



## Constituency Report (January 2021)

### Coronavirus Support



*With volunteers at The Ringcross foodbank, 23 December*

At the beginning of this year, Boris Johnson announced that England was to enter its third national lockdown. Coronavirus cases in this country were — and still are — at an all-time high and it was clear that the government needed to act immediately to save lives and prevent our NHS from becoming overwhelmed.

Lockdown is hard on all of us, but it is much more difficult for some people than others. Last March, the government seemed to recognise this, providing Universal Credit claimants with a £20 uplift to their benefits.

This extra money has helped cover the cost of bills for some of our society's poorest households during the pandemic, and yet many have still had to rely on foodbanks for their meals.

Over Christmas, I helped deliver food parcels to households across Islington with The Ringcross foodbank, where the queues

for food are continuing to grow. As with everywhere in Islington I have visited during the pandemic, it was great to see people out volunteering and giving what they can.

Our local community is doing us proud whilst the government is shamefully refusing to keep the £20 uplift to Universal Credit, allowing private companies to rip off families entitled to free school meals, and failing to provide all children with the technology they need to effectively learn from home. Many constituents have written to me about keeping the £20 uplift to Universal Credit. You can read my response to those constituents [here](#).

There is now light at the end of the tunnel, with the rollout of the Coronavirus vaccine well underway. But until our lives can return to normal, we must continue to look out for each other from a safe distance, be kind to our neighbours, and remember that the hard times won't last forever.



*Wise words from Goswell Street Cafe, 17 January*

### Fire Safety in Tower Blocks

As I wrote in my October report last year, there needs to be robust regulations in place to ensure that blocks of flats are not clad with materials which might be a fire risk, and housing providers need to take steps to ensure that the homes they are providing are safe. I know that there have been unacceptable delays, meaning that temporary fire protection measures are still in place on many blocks, and leaseholders are facing large bills whilst being unable to sell their homes.

Over the past three years, I have been pressing Ministers to resolve this crisis, but to no avail. I wrote a letter to the Secretary of State in October, which you can read [here](#). I have now written to the Secretary of State again, making it clear that more government money is needed to renew cladding and to make flat blocks safe. Leaseholders and Housing Associations cannot be left to foot this bill. You can read my latest letter on this issue [here](#).

# Fabians New Year Conference and US Politics

On 16 January, I spoke on a panel at the Fabians New Year Conference called 'Biden vs Trump: Lessons for the European Left'. You can watch my panel [here](#). I said the following:

*"[The US Presidential Election] was by Donald Trump's own design a referendum on himself. He deliberately turned the election into a choice about whether you stood with him or against him, and whether you accepted the crude and naked lie that supporting him was equivalent to supporting America.*

*"Voters turned out in record-breaking numbers to reject continued division and hatred, and to endorse an opponent in Joe Biden who offered an entirely different type of Presidency."*

January 2021 was a tumultuous month for US politics, starting on 6 January when a mob of Trump supporters stormed the Capitol in a direct attack against US democracy. It was an incredibly dangerous situation for all involved.

Thankfully, on 20 January, we were able to watch another type of history being made when Joe Biden and Kamala Harris were sworn in as the 46th President and 49th Vice President of the United States. I thought President Biden delivered a wonderful speech on unity. We all benefit when we put ourselves in someone else's shoes, even just for a moment.



*Speaking at the Fabians New Year Conference, 16 January*

## Global Britain Debate and Lords Amendments to the Trade Bill

On 11 January, a [General Debate on Global Britain](#) was held in the House of Commons. During my speech, I outlined Labour's position on trade, which also spoke to the [Lords amendments to the Trade Bill](#) which I later defended on 19 January:

*"No matter how desperate the government get, they should not be allowed to do deals at any price. Deals must not come at the cost of domestic British jobs and business. They must not come at the cost of our farmers and our food standards. They must not come at the cost of our ability to protect the NHS from marketisation or put environmental protection before corporate profits. They must not come at the cost of our principles when it comes to human rights, democratic freedoms and the future of the planet."*

You can watch that part of my speech [here](#).

Labour supported 8 Lords amendments to the Trade Bill when

it returned to the House of Commons, ranging from provisions to protect [human rights](#), our high standards, the NHS, and the environment, to provisions to prevent our children from online harms, and to increase parliamentary scrutiny of trade deals.

Votes on the amendments came incredibly close, particularly on the so-called 'genocide amendment' which came within 11 votes of passing. Please be assured that Labour will continue to fight for what's right when the Trade Bill returns to the House of Commons next month.



*Debate on the Lords amendments to the Trade Bill, 19 January*

## DIT Questions



[DIT Questions](#), 14 January

On 14 January, I asked Liz Truss where the Economic Impact Assessment is for the UK-EU Deal. You can watch me do so [here](#).

In response to what should have been a simple question, she told me to ask the Cabinet Office, before backtracking and claiming that the Economic Impact Assessment doesn't matter as the UK-EU Deal has already passed. This is unacceptable.



## International Trade and Work in Parliament

- 16 December: Video call with the Green Alliance
- 29 December: Meeting with the M5
- 29 December: Video call with Food and Drink Federation
- 11 January: [General Debate on Global Britain](#)
- 14 January: [DIT Questions](#)
- 16 January: Spoke on a panel at the [Fabians New Year Conference](#)
- 19 January: [Consideration of Lords amendments to the Trade Bill](#)
- 20 January: Video call with War Child
- 21 January: Virtual visit to the Scottish Whiskey Association with Keir Starmer
- 21 January: Spoke to the Industry Forum
- 21 January: Video call with Common Wealth
- 22 January: Video call with the NFU
- 25 January: Video call with Sam Lowe
- 26 January: Spoke on a War Child panel

## In the constituency

- 17 December: Spoke to Mike Cooke, Chair of North Central London Integrated Care
- 18 December: Briefing on COVID-19 for London MPs
- 4 January: Briefing on COVID-19 from the Health Minister
- 8 January: Briefing on COVID-19 for London MPs
- 27 January: Islington Holocaust Memorial Day Service
- 27 January: National Holocaust Memorial Day Ceremony



General Debate on Global Britain, 25 January

## Media



Kicking off the morning media round for the Trade Bill at Sky News, 19 January

19 January: Sky News – “I hope America will move into a new phase in its history.”

19 January: BBC Radio 4 Today

19 January: [Times Radio](#)

19 January: ITV News

19 January: LBC Radio



Speaking on a War Child panel about the current priorities of the Shadow Cabinet on human rights, 26 January



It snowed in London! Via [Instagram](#), 24 January