga should have been celebrating her 49th birthday with her family. But instead, they were mourning her loss. I joined them at the National Covid memorial wall to mark her birthday and reiterate our call for justice. With the inquest into Belly’s death slowly approaching, let’s keep her and her loved ones in our thoughts and prayers. It’s absolutely vital for her family to get some clear answers about her untimely death.

Calling for [Justice for Belly Mujinga](#)

National Covid Memorial Day

The first heart was painted on the National Covid Memorial Wall a year ago this month. The wall is now decorated with 180,000+ hearts, each commemorating someone who has lost their life to Covid. As well as remembering all those lost to Covid in our thoughts and our prayers, let’s also keep fighting for a proper inquiry that holds the Government to account for poor decision-making, corrupt contracting and long-term planning failures that allowed the virus to rip through society.

While everyone else was making huge sacrifices to keep one another safe, the corrupt cabal running the country were living it up and laughing at us. Just this week, police issued 20 fines in connection with their Downing Street parties. We heard how the Government paid £122m for unusable gowns from a company with links to a Tory Peer at a cost of £76m more than they were purchased for in a contract personally fast tracked by Michael Gove. These things only hammer home how important it is to have a proper inquiry into everything that’s happened during the pandemic.



Keep Free Covid Testing

With universal Covid testing coming to an end at the end of March, I called on the Government to rethink this decision. Immunity is waning, Covid rates are rising and people are struggling to get by. Cutting free testing means someone visiting a relative in care could end up paying around £73 a month just to keep their relative safe from Covid. In practice, it means many people will simply stop testing.

With the ever-present danger of new variants emerging, switching off our defence systems against Covid this early is complacent and short-sighted. As the early stages of the pandemic showed all too clearly, failing to have the right systems in place may well end up costing us more than it saves. The Government should keep free PCR and lateral flow tests and keep our current testing infrastructure in place, as the overwhelming majority of public health leaders and scientists have advocated for.



End Conversion Therapy for All

Jamie Wallis's brave decision to come out as the first trans MP this week is surely a watershed moment. And the warm reaction across the House shows that on an individual level, even MPs are capable of love and acceptance. Sadly, this compassion is not being mirrored at the level of policy. On the very day we celebrated trans visibility, the Government first appeared to row back altogether on its previous commitment to ban conversion therapy for all LGBT+ people. Then they clarified that they would be banning conversion therapy after all, but not for

trans people. Promising to protect lesbian, gay and bisexual people while excluding trans people sends a clear message that trans people are not worthy of the same rights, dignity and safety as their peers. There's no LGBT without the T. We still have a long fight ahead of us to build a truly inclusive society where everyone is free to be who they are.

Justice for the Windrush Generation

This month I joined my colleague Kate Osamor MP to hear the harrowing stories of Windrush compensation claimants struggling to get compensation for their suffering during the Windrush Scandal. The Government initially estimated there were 15,000 eligible Windrush compensation claimants. More than two years after the scheme launched, just 20% of this number had applied, with just 5% have received compensation. 23 have died waiting. The Windrush Compensation scheme has been a scandal in itself.

You could be forgiven for thinking that the Home Office was trying to wait for people to die so it could avoid discharging its obligations. With the scheme continuing to deny Windrush victims the justice and compensation to which they are entitled, the time has come to take it off the Home Office's hands and entrust it to an independent body that is capable of securing justice.





Supporting the Right to Food Campaign

Ahead of the Spring Statement, I joined my friend Ian Byrne MP and other Labour Party colleagues to hand in his Right to Food letter to Ten Downing Street. The levels of food insecurity afflicting our country are a direct consequence of twelve years of Tory policies which have created higher and higher levels of poverty, precarity and inequality. In the past month, food banks reported they were having to refuse potato donations because people cannot afford the energy to boil them. We should put the right to food in law and hold the Government accountable for this failure.

Windfall Tax

Inflation reached a 30-year high in February. Wages, welfare and pensions are all tumbling in real terms while national insurance is about to rise, along with the cost of basics like food, fuel, rent and energy. Meanwhile, banks are doling out their biggest bonuses since they crashed the financial system in 2008. This squeeze on living standards is the consequence of a Conservative Government that prioritises the very rich at the expense of everyone else. By rejecting our proposals for a windfall tax on oil and gas companies to help bring down bills, they have chosen to put making money off their misery ahead of helping people out of that misery.



Migrants Make Our NHS: Overseas NHS Workers' Day

On March 4th every year, we say thank you to our overseas NHS workers, who come from over 200 countries around the globe. Migrants helped build our NHS and many continue to dedicate their lives to keep it running today. Never forget that migrants make our NHS.

Commonwealth Africa Summit

I was very pleased to deliver a keynote speech at the 8th Annual Commonwealth Africa Summit this month. I spoke about the global post-Covid recovery, the African Common Market, debt cancellation for climate resilience and my work with the APPG for African Reparations.



Free Nazanin

After her family's long fight for justice, Nazanin Zaghari Ratcliffe returned to the UK this month to be reunited with her family. Some people have suggested she should have kept her mouth shut about the Government's refusal to pay a debt that would have secured her release six years ago and a Prime Minister whose clumsy words only added to her ordeal. Nazanin's experience is a familiar one for migrants and people of colour. Even if you are objectively harmed and wronged by Government actions - if you lose years of your life because the Government refused to settle an old debt - you're expected to keep quiet and be grateful. Instead of getting defensive and angry, the Government must examine how her case was handled and review the cases of other British citizens detained in Iran.

Local Campaigns

Our local election campaign is now well underway. This election presents a very simple choice between local Labour candidates embedded in our community and - in most seats - candidates who are representatives of the most corrupt Conservative Government of our constituency. But we cannot take anybody's vote for granted. Please join our local Streatham Labour canvassing sessions to talk to residents about how we're hoping to build on local achievements in our area over the last four years.

I'm working in partnership with local baby bank Little Village to help them get hold of more clothes and kit for the families they support in our area. Thank you to all the local members who volunteered to help us run a big donation session together at the end of April!

Since the beginning of 2020, Little Village have responded to 919 requests for help for Lambeth families. They are now running urgently low on many essential items, such as beds, buggies and clothes (especially for ages 3-5 years), for the high number of families that need support.

Our donation drive is happening on the morning of Saturday the 23rd of April at St Margaret's Church (SW2 3BH) from 9:30pm-12:30pm. Please do spread the news with everyone you know in our area.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy



Little Village donation drive

We're a village of support and solidarity for struggling families with children under five in London. We offer preloved kids' clothes and baby essentials and guidance for parents.

Thank you so much Bell Ribeiro-Addy, MP for Streatham, for kindly holding a donation drive to support our work.

We collect great quality items that feel like a gift to receive - we like to apply the "would you give it to your best friend?" rule of thumb! Please check out littlevillage.org/donateus when preparing your donation for the items we are unable to accept.

Items we are very short of include:

- Clothes birth - 1 year and 2-5 years
- Moses Baskets, cots and cot beds (we are unable to take used mattresses)
- Prams and Buggies
- Playmats
- High Chairs
- Blankets
- Bottles and new teats
- Weaning plates and cutlery
- Highchairs
- New/unused toiletries for babies, children and mums

When? Saturday April 23rd 10am - 12noon
Where? St Margaret Hub, Streatham Hill, SW2 3BH (entrance from Faygate Road under the bunting)
Note this is a low traffic neighbourhood and drivers should enter and exit from the A23

© @littlevillagehq
w. littlevillagehq.org
Registered Charity Number: 1169735

Read more about [Lambeth Labour achievements](#)

Contact Me

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