

# Emily Thornberry MP

ISLINGTON SOUTH AND FINSBURY

January Report



## London Labour Conference



Islington South and Finsbury CLP table at the London Labour Conference Gala Dinner

At the end of January it was fantastic to attend the 2023 annual London Labour Conference, where I was joined by members of the Shadow Cabinet, Council Leaders, GLA members, the Mayor of London, and of course Labour members from across the capital.

I jointly hosted the evening Gala Dinner with Sadiq Khan and Dawn Butler - all first elected in 2005, we used to call ourselves the Three Musketeers! In my Gala Dinner speech I said what a difference a year makes, with Labour riding high in the polls, but we mustn't be complacent - we need to be fighting for every vote in London and across the country if we want to beat the Tories.

At the conference I also spoke at a roundtable with the Solicitors Regulation Authority on the future of legal services. It was a hugely important discussion, because whether it's cuts to legal aid, the huge backlogs in our courts, or declining prosecution rates, the Tories have been a disaster for access to justice.

## Attorney General Oral Questions

Attorney General Oral Questions in parliament is an important opportunity for holding the Attorney General to account, and on 1 February I dedicated my questions to the Tories' dismal failure to enforce the Ministerial Code.

In particular, I wanted to know whether it was a breach of the code for Nadhim Zahawi to have threatened journalists with legal action for asking questions about his dodgy tax affairs, when the Code says that ministers should alert the Prime Minister before embarking on legal action. Rest assured that I am not satisfied with the Attorney General's response that there is "wriggle room" in this area. You can [watch our exchange here](#).



# Holocaust Memorial Day

Friday 27 January was Holocaust Memorial Day, and I was honoured to speak at Islington's Holocaust Memorial Day event at Islington Assembly Hall.

In my remarks I reflected on this year's theme of 'ordinary people', and the incredible sacrifices so many made to protect and shelter Jewish people under the threat of the Nazis, at great risk to their own safety. Holocaust Memorial Day is so important for reflecting on those sacrifices, and for remembering the victims of genocide, whether that be Jews, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities, Roma and Sinti people, or the many other victims of persecution.



## Wasteful government spending



Many of you will have seen Labour's launch of the GPC Files, an investigation I have been carrying out into the use of taxpayer funded government payment cards. Since the Tories came to power, I found that spending on GPCs by fourteen major Whitehall departments had increased by 71%, much of it on wasteful or excessive purchases that seem especially hard to justify during a cost-of-living crisis.

But almost as shocking as how some of the money was spent was the lack of transparency around it. For example, my Parliamentary Questions revealed that thousands of pounds worth of English sparkling wine had been labelled as 'computer equipment' in Foreign Office accounts, and that millions of pounds of Ministry of Defence spending had not been reported at all.

Transparency in government is important, and there were some departments – like the Home Office – where I had to ask very few questions about their purchases because all the details were normally published up front. But in most areas, transparency is not the norm, and that's why it's important for MPs to use their power to ask questions to reveal the truth, and make the government do better.





# Parliamentary Staffer Awards

---



I'm delighted that on 11 January, Frances Simmons, my Senior Caseworker, who so many of you know, came runner up for Constituency Staffer of the Year at the Parliamentary Staffers' Network Awards.

Coming second only to a constituency staffer for the late Sir David Amess MP is a huge achievement, which reflects Fran's seventeen years of dedication and dogged perseverance in supporting people in our community. I know there are so many in Islington South and Finsbury who will be delighted that the help Fran has provided to them over the years has been recognised by the many parliamentary colleagues who nominated her.

## Campaigning

---

It's been a busy month of campaigning, but I'm hugely buoyed by the enthusiasm for Labour I've been hearing on the doorstep. In South Thanet, where I was canvassing ahead of the local elections, people are sick and tired of the chaos and dysfunction we've seen under the Tories.

And in West Lancashire, it was brilliant to receive such a positive reaction to our byelection candidate Ashley Dalton. Ashley absolutely trounced the Tories, taking 62.3% of the vote - the best result for Labour and the worst for the Tories in the seat's history.

With local elections coming up, I'm hopeful that voters will be sending a message to the Tories that their time in office is coming to an end. But we've got to keep fighting to get fantastic Labour councillors elected, so I know in the coming months there'll be a lot more campaigning to come!



Campaigning in West Lancashire



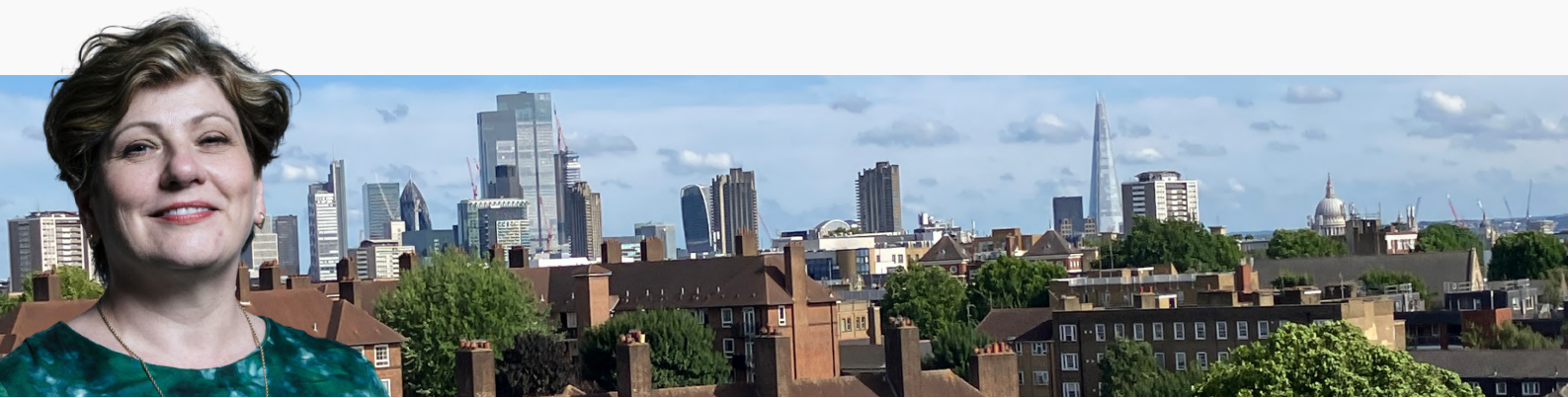
Campaigning in South Thanet

## Fabian Booklet Launch

---



On 24 January I spoke on a panel to launch a new Fabian Society booklet - *Solidarity, Equality, Opportunity: Creating strong social justice systems for women*. In my role as Shadow Attorney General, ensuring the justice system works for women is one of my highest priorities, which is why it's so important we don't let the Tories off the hook for the damage their neglect of criminal justice has done to vulnerable women.





# Visit to the Hammerton Brewery

---

Small businesses are the lifeblood of our community in Islington, so on the 20 January, I was delighted to visit the Hammerton Brewery on a visit organised by the Small Independent Brewers' Association. I had a wonderful tour of the brewery, sampled some of their products, and got the opportunity to pull a pint. For the more adventurous, I can recommend the Peanut Butter Crunch Stout!

But importantly, the visit was also an opportunity to discuss the challenges facing this important sector, like the impact cost of living crisis and making sure that the proposed bottle recycling scheme works for small businesses.



# Metrobox Visit

---



On the 23 January I visited Metrobox, a project run by the Metropolitan Police to provide a space for disadvantaged young people to learn how to box. In addition to learning a skill, the classes are a great opportunity for participants to socialise with others and interact with their local police force in a positive environment. It was a pleasure to meet some of the organisers and attendees, and to learn more about how the police are engaging with young people in the community.

# Visit to New North Academy School

---

On 26 January, I visited New North Academy School, where I received a tour and had the joy of the pupils presenting to me a book where they keep a record of all the things they have learned together. You can often tell a lot about a school by the corridors, and at New North the corridors are quiet and calm and the work on the walls is really impressive. I particularly loved being taught about the Great Fire of London by 3 nine year olds who were confident, well-informed, and articulate.



# Diary

---

## Constituency

---

### January

12 Jan - Visit to the Arc Foodbank  
13 Jan - St Luke's Surgery  
14 Jan - Surgery at Town Hall  
19 Jan - Visit to TAG Fine Arts Fair  
20 Jan - Meeting with NHS Integrated Care Board for North Central  
20 Jan - Visit to Hammerton Brewery  
23 Jan - Visit to MetroBox  
26 Jan - Visit to New North Academy School  
26 Jan - Visit to Stroke Group on Upper Street  
27 Jan - Spoke at Holocaust Memorial Day event

### February

3 Feb - St Luke's Surgery  
6 Feb - Foreign Office meeting about conflict in Tigray  
9 Feb - Visit to The Manna at St Stephen's Church  
11 Feb - Surgery at Town Hall

## Parliament and Shadow Attorney General

---

### January

24 Jan - Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office Holocaust Memorial Day event  
24 Jan - Meeting with The Society of Labour Lawyers  
24 Jan - Meeting with the Criminal Bar Association  
24 Jan - Spoke at Fabian Booklet Launch for Fabian Women's Network  
25 Jan - Drop in event with Fur Free Britain  
28 Jan - Canvassing with South Thanet CLP  
28 Jan - London Labour Conference  
30 Jan - Labour International Trade Reception

### February

1 Feb - Attorney General Oral Questions  
1 Feb - Asian Community Fundraiser Dinner  
2 Feb - Canvassing with Ashley Dalton for the West Lancashire by-election

## Media

---

### January

12 Jan - Media round with Good Morning Britain, Bauer, Sky News, Times Radio, GB News, ITV  
18 Jan - Media round with Times Radio, Sky News, GB News, Bauer, LBC, ITN, BBC News  
25 Jan - Politics Live and the World at One

### February

3 Feb - ES Magazine My London profile  
6 Feb - Politics Live



Meeting Meera Syal at Labour's Asian Community Fundraising Dinner

