



MP's UPDATE FOR BRENTFORD & ISLEWORTH February - March 2021 RUTH CADBURY MP

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See my special [Coronavirus Web-page](#) for information on local and national services, help-lines and volunteering; and to sign up for Hounslow Council's daily updates.

Dear

This is my first update since early February, so I make no apologies for its length.



COMMONS UPDATE

The death of the Duke of Edinburgh impacts on the Commons as on many aspects of public life. He spent his life dedicated to public service and to the Queen. One of his great achievements was the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme and recent days so many people have described how they benefited in ways that lasted throughout their lives.

Our thoughts and condolences are with the Queen, the Royal Family and all who knew him.

The Policing, Crime, Sentencing & Courts Bill, a massive hotchpotch of different clauses, landed in the Commons with a few days' notice just before the Easter recess. The Home Secretary clearly intended to rush this through Parliament with minimal time for scrutiny. However that was before the botched response to the Clapham Common vigil, where women were demanding freedom from harassment and violence on our streets.

I received over 100 emails from concerned constituents, many of whom have never written to me before. The Bill seeks to criminalise peaceful protest, it protects statues and not women.



It also does nothing to address the extraordinary backlog of court cases that was growing over the years since the Government closed court buildings and underfunded the CPS and police. In the Crown Courts alone the list of 35,000 cases waiting pre-Covid, has now grown to over 50,000. As David Lammy, our Shadow Justice Secretary, and numerous Labour speakers said in the Bill debate; justice delayed is justice denied. The Government were no doubt rattled by the response within and outside Parliament, so now they have quietly shifted the start of the Committee stage of the Bill from before Easter until the end of May, which means it won't to the House until July.

Priti Patel again showed her extreme illiberalism with her announced Reform of the UK's asylum system – grading asylum seekers according to their method of entry not their reason for fleeing. I told her in the Chamber that her Government has form for lack of compassion towards those who have fled horrors that we can only imagine. The Government ended the Dubs child refugee scheme, and run a broken system that leaves asylum seekers in limbo for months, if not years, having to go to food banks because even the minimal support they are entitled to often does not arrive. The proposed regulations appear to be in breach of international law on the status of those seeking to be defined as Refugees, and of course does nothing to speed up the Home Office's appallingly slow and incompetent decision-making processes. This is a Government with not one iota of compassion.

Impact of EU/UK visa arrangements: Just one fall-out from Brexit is the inability for musicians and other performers to be able to move easily between the UK and EU countries when work beckons. This doesn't just affect their career, but the UK's reputation for musical talent. At DCMS Questions I mentioned a constituent, a conductor, whose work has been severely impacted by the failure to reach an EU-UK deal on touring. On behalf of him and many of my constituents similarly affected, I demanded the Government address this issue urgently.

Parliament is still operating in hybrid mode, as only 50 MPs are permitted in the Commons Chamber at any one time. So most of my speeches and questions to Ministers have been done on Zoom. The system actually means we get fewer opportunities to speak. It's pot-luck if you get drawn, and even then we're only permitted a 3 minute speech

My other contributions in the "Chamber" (mainly on Zoom) :



- I demanded that the PM provide specific Covid support to the Aviation sector and Airport Communities, as aviation will be the last sector to recover from the pandemic.

- In the Fire Safety Bill I made it clear that leaseholders should not have to face the costs of this crisis - responsibility lies with the builders and also with Government that had ignored warnings for too long.
- I urged the Education Secretary to provide adequate support to FE Colleges such as West Thames to support students who have missed so much learning over the last year
- In the debate on the Impact of Covid on the Creative Sectors I mentioned the impact on constituents, those excluded from support and the failure of the UK Government to agree a visa deal with the EU.
- The Budget was a missed opportunity to increase NHS pay, and fix the Social Care crisis so long promised by this Government. However Rishi Sunak did neither. In the Budget debate I criticised the Government for failure to give NHS staff a proper pay rise. I addressed the lack of action on social care, the lack of support for aviation communities like Hounslow and the failure to tackle the climate crisis
- I spoke in a debate about the Air Traffic Management Bill and described the impact that aviation noise has locally and the need for better oversight for the environment from the CAA
- In a Westminster Hall debate about Sadiq Khan's proposed new congestion charge on the Greater London boundary I criticised the Government for cutting all central grant to London so that the Mayor had few choices to raise additional income in London to be able to Transport for London running
- At Women & Equalities Questions I asked for more support for boroughs with highly diverse populations like Hounslow, to be able to better target groups with a low uptake of the coronavirus vaccine
- I co-sponsored a well-subscribed debate on the need for sector support for the Hospitality sector and addressed the situation of the many low-paid, zero hours contract, constituents working in the sector. I also congratulated Hounslow Council for the work they have done in supporting local hospitality and retail businesses.
- I wrote to Terese Coffey, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, urging the Government both to cancel the expected £20 cut in Universal Credit which would impact 17,000 constituents, and called for an increase older legacy benefits.



I have founded the All Party Group on Period Equality and was proud to welcome Labour MSP Monica Lennon to our meeting. She spoke about the Period Poverty Bill she got unanimous support for in the Scottish Parliament – free period products will soon be available in public places, not only schools, for anyone unable to afford to buy what can be expensive items, or when "caught short".

COMMUNITY UPDATE



COVID: March 23rd marked a year since the first lockdown. Since then a series of Government failures and delays has led to 150,000 UK deaths, probably the highest death rate in the world, and 1.1 million people estimated to suffer from long Covid.

The vaccination program is the one aspect of Covid response that the Government have more or less got right, but only because they have put the programme fully in the hands of the NHS, working closely with local councils. If only they had done the same with Testing, Track & Trace, and PPE procurement, the last year may have meant have saved lives and had less impact on the economy and on education. The pandemic has also starkly exposed the shocking levels of inequality in our country. Those hit hardest have been those on low incomes and unstable work, those with chronic health conditions, and ethnic minority communities.

The area around Heathrow is over-dependent on airport jobs and as a result households on Universal Credit have increased 80% in the last year and over 56,000 Hounslow residents are on furlough, many of whom will join the claimant count once the furlough scheme ends. On numerous occasions, I and other Heathrow-area MPs have raised with Government the need for aviation-sector specific support. We have also been supporting the unions in their fight against draconian and permanent cuts to terms and conditions through the "fire and rehire" tactic.

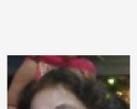
I've spoken at a meeting of West London Business and local Councils which shared exciting ideas about a sustainable strategy for aviation and how West London can contribute people and skills. I have also chaired a meeting of North West London MPs on the challenges for a sub-regional recovery plan.



BANK CLOSURES: Barclays are to close their Brentford branch, the last bank counter left in Brentford since the Post Office and NatWest went. Now Santander have announced they are to close their Chiswick branch. Cllr Steve Curran and I met senior staff of Barclays to persuade them to reconsider their decision, or at least to delay until we can find a way of getting some kind of bank service into Brentford, such as the Post Office. I also expect to meet Santander soon.



THE COST OF SCHOOL UNIFORMS: Some parents have written to me expressing concern about the cost of uniforms. Some local schools ensure their uniform is mainly made up of items that can be bought "on the high street" and parents only have to buy a sew-on pocket badge and a tie from school. However other local schools expect children to wear mostly school logo items that can only be bought at specialist school suppliers for up to 3 times the price. Offering to help families (many of whom are not eligible) with grant applications and providing a stock of 2nd hand uniform is hardly the leveler that school uniform is supposed to be. I would be happy to hear the views of parents about their children's' schools' policy on this.



COMMUNITY AWARD: I was very pleased to present (on Zoom) a community award from BT Openreach to local resident Ashi Dhillon – who has long been Disability Network Hounslow's Advice worker, and has also been working tirelessly during Covid to cook and deliver food to vulnerable people



TRAIN OVERCROWDING: The SWR trains on the Hounslow loop line were cut from 4 and 5 an hour to only 2 during lockdown. SWR have said they won't add additional trains until the new timetable comes in on 16th May. Several constituents have written to me concerned about the increasing crowding on the trains especially on the morning peak since schools have returned. SWR have also removed the early trains that serve the many key workers needing to get to central London early. I have written to the CEO of SWR and the Rail minister demanding action now to relieve the overcrowding and reinstate the early trains.

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE: Along with other West London MPs I've written to Transport Secretary Grant Shapps again, demanding that he take responsibility for getting Hammersmith Bridge reopened. It needs £140 million, an amount way beyond the resources of either Hammersmith & Fulham Council, or TfL.



SUMMER IS COMING: I am sure everyone is looking forward to getting away this summer, albeit staying in the UK. Luckily we have wonderful festivals, and I can't wait

UNSUBSCRIBE