

BELL RIBEIRO-ADDY MP

Monthly Report, Nov-Dec 2021



Ban Lucrative Second Jobs for MPs

A Tory MP was paid three times his MP salary to lobby Ministers for a big healthcare company. Randox paid disgraced MP Owen Paterson £100k a year and got a £133m Covid testing contract without other firms being invited to bid. That's quite an impressive return on investment. When found guilty of an obvious standards breach by Parliament's independent cross-party committee, what did his party do? They voted to overturn the decision, scrap the body that made it, and pave the way for more of the same.

Luckily, public pressure forced the Tories to reverse their plans to scrap what limited parliamentary scrutiny does exist over corporate lobbying. But this whole episode exemplifies the way this Government is trying to put itself beyond accountability in its attempt to concentrate more power and wealth in the hands of the few. It shows we need to strengthen the rules if we're going to protect our democracy from corporate interests.

On a Labour Opposition Day honing in on corruption, Tory MPs voted down our motion to ban MPs from being paid advisers and consultants. Yet again, they chose to put lining their own pockets ahead of the interests of their constituents and the country. I was also proud to support my colleague Richard Burgon MP's Bill to ban MPs from taking up lucrative second jobs in consultancy and lobbying – but not from doing important frontline work like caring or working in the NHS.

Boris Johnson's full-blooded support for getting rid of the Parliamentary Standards Commissioner was inseparable from the fact that she will shortly be deciding whether to investigate him for alleged rule breaches. I hope she throws the book at him.

Something else that should not be lost in the noise is the fact that the Government has handed out gold plated contract after gold plated contract to the wealthy and the powerful (also known as its donors). They must come clean about how so many contracts, including the ones facilitated by Owen Paterson, were awarded to companies that have given money to or have ties with Tory MPs or the Tory party.

Owen Paterson should have resigned the day he was found guilty of breaking lobbying rules. Instead, Boris Johnson's Tory Party tried to rip up the rulebook and pretend this kind of corruption was acceptable. They'll do the same thing again and again if we let them. We must not.

Watch my video calling for [accountable policing](#)

In the Constituency

Challenging the Tories' deport first ask questions later approach

In November, the Government detained two of my constituents, a mother and daughter, ahead of a mass deportation flight to Jamaica. Both of these women have close family here. Neither has a criminal record. They arrived on a joint visitors visa, but shortly before they were due to return, her mother fell down a flight of stairs and developed a serious injury, leaving her unfit to fly. The daughter started attending school but difficulties around her immigration status led to her dropping out. In the run-up to the flight, she was detained in the infamous Yarl's Wood immigration detention centre (which would have been closed down under a Labour government).

This decision typifies the way the government frequently fail to make a proper assessment of individuals' situation and needs in their haste to deport. Thankfully, following my letter to the Home Secretary and pressure from migrant justice campaigners, the Government decided to pull them off the flight – along with the majority of those scheduled to be on it. If it had gone ahead, it would be the first flight with non-offenders on board since before the Windrush Scandal.

The fact that so many people were removed from the flight offers further proof that the Home Office continues to operate under the same “deport first, ask questions later” mentality that led to the Windrush Scandal and tore friends and neighbours from our community. The flight went ahead at a cost of £200,000: £50,000 a head for each of the four people the Government deported. Another reminder, as the Tories prepare to get their Nationality and Borders Bill through Parliament, that the Hostile Environment is a very expensive way of playing divide and rule.



Warm coats for newly arrived refugees

A huge thank you to everyone in the constituency who kindly donated your warm coats to help newly arrived refugees in the constituency. I continue to work with Nighat Khan and New Vision 4 Women to ensure everyone staying at the Dudley Hotel has the basics and a better start. As well as ensuring they have access to healthcare, education and food, we've managed to supply most of the families with the essentials.

I was hoping to arrange a Winter party to build up the bonds of solidarity in our local community in early December. Sadly, the arrival of the Omicron variant means this was too risky to push ahead with. In lieu of this, I'm hoping to organise a small collection of gifts - with priority given to the refugee children. The intention is to distribute these at a winter party early in the new year (Covid permitting).

Coverage of deportation flight in [The Independent](#)



Fighting for tenants facing evictions

I'm still angry that Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing (MTVH) attempted to force more than a hundred Clapham Park Estate households out of their homes over Christmas, with nowhere else to go and Covid cases at record highs. It's worth drawing attention to the fact that the company pushed ahead with these plans in full knowledge that there were very few readily available alternatives for people to

rent at this time of year, let alone affordable ones. I was contacted by numerous residents who rebutted the company's claims that they had been contacted in advance of official notice being served and offered alternative accommodation.

Thankfully, residents got organised and pushed back against this shameful decision. I was very happy to support their efforts, lobbying MTVH and raising awareness about the evictions to make them think again. The company was forced to listen and reverse their heartless plans, giving residents of two blocks a reprieve until early February. I continue to push them to do the same for residents of the final house.

Knight's Youth Centre

In December, I had the chance to tour Knight's Youth Centre to hear about the work they are doing with young people in our community. The Tories inflicted 70% cuts on youth services over the last decade, forcing over 1,000 UK youth centres to close. Earlier in 2021, I used one of my PMQs to raise this with Boris Johnson. Seeing the work our youth centres do in person and talking to local youth workers only strengthens my resolve to fight for fair funding for youth services over the coming years. We must ensure for proper investment so that every young person has the support they need to fulfil their potential.



Get Boosted Now

Like many people in Streatham, I was very glad to receive my COVID-19 booster jab this month. It's been fantastic to see so people queuing up to boost their immunity. Every single shot of the vaccine takes us a small step closer to ending this pandemic once and for all and moving forwards. With the Government hell-bent on running the NHS beyond physical capacity, I urge all of you get your boosters and flu jabs as soon as you can to protect yourself and protect the NHS this winter.



Visiting local schools

It's always uplifting to talk to school students in our area about the things that matter to them. I had a great discussion with La Retraite Sixth Form students this month about my role as an MP. They asked me questions on a range of topics: from the climate emergency to citizenship fees. It was also lovely to check-in with pupils from Glenbrook School for a virtual question and answer session about my job as an MP and see how they were getting on with the laptops we delivered earlier this year.

Streatham Christmas Card Competition 2021

This month, I was excited to officially launch my 2021 Christmas Card competition, giving children who live or go to school in the constituency the chance to design my official festive greeting card, which will go out to thousands of people in our area. The competition has now closed and we've had some great entries! I'll be judging winners across a range of age categories and publicising some of my favourite designs in the run-up to Christmas.



Standing up for Teachers' Pensions

The Girls' School Day Trust (GDST), which runs 23 independent schools across the UK, is proposing to leave the Teachers' Pension Scheme, threatening the financial stability of teachers in retirement. This month I met with teachers from Streatham and Clapham High School and their National Education Union representative to discuss the impact of these proposals, which they are being threatened with.

Leaving the Teachers' Pension Scheme would hit loyal, hard-working teachers hard in their retirement – a poor reward for the extraordinary efforts they made to teach under pandemic

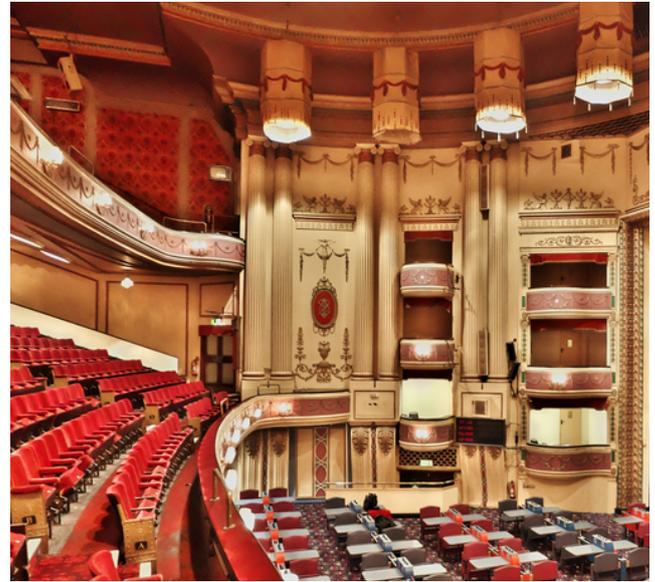


conditions. Worse still, the Trust is proposing to fire and rehire them if they do not voluntarily agree. The case for moving out of the Teachers' Pension Scheme is based on two pieces of speculation: that the employer contribution in the scheme will increase to 30% and Business Rate Relief will be removed from independent schools.

To date, the Trust have refused requests from the National Education Union to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment on their proposals. The Union is concerned that the changes will exacerbate the pension inequality already suffered by women, given that an estimated 75% of the affected staff are women. They are also concerned that it won't end with GDST, with academies also considering similar moves to downgrade pensions. I will stand with NEU members against this attempt to weaken their pensions.

Streatham Hill Theatre

The Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre had more good news to celebrate this month as Historic England announced it would be adding the theatre to its at-risk register. Streatham Hill Theatre is an architectural gem: an impressive Grade 2 listed theatre, designed and built in the late 1920s for an audience of over 2,500 with a stage large enough to take the very biggest shows. I've been proud to support the campaign to revamp it as a multi-arts community venue in what would be a big boost for Streatham's growing creative scene and our local economy. Let's keep pushing to make it happen.



Sackville Estate walkabout

Thank you to our Streatham Wells Councillors for inviting me to join their walkabout on the Sackville Estate to talk to residents about the range of repair issues they are currently facing. There are some ongoing issues with the current contractors, so it was good to create some dialogue with residents and reassure them that their issues are being taken seriously. If you or someone you know is experiencing a housing issue, please get in touch with me via email and I'll do what I can to help.

Respect for Shopworkers Week

Every minute of the working day a shopworker is verbally abused, threatened with violence or physically attacked.

It was eye-opening to join Usdaw members this month in support of their Respect Shop Workers campaign. I met with workers at Tesco Acre Lane and Streatham Hill Co-op to talk about their experiences of abuse and violence on the job. With abusive incidents against retail staff doubling since the pandemic began, we must do more to ensure they are respected and protected.

But retail workers are getting organised. In August a new ground-breaking law to protect shopworkers from violence, threats and abuse was introduced in Scotland thanks to the campaign. Union members continue to fight for equivalent legislation in the UK Parliament and have been successful in progressing amendments to the Police, Crime Sentencing and Courts Bill to include protections for shopworkers. More can be done and the campaign continues with my support.



Remembrance Sunday

Elected representatives from across our borough gathered on the morning of Remembrance Sunday to lay wreaths at Lambeth Town Hall. After the disruption of the last year, it was good to be able to come together and mark the occasion properly.

On Remembrance Sunday, Streatham came together in force at our war memorial to remember those who came before us, to whom we owe so much. Combatants and civilians from Streatham, London Britain and around the world made huge sacrifices during two world wars, which caused unimaginable damage and claimed millions of lives. And millions more have lost their lives in conflicts since.

In particular, we honour the necessary sacrifice of those who stood against fascism and in defence of our rights and freedoms. It is our duty to remember them all, stand together and say never again to the forces of far right nationalism. And it is our duty to create a world of peace and stability, where we refuse to send servicemen to die in unjust and unnecessary wars and keep the promises we made to them when we sent them there.

Thank you to Roger Bowdery, the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and the friends of Streatham Common for their tireless work to make this event happen, and a special thank you to Immanuel and St Andrew's Church for stepping up at the last minute to offer refreshments after Sainsbury's pulled out at the last minute.



Click here to watch my [Remembrance Day speech](#)

I was also glad to meet with the West Indian Association of Service Personnel, who organised a march past at Windrush Square to commemorate and educate the public of the contribution made to world peace by servicemen and civilians from across the Commonwealth. And it was an honour to address the Nubian Jak Community Trust's Remembrance event later in the day in Windrush Square. As I pointed out, there are more elaborate monuments to animals than there are to the African, Indian and Caribbean soldiers who gave their lives in service of our country. We still have a long way to go if we are to secure equal commemoration for all soldiers.



A country that doesn't honour its veterans isn't worth dying for

In an area that has been shaped by people from all over the Commonwealth, we remember the hundreds of thousands of soldiers from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean, who served and died. Just this year an investigation found that up to 350,000 predominantly African and Middle Eastern first world war casualties were commemorated by name – or at all in some cases – and that 45,000 and 54,000 African and Asian casualties were unequally commemorated. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission's long overdue apology this year must mark a turning point where servicemen from Africa, India, and the Caribbean are given the recognition they deserve.

This year, I marked the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month with Commonwealth veterans at Christianborg War Cemetery in Accra, Ghana. We must never forget the hundreds of thousands of soldiers from across the Commonwealth who served and died in both World Wars. Not least, my great uncle, Private Ashitey Hammond, who served in Burma during the Second World War and, just last year, raised \$600,000 to support frontline workers and veterans across Africa during the pandemic.



Remembering Streatham's Dead

William Clayton and Donald Sibley were volunteer members of Streatham Home Guard, who lived next door to each other on Wellfield Road. They were both killed by a high explosive bomb in January 1941 whilst putting out an incendiary bomb during an air raid. Following a service at St. Leonards church William was buried in Streatham cemetery and Donald was buried in the same cemetery the day after. They were just seventeen.

At least seven members of the Streatham Home Guard died in the second World War including William and Donald. Five are recorded but the names of William and Donald are apparently not recorded on any local war memorials. Neither are they listed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission as names on any official memorial. In the run-up to Remembrance Sunday, a stake was planted in the Speaker's constituency garden to remember their loss.



Small Business Saturday

Small Business Saturday is an opportunity to celebrate all the brilliant local businesses in our community and the people who keep them running. It was great to spend the day catching up with local business owners and staff and getting some early Christmas shopping done. This year also brought an exciting first for me as an MP as I got to light the way into the festive season by switching on Streatham BID's amazing Christmas lights. I was also delighted to present the Streatham short story award to one of Streatham's future writing stars.

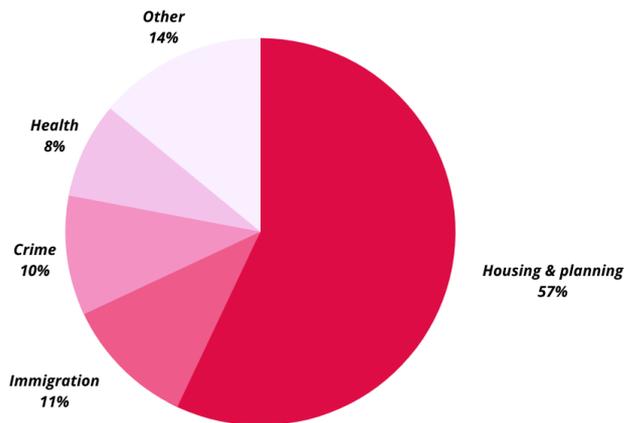
From locally brewed beer to Streatham's unbeatable selection of local restaurants, delis, and cafes, local businesses aren't just the beating heart of our local economy, they're the beating heart of our local community. With the Government prioritising a recovery for big business and the rich and failing to step up and support business and workers, it's crucial we support local independent businesses, which don't have vast cash reserves and structural advantages to fall back on in 2022. I'm very happy to have secured a Westminster Hall debate on better support for small businesses in Streatham in mid-January.



Find out about Streatham BID's [Shop Local campaign](#)

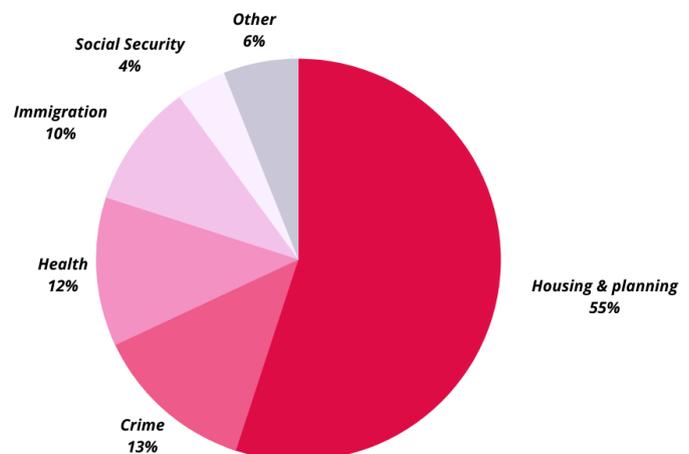
Casework

The last two months of the year saw the majority of our casework consist of housing disrepair and other related issues including unfair eviction notices, overcrowding and suitability of housing. Constituents also reported issues with the Home Office regarding immigration and asylum, with some experiencing delays in their applications, and others expressed issues with asylum accommodation and serious threats of deportation. A significant number of constituents have written to us raising concerns about health and crime related issues these last two months.



November Statistics

December Statistics



Correspondence

In the last months of the year, I continued to receive emails about the Government's decision to let water companies off the hook for filling our waterways with sewage and handing out repairs money to shareholders instead. In the run-up to the Westminster Hall debate on supporting Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, a British citizen who is currently being held prisoner in Iran, I received dozens of emails from concerned constituents expressing support for her husband's hunger strike and urging me to push the Government on this. The Health and Care Bill generated understandable anger from constituents deeply concerned about efforts to increase the role of private companies and impose another top-down reorganisation on the NHS when it is already at breaking point. I also received many emails urging me to oppose and amend the Nationality and Borders Bill.

In Parliament

NHS Corporate Takeover Bill

The Health and Care Bill came back before Parliament this month. This Bill is a naked attempt to carve up more of our NHS for privatisation and pave the way for more of the corrupt contracts we've seen during the pandemic. From test and trace to PPE, the pandemic has shown how dangerous it is to outsource and privatise essential public services for profit and pure private gain. A Government who cared about the success of our NHS would halt any further attempts.

The Tories promised us 48 new hospitals by 2030. But over the summer they commanded NHS trusts to refer to refurbishments or new units as "new hospitals". They have set aside more money for outsourcing provision to private hospitals than they have on building new NHS ones. This is very the same energy behind their Health and Care Bill, which would carve up our NHS into 42 parts and allow private companies to sit on the board of every single one.

I voted against this corporate takeover bill but in favour of amendments to protect our NHS from further privatisation and improve health outcomes.

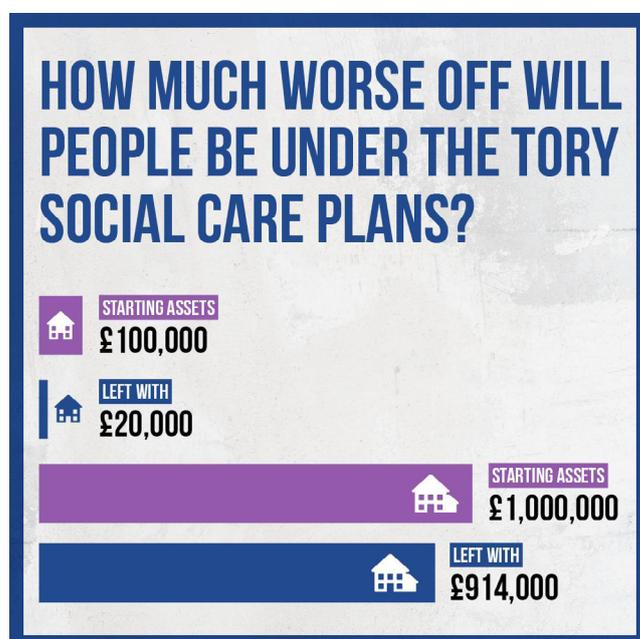
The cost of medicines still deters many people from getting the medication they need, with worrying health implications. My New Clause 56 would have scrapped NHS prescription charges in England - as in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland - removing cost barriers. My New Clause 57 would have compelled NHS England to set out data collection guidelines on health inequalities. The first step towards addressing the chronic health inequalities we've seen during the pandemic is accepting they exist and collecting proper data.

Our preparation for the pandemic was a decade of privatisation and rising inequality. The pandemic lit the touchpaper on decades of chronic health inequalities in the UK. And more and more people are waiting longer and longer for treatment because the Government is making the same damaging choices. We must focus on improving health outcomes. That means putting NHS money into our NHS, not into private health companies.

Watch my contribution to the [debate](#)

Working class social care tax

The Tory manifesto promised no one would have to sell their home to pay for care. Their social care plan is another broken promise. It's not about fixing the social care crisis, it's about protecting property for the wealthiest. Under their plan, working class households will lose almost all their assets whilst millionaires will have almost all their assets protected. The Government's social care cap won't fix the social care crisis. What would? A National Care Service free at the point of need and funded by progressive taxation (including a wealth tax) which ensure that those with means are paying their fair share.



Voting on new Covid restrictions: all sticks and no carrots

This month, Parliament voted on the Government's decision to bring in new Covid public health measures. I voted to adjust the self-isolation rules and to extend mask wearing in public venues (something which only passed thanks to Labour supporting it). However, I voted against mandatory jobs and plans for vaccine passes. The Government's approach to managing this dangerous phase of the pandemic cannot be all sticks and no carrots.

The legislation for mandatory jobs has worrying implications for our overstretched and understaffed health service. It's no way to build confidence and consent. Our vaccine rollout has often been praised for its rapid speed and NHS deserve full credit for this. But it's also become apparent that we're struggling to attain the higher rates of full vaccination achieved by other similarly wealthy nations. That's hard to separate from a deeply untrustworthy Government relentlessly trumpeting the vaccine rollout as its own achievement.

It's unclear exactly how allowing fully vaccinated people into mass venues without requiring them to test for Covid will keep others safe and prevent further spread of infection. In other countries with reasonable levels of vaccine uptake where vaccine passes have been implemented (e.g. Germany), studies suggest they have had a very limited effect on increasing vaccine coverage. On the other hand, the worrying civil liberties implications of this policy are all too clear. I would have supported regulations that called for everyone to take a lateral flow test before entering a venue. Unfortunately, these were put through via a statutory instrument, so there was no scope for amendments.

I will continue to call for effective measures designed to keep everyone safe through protection and persuasion, first and foremost, not through coercion. Imagine if, instead of taking these two authoritarian steps, we had a Government that increased statutory sick pay, introduced mitigations like mask-wearing and ventilation in schools and fixed its shoddy Test and Trace system.

Challenging poor treatment of Sickle Cell patients

A recent cross-party report highlighted the prevalence of racism towards sickle cell patients, who are predominantly Black. This month, MPs had the chance to discuss this report and highlight the unacceptably poor treatment received by so many sickle cell patients. I know the pain of this better than many, having known, cared for, and ultimately lost a loved one who suffered from this disease to negligence. I sat with my friend Adjuah through many hospital admissions and witnessed mistakes and mistreatment. She said to me on more than one occasion, "one day this hospital is going to kill me," and one day it actually did.

I raised the fact that Government policy continues to perpetuate a culture of institutional racism within the NHS. The latest report was clear what the issues are: from racist attitudes which negatively impact patient care to biased perceptions of pain tolerance, drug habits and medical knowledge and lack of research, education and public awareness around the condition and its symptoms.

I also pointed out the need to address the shortage of Black blood donors, something exacerbated over decades by discriminatory blood donation restrictions which deterred people of African descent, or with African partners, from becoming donors. I was pleased to hear consensus on my suggestion that MPs should roll up our sleeves and set up a blood donation stand in Parliament to lead by example. Watch this space. Finally, I touched on the issue of prescriptions. It can't be right that sickle cell patients do not receive free prescriptions when patients with other chronic and debilitating conditions do.

Watch my [contribution](#) to the sickle cell debate

Nationality and Borders Bill

This month, Parliament debated amendments to their Nationality and Borders Bill, an attack on people who have fled appalling circumstances to seek safety in our country: from asylum seekers and refugees to modern slavery and trafficking victims. It Bill does nothing to address the real issues with our immigration system.

There is nothing on sate safe routes for refugees, nothing to end the hostile environment, nothing to end the danger of unsafe asylum accommodation and nothing to address bureaucratic hurdles depriving people of documentation. As the Tories are submerged under a sewer of corruption scandals and anger over their failure to deliver on a single election promise, they're pushed deeper into their last redoubt: anti-migrant policies and racism.

Instead the Government is arbitrarily dividing people into deserving and undeserving cases, based on how they arrived here, abdicating responsibility for helping them escape dangerous circumstances which UK foreign policy has often played a hand in creating. This two-tier asylum system runs counter to human rights and international law. It will damage lives by denying people their rights and undermining international cooperation on resettlement by rolling back the 1951 Refugee Convention.

So-called libertarian Tory MPs lined up to vote for clauses which would normalise the "reception centres" the Government refers to in Orwellian language. In other words, the barracks-style accommodation we've seen at Napier & Penally during the pandemic. There are also provisions to offshore asylum accommodation to other countries, moving people out of the UK without a fair hearing and housing them away from public scrutiny in likely even worse conditions than this. Just days after 27 people drowned in the English Channel, they voted to give border agents new powers to push back refugee dinghies and indemnify them for killing people in the process.

As usual, they continue to ignore the entirely legitimate reasons why asylum seekers might seek to enter the country this way when left with no other way to do so. For instance, those stranded in France desperate to reach loved ones or family members in the UK. If they were serious about putting people smugglers out of business in the Channel they would open up safe routes for people to claim asylum here in the UK and put an end to the market. But of course, they're not.

As part of a wider attack on "activist lawyers", the Government is bringing in new rules that make it more difficult for legal representatives to challenge bad decisions and subject asylum seekers to harsher standards and higher burdens of proof.

Between the Bill's second and third readings, the Government tabled 80 amendments that would make it an even more hard-line and despicable piece of legislation. If their Clause 9 enters law, as looks likely, more than six million Black, Asian and ethnic minority people in England and Wales would become eligible to have their citizenship stripped without notice. People accused of speeding have more rights than this. It would make the UK the only government in the world with such a draconian power. The Government should be doing all they can to help refugees and asylum seekers rebuild their lives here within our communities, not subjecting them to more criminalisation, upheaval and trauma. Instead, they are extending their misery and extending the hostile environment.



On a recent visit to the South London Refugee Association

Child Citizenship Fees

My contribution to the Nationality and Borders Bill debate focused on pushing the Government on their retrograde attitude to citizenship fees. Like Clause 9 (the citizenship stripping amendment), child citizenship fees are a reminder that some people are more British than others to them. I moved an amendment to end government profiteering on fees so that every child gets to enjoy the citizenship rights they are entitled to in the country they call home, campaigning to get frontbench backing for this (which pushed it to a vote).

Standing at a staggering £1,012 and increasing at almost ten times the rate of inflation since its introduction in 1983, this fee is now one of the highest in Europe. The Government is charging children and families over £640 above the cost of processing the applications. There are 85,000-215,000 children born or raised in Britain who are denied their citizenship rights as a result. These children will grow up feeling British and may not even realise they do not have citizenship until they try to travel, get a job, rent a home or are suddenly asked to pay international fees for their university education.

It's also a particular scandal that many looked after children are emerging from our care system without British citizenship. These children have been entrusted to the care of the state. The state has a responsibility to get the best outcomes for them, not simply throw their rights away.

Citizenship fees were one of the first things raised with me in my campaign to become an MP by Lambeth Citizens. As well as the material considerations, I've talked to many young people in our area who face feelings of worry, alienation and social exclusion as a result of being denied citizenship. The harm of being denied your citizenship rights in the only country you truly know cannot be overstated. It's not just about the societal barriers you face, it's about the psychological impact of being constantly treated as a second-class citizen.

I honestly had high hopes of getting what was really a very reasonable and consensual amendment through. But sadly, after explaining my compromise proposal to cut fees to cost price and get rid of them for children in care, a Tory MP stood up and told me I should be very concerned about terrorism. They could at least make the dog-whistling subtle!

When I was invited to move the motion by the Speaker, it was jeered and voted down by red-faced Tory backbenchers. What kind of message does this send to young people in my constituency, who know no other country and are priced out of citizenship by Government profiteering on sky high fees?

If you are born in Britain, or grow up British, citizenship is your entitlement, not something you should pay the Government massive amounts of money to bestow. With a Supreme Court ruling on child citizenship fees imminent, I'll keep pushing the Government to accept its legal obligations, reduce the charge, and stop making children into second-class citizens.



As well as **moving my amendment**, I also made the case for cutting citizenship fees in **LabourList**

Cancelling debt to fight the climate crisis

After centuries of exploitation and underdevelopment by wealthy countries, countries in the Global South are now being forced to confront the climate emergency with both hands tied behind their back. Recent analysis from the Jubilee Debt Campaign found that 34 of the world's poorest countries are spending £21.4bn on debt payments a year compared with £3.9bn on measures to tackle the climate emergency.

As one of the largest historic emitters and one of the largest contemporary per capita emitters, the UK has a major obligation to the world. Disappointingly, despite being one of the world's most important climate summits in history, COP26 failed to even mention of the link between global debt cancellation and climate change.

That is why I orchestrated an open letter to the Foreign Secretary calling on the UK to do everything in its power to help the world mobilise its resources to confront climate disaster and protect people from the worst impacts by:

1. Supporting efforts to cancel debts for all climate-vulnerable countries with unsustainable debts by expanding the Common Framework to include middle-income nations and strengthening it to make sure private creditors participate.
2. Enhancing the UK's commitments on international climate finance and encouraging other countries to do the same through a comprehensive financing facility to offer unconditional grants, not more debt, to countries facing climate disaster.
3. Pushing for automatic debt payment suspension and relief for countries in the event of climate-related disaster.
4. Calling for a reallocation of Special Drawing Rights to developing countries in a way that does not increase debt burdens.
5. Introducing legislation to stop private creditors from suing developing countries (with 90% of bond contracts governed by English law, we have a real chance to lead on this).

The UK's role as a major historic emitter, former colonial power and current global leader places a special obligation on us to put climate justice at the heart of our global response to the disaster we now face.

I also tabled an **EDM** on debt cancellation

Free Nazanin

Thank you to everyone who wrote to me this month asking me to support efforts to Free Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and to my friend Tulip Siddiq, who managed to secure a debate in Parliament last month off the back of a three week hunger strike by Nazanin's husband, Richard. Richard and Nazanin's family have my full support. The Government must do everything in its power to bring her home and end their heartbreak, including paying the 42-year-old £400 million debt owed to Iran.





Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP
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The UK has some of the highest rates of poverty among over-65s anywhere in Europe:



Last night the Government voted to scrap the triple lock and push this number even higher [#TripleLock](#)



Voting to maintain the triple lock

The Government broke another key manifesto pledge this month when they voted to abolish the Triple Lock on pensions. The state pension is more than £50 a week lower than it would be if Thatcher hadn't broken the earnings link in 1980. There are many reasons to oppose this further cut too. The UK has some of the highest rates of poverty among over-65s anywhere in Europe. And whilst the immediate effects of this will be felt most strongly by pensioners, those who lose out in the long-term are the pensioners of tomorrow: the working population of today. This is another sign that the Government is willing to clobber old and young alike in service of their latest attempt to bolster the existing balance of wealth and power.

Endometriosis and PCOS debate

Endometriosis affects more than 1.5 million women in the UK and Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is the most common female hormone condition, affecting 1 in 10 individuals assigned female at birth (AFAB). Both can have a devastating impact on someone's self-esteem and if not properly managed, can lead to additional health problems later on in life. Yet despite these two conditions impacting so many women, we know so little about them and little effort is being made to increase our knowledge of their impact and how we can treat them.

During a Westminster Hall debate this month on the need to increase research funding for these two conditions, I shared my own story of living with endometriosis. Like most women, I experienced the impacts of my endometriosis from a young age. And like most women, I was told that "once you have a baby, you'll be fine". Many of us who experience PCOS, or endometriosis wait years for a diagnosis, and even when that diagnosis eventually comes, the lack of research into the conditions means that there is no set treatment, and these are often trial and error.

Endometriosis costs the UK economy £8.2 billion per year through treatment, healthcare costs, and the impact on work and employment. The cost to the UK economy of PCOS is unknown due to a lack of research. Women's health has historically been under-researched, including menstrual health. In 2018, only 2.1% of publicly funded research in the UK went on reproductive and menstrual health. More research must be funded to improve the diagnosis and treatment of both conditions. This will not only help the physical and mental health of those suffering but could save NHS thousands of pounds and resources spent.

Watch me discussing my [experience](#) here

Islamophobia Awareness Month

This month was Islamophobia Awareness Month and came with several stark reminders of the vile Islamophobia that is sadly still rampant in our society. As a Muslim cricketer at Yorkshire Cricket Club, Azeem Rafiq faced awful Islamophobic abuse. His testimony before Parliament shines a light on the prevalence of Islamophobia in cricket and the structural disadvantages that Muslims continue to face in professional sport more widely.

The treatment Azeem faced at his club, at the hands of other players and club officials, and absolutely disgraceful. From being held down at the age of 15 and having wine poured down his throat, to persistently being called racial slurs as “banter”, it is no wonder that Azeem broke down when recalling this abuse to the DCMS select committee. The culture of professional cricket in the UK is particularly dated, hierarchical and exclusory. But Azeem’s testimony clearly resonated with British Muslims in the UK, who had experienced similar treatment in sport and wider society too.

My colleague and friend, Apsana Begum MP gave a tear-jerking account of the vile abuse she faces on a daily basis on social media. My friend Zarah Sultana MP also spoke out about the level of abuse she continues to receive in her inbox. We have all become aware of the abuse that MPs face, and there is usually a correlation between the length of time someone has served as an MP and their profile. For MPs like Zarah and Apsana, who were only elected two years ago, to face this level of abuse, reveals the disproportionate levels of abuse that young, socialist, Muslim women face in politics.

The Tories weren't happy their poor record on tackling Islamophobia in their own Party and in Government was challenged this month. But the fact remains that Muslims are on the receiving end of some of the worst racism in the UK, accounting for almost half of all religiously aggravated offences. And the fact remains that we have a Prime Minister who has openly denigrated Muslim women.

As well as its own appalling track record on Islamophobia, the Government still doesn't have a working definition of Islamophobia, has delayed its review into the discriminatory

and counter-productive Prevent policy, and continues to appoint people with a track-record of anti-Muslim discrimination to key posts in government. This month, during a Westminster Hall debate, I called on them to listen to the Muslim community, get their house in order, and act to safeguard Muslims in the UK from further discrimination and abuse.

I was also pleased to speak at this month's Lambeth Town Hall event alongside Councillor Dr. Mahamed Hashi.



Watch my [contribution](#) to Parliament's debate

Campaigns

March with Midwives

It was simply heartbreaking listening to some of the stories on the March with Midwives. Most people in modern Britain owe our lives to a midwife but failures to address chronic staff shortages and invest in maternity services now leave them facing incredible strains.

Midwifery services are at breaking point, with shortages of more than 2,000 midwives in England alone. 60% of midwives are considering quitting their jobs. For every 30 midwives that train to enter the profession, 29 are leaving or never entering the workforce. In a recent survey of midwives considering quitting, 80% said lack of staff played a part and 67% said they were unhappy with the quality of care they were able to deliver.

It's clear we have a long way to go if we're going to address the crisis in maternity care, with 30,000 women and birthing people experiencing birth trauma every year in the UK - as many as 3 in 10 pregnancies.

All midwives want is the resources to do their job safely and provide care to women and birthing people. It's time for the Government to close the staffing gap and bring forward the necessary funding to give midwives, mothers and parents the level of care they all deserve.



I was glad to see the march generated coverage



UCU Strikes

It was great to join the Birkbeck branch of the University and Colleges Union (UCU) to kick off a wave of strike action by university staff in December. University staff are overworked, underpaid and face ever more precarious contracts. On top of this, they're now being hit with huge pension cuts. I was proud to express my solidarity with UCU members fighting for the future of our higher education sector. They are quite right that standing up for better teaching conditions is standing up for better learning conditions. The Government must accept that turning another public good into a product for sale has been a disaster for students and staff alike.

Hosting the founder of Black History Month

I was honoured to host the founder of UK Black History Month, Akyaaba Addai-Sebo, in Parliament over December. Trailblazers like him helped to push Black History onto the political agenda. It was great to get his thoughts on how we can put it onto the curriculum year-round. I'll continue to campaign for well-funded schools that equip our children with an honest understanding of our country's past, preparing them for life in a multicultural country that respects and values diversity.



World AIDS Day

World AIDS Day is a time to remember the millions of people lost to the virus and show solidarity with everyone living with HIV. This year's theme was ending inequalities, which is highly appropriate. We have the tools to end UK HIV transmission in the next decade. What we need to achieve this goal is a laser focus on addressing unequal access and getting them to everyone who needs them.

In particular, all the people who could benefit from PrEP but are not offered it. Local services need proper funding so they can engage with communities at risk of HIV and roll out routine HIV testing. And all schools need to have the resources so they can deliver quality relationships and sex education that includes up-to-date information about HIV.

National Postal Workers Day

Monday 13th December marked National Postal Workers Day. Postal workers deserve an extra special thank you this year, delivering and keeping us connected throughout the most challenging circumstances. Always remember to thank your postie, this month and every month!



Getting out the Labour vote in Old Bexley and Sidcup

Last month, we dealt the Government a bloody nose in the Old Bexley and Sidcup by-election. I was glad to join our Get Out the Vote operation for Labour candidate Dan Francis and hit the doorstep on polling day to help send this Government a message. People I spoke to were overwhelmingly disgusted by the levels of corruption we've seen from the Tories during the pandemic and there was a decent response for Labour on the doorstep.



Sick Pay for All

Almost two years into the pandemic, UK Statutory Sick Pay remains among the lowest in the developed world, with millions of low earners not even qualifying for this pittance. In December, I was glad to add my name to Richard Burgon's letter to the Chancellor calling on him to increase it to real living wage. Proper sick pay slows the spread of the virus. But this Government's reluctance to provide everyone with the support they need to self-isolate will only worsen the already shockingly high case rates and death tolls which typify their whole approach to Covid.

Save London's Transport

I was proud to join my union Unite, alongside the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT), Transport Salaried Staffs' Association and train drivers' union, ASLEF, this month to show solidarity with the transport workers who keep our city running. Transport for London saw a huge drop in fare revenue as the pandemic ripped through the country and Londoners followed the government's own work from home advice. A partial recovery did not restore passenger numbers to their normal levels. TfL's funding issues reflect the fact that we have a Government that is not even meeting its own goal of trying to live with the virus.

The Tories have cynically treated this situation as an opportunity to impose vicious conditions on London and drive our transport system into the ground. We could see bus service reductions of up to a fifth, tube service cuts of 10%, meaning the closure of an entire tube line and 100 bus routes. We need a long-term funding settlement to save London's transport and guarantee faire conditions to workers.





Make Amazon Pay

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Amazon has become a trillion-dollar corporation. Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos's personal fortune has soared to \$200bn during the pandemic while some Amazon couriers in the UK have been earning as little as £1.83 p/h. Amazon raked in €44bn in revenues across Europe in 2020 without paying a penny of corporation tax. As its corporate empire has grown, so has its carbon footprint, now larger than two thirds of all

countries in the world. Its growing delivery and cloud computer businesses are accelerating global climate breakdown.

Amazon may not be alone in these exploitative and damaging practices but it exemplifies the unfettered multinational capitalism that has driven inequality, climate breakdown and democratic decay. Its sheer presence at every stage of the global supply chain means we have to take it on if we're going to secure a better future for people and planet.

The pandemic has exposed how Amazon places profits ahead of workers, society, and our planet. Amazon takes too much and gives back too little. On Black Friday, Amazon workers across the world in oil refineries, factories, warehouses, data centres and corporate offices rose up in a series of strikes, protests and actions to make their employer pay. I was proud to show my solidarity with them.

Youth Work Week

On Youth Work Week, I highlighted the unsung efforts of youth workers in Streatham and beyond. If only we had a government that recognised how much difference youth workers make to our communities. Youth work provides open-access support, guidance and non-formal education to young people across the UK, with a safe space for young people to go to, things to do and someone to talk to who knows what is needed.

Young people have been left behind by the Conservatives since long before Covid. After a decade of Tory governments, young people already faced stagnating wages, rising debt, and slashed youth services, with record-high levels of poor mental health. Youth services are a vital lifeline, often standing as the only safe space or source of positive contact in a community for young people to access. We must invest in youth services to ensure that every young person has the support they need to fulfil their potential.

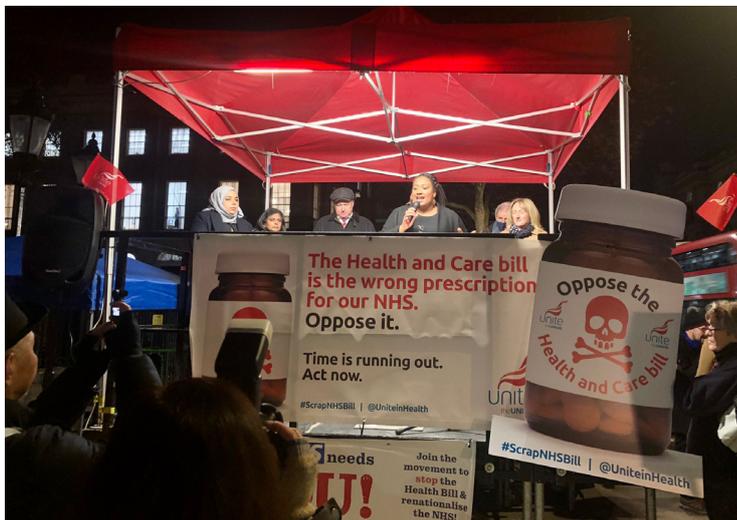
MBRRACE-UK 2021: Improving Black Maternal Health

November also saw the publication of the latest Mothers and Babies: Reducing Risk through Audits and Confidential Enquiries across the UK (MBRRACE-UK) report. In 2017-19, 191 women died during or up to six weeks after the end of pregnancy from causes associated with their pregnancy, among 2,173,810 women giving birth in the UK.

As reported time and again, outcomes for mothers and birthing people are not equal. Those living in the most deprived areas are twice as likely to die than those who live in the most affluent areas. Black women are still four times more likely to die in pregnancy and childbirth than their white counterparts. Until we have a government that commits to binding targets to end racial inequalities in maternity care, this is unlikely to change.

Your NHS Needs You

Ahead of the Health and Care Bill's third reading, I joined a well-attended rally outside Parliament to show our opposition to giving private companies a bigger say and role in our NHS. Private companies have leeches out more than £96 billion of NHS money over the last decade. As our frontline health services struggle to cope with the Government's handling of Covid, the last thing it needs now is more of the same medicine.



I've also been supporting the Your NHS Needs You campaign to renationalise the NHS. The Health and Care Bill is likely to be the nail in the coffin for our public health service. They are sounding the alarm that the Bill will pave the way for the English NHS to be replaced by the profit-driven American system, in which private health providers are incentivised to cut and deny care to increase profits.

Stop freezing pensioners out

It's been a year since I raised the scandal of frozen pensions in Parliament. Half a million British pensioners overseas are still being denied access to their full state pension. On Frozen Pensions Day, I reiterated their call for the Government to right this wrong and uprate frozen pensions so that no pensioner faces financial insecurity as a result of this unfair policy.

FROZEN PENSIONS DAY 2021

One third of frozen pensioners have had to take on extra work to supplement lost income.

It's time to #EndFrozenPensions
www.endfrozenpensions.org



FROZEN PENSIONS DAY 2021

38% of frozen pensioners feel they have lost their independence because of their frozen pension.

It's time to #EndFrozenPensions
www.endfrozenpensions.org



FROZEN PENSIONS DAY 2021

54% of frozen pensioners do not feel financially secure in their retirement.

One quarter are reliant on family members for financial support.

It's time to #EndFrozenPensions
www.endfrozenpensions.org



FROZEN PENSIONS DAY 2021

28% of frozen pensioners cannot access medication or health treatment due to financial costs.

It's time to #EndFrozenPensions
www.endfrozenpensions.org



Here's what I asked the Government **last year**

Ban Plastic Wet Wipes

I was proud to back my colleague Fleur Anderson's Bill to ban plastic-containing wet wipes. 90% of the 11 billion wet wipes used in the UK every year contain plastic, doing huge damage to our water systems and our rivers, lakes and sea.

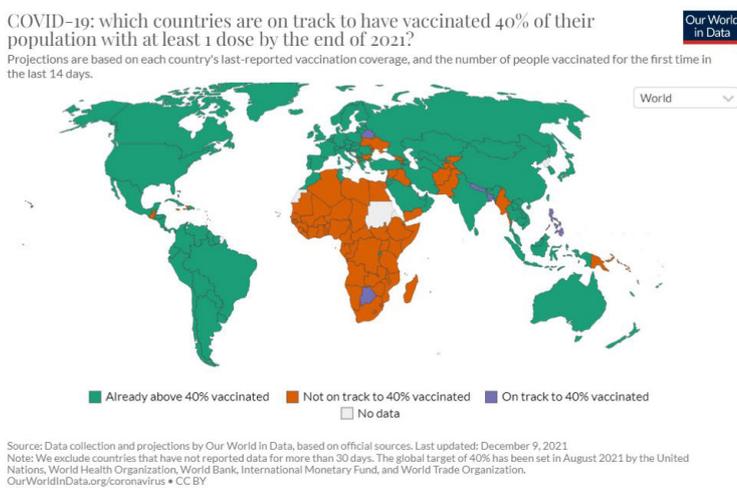
Current labelling on wet wipes is confusing and there are thousands of people out there right now using them daily with no idea of the harm they are doing to our water systems and marine environments. In a two-hour clean-up run by Thames21 in 2019, 23,000 wet wipes were found on the shore of the River Thames in southwest London alone. This legislation is an important upstream measure to tackle the environmental harm plastic wet wipes are doing at the very source. I was glad that the Bill secured a second reading.



People's Vaccine

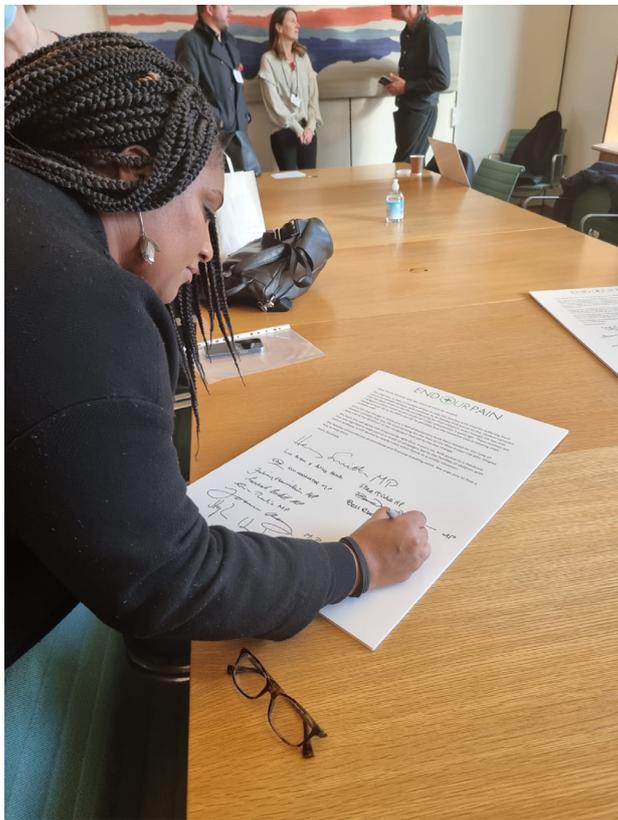
We got vaccines in under a year because governments around the world channelled billions of public money into research. Capitalism has ensured only rich countries could access them. Boris Johnson's Government is one of the last obstacles standing between the Global South and a massive boost to vaccine supplies. I have repeatedly called on the Government to drop their opposition to the life-saving patent waiver on Covid-19 vaccines.

The slower the global vaccine rollout, the more likely we are to see worrying new variants. With global supplies being diverted to wealthy countries and Covax inching towards even its very modest targets, it's clear we need to ramp up supply if we're going to get more people protected. In December, it emerged that there are over a hundred factories in Africa, Asia and Latin America sitting idle because wealthy governments like ours have let private companies hold publicly funded vaccine blueprints hostage.



Putting pharmaceutical profits ahead of public health puts lives in the Global South at risk and leaves us all more vulnerable to new variants. Wealthy governments like ours must stop letting pharmaceutical companies hold life-saving vaccine blueprints hostage if we're going to vaccinate the world before the emergence of new variants. It's time to set the publicly funded vaccines free with an IP waiver on patents.

I raised global vaccine **supply constraints** earlier this year.



End Their Pain: Medical Cannabis Awareness Week

It's disgraceful that whilst the UK is the biggest exporter of medical cannabis in Europe (and one of the biggest in the world) families who live here find it impossible to access it on the NHS.

There is a legal cannabis farm the size of 34 football pitches in Norfolk. Individuals who grow and distribute marijuana face up to fourteen years in prison. Meanwhile, special licences have been given to medical cannabis companies with links to government ministers.

This month, I met with affected families who are paying up to £2,000 a month to get access to life-changing medical cannabis for their children. I was proud to echo their call to the Prime Minister and Health Secretary for NHS funding to access medical cannabis.

Just three prescriptions for cannabis-based medicines have been issued since the treatment was legalised in 2018, with around 10,000 families relying on private prescriptions. If you're in any doubt about the pain and difficulty that this causes, please watch my colleague Andy McDonald MP's [deeply moving speech](#) on the issue from this month's Westminster Hall debate. We must listen to parents and families on this.

Equal Pay Day

On the 18th November, women effectively stopped earning relative to men because of the gender pay gap, which has grown on the Tories' watch. On current progress, it will be another 151 years before the average woman working in London earns the same as a man. Striving for equal pay means allowing women to compare salaries with men who do the same jobs, including outsourced workers in pay gap and pay ratio reporting and enforcing requirements on companies to report and eliminate pay gaps.



Trans Day of Remembrance

365 trans people have lost their lives to violence in the last year alone - the highest number on record. On Trans Day of Remembrance, we remember them all and commit to taking action to end anti-trans hatred and bigotry. There is no conflict between the rights of trans women and cisgender women, or of trans people and cisgender lesbian, gay and bisexual people. And there is no equality for any of us without equality for all of us - that means solidarity within the LGBTQ+ community and outside it.

Justice for the Windrush Generation

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 have applied. Just 5% have received compensation. 23 have died waiting. This is a scandal in itself.

The Government's failure to deliver compensation to victims of the Windrush scandal shows it was a mistake to entrust the scheme to the department that administered the Windrush Generation's suffering in the first place without root and branch reform. I've long supported calls for the scheme to be taken out of the Home Office and entrusted to an organisation that is not constantly trying to cover its own tracks and still hasn't got rid of the hostile environment.

Hosting the Shrewsbury 24 in Parliament

The Shrewsbury 24 were wrongly convicted in 1972 for picketing during a national builders' strike. They took on the establishment and won. After almost fifty years of fighting for justice, they were finally vindicated earlier this year. I was proud to join colleagues from the Socialist Campaign Group this month to host representatives from the campaign in Parliament..



International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

November marked International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. As Palestinians continue to be denied their rights and face intensifying human rights abuses, we must continue to stand with them in demanding an end to Israel's illegal occupation, settlement and blockade.

The motion passed at this year's Party conference in support of rights for Palestinians was genuinely a really significant achievement, The resolution demanded a pausing of arms sales until the ICC reports on potential war crimes since 2014, a halt to illegal annexation, sanctions in response to violations of international law, an end to the collective punishment of blockading Gaza, and argues for the right of refugee return. It's vital that we keep pushing for these to be implemented in practice.

End the Care to Prison Pipeline

Children in care make up less than 1% of the population. But the latest statistics show care leavers make up a quarter of prison and homeless populations in this country. I've been campaigning on this issue, including calling for a new approach to citizenship for children in care (who grow up British but are deprived of citizenship) and for an end to punitive policies like handcuffing looked after children.

This month, I wrote for the Independent on the need to end the care to prison pipeline. The current children's social care review must focus on not only improving young people's time spent in the system, but also on levelling out the playing field of their future outside it.



Digital access is a lifeline, not a luxury

Having access to technology isn't a luxury, it's a lifeline. After a decade of austerity and rising poverty, too many people are struggling to get online. Community Tech Aid and Millennium Community Solutions have been fundraising to combat digital exclusion in our area, raising money for smart phones. If you have any money to spare this Christmas, please do consider donating.

International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

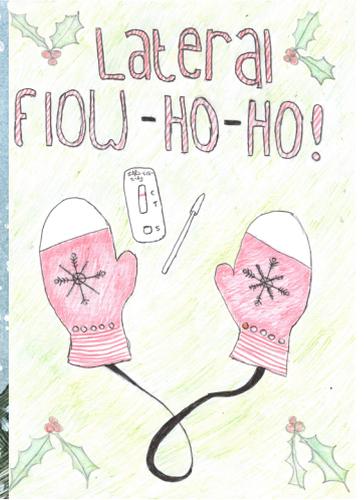
On International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, we remember all the women and girls lost to gender violence. Millions of women are attacked, assaulted and killed every year by men. We must address the deeper cultural reasons and political failures behind this if we are to achieve a world without violence against women.

Labour is committed to prioritising domestic abuse as a health issue. I stood on a platform that called for the introduction of a comprehensive Domestic Abuse Bill in Parliament, guaranteeing 10 days paid leave for domestic abuse survivors.

We, as a Party, pledged to ensure refuge centres receive adequate, long-term funding to support survivors through the establishment of a National Refuge Fund. We also pledged to implement new standards for tackling domestic and sexual abuse and reform the family court system in order to protect survivors of domestic violence and prohibit cross-examination by abusers.

Find out how we can end the [care to prison pipeline](#)

Happy New Year



Thank you to all who entered this year's Christmas card competition and special congratulations to the winners: Polly from Dunraven School, Livia from Streatham and Clapham High School and Joshua from Glenbrook School (from left to right).

I'd like to wish everyone in our local Labour family a belated Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year. I'd like to extend an extra special thank you to all of you in our local Labour family. From the work you've done to keep branch meetings running, campaigning in the Mayoral and Assembly elections in May to putting in the groundwork for next year's local elections, you all more than earned a proper Christmas break, so I hope you got one!

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'm looking forwards to working together in 2022 to make sure we elect more Labour councillors to continue standing up for our community. It's vital that we show people what Labour can do in power to show a hopeful alternative to this rotten Tory Government.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy

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