



WEST MIDLANDS POLICE FUNDING DEBATE



A debate on the funding of the West Midlands Police was held in Westminster Hall on Wednesday 9 September 2015 to highlight the unfairness of the police funding formula on the West Midlands. In the debate I said: "I want to add my voice to the concerns about finance and the funding of the West Midlands police. West Midlands Police has had its funding cut by 23%. By comparison, Surrey has faced cuts of only 12%. There have been cuts of £126 million in the past five years from the West Midlands Police budget."

"Under the current formula, West Midlands Police should have received £43 million. There has been a squeeze on West Midlands police nationally, but also locally, and it has resulted in the loss of 1,471 police officers and there has been a recruitment freeze."

"Walsall borough Neighbourhood Watch have enjoyed a good relationship with the police, but one neighbourhood team has moved back to the town centre. One person spoke of being at the mercy of a local response team which will not always deal with the low-priority cases. Pleck, Alumwell and Birchills are distressed at the kind of things that the police, with the minimum of resources, are having to do—they cannot do their job. I ask the Minister to start the consultation again, because the process is flawed. A decision cannot be made without all the information. I ask for all the information to be published immediately—not on 29 September after the consultation period ends, as has been suggested."

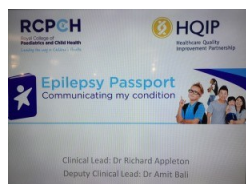
LAUNCH OF EPILEPSY PASSPORT

On Friday 18 September 2015 I hosted the launch of the Epilepsy Passport at the House of Commons. As Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Epilepsy I was delighted that the launch brought together people working in child health and epilepsy.

Judith Ellis, Chief Executive of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, welcomed the two clinicians who worked on the EpPassport, Dr Richard Appleton, a consultant paediatric neurologist at Alder Hey Children's Hospital and Dr Amit Bali, Darzi Fellow in paediatrics at the UCL-Institute of Child Health. They explained the Epilepsy Passport how it will help children with epilepsy by summarising their medication and agreeing the summary with the young person and family.

Under the leadership of Dr Appleton and Dr Bali, the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) developed the Epilepsy Passport following its recommendation by the Child Health Review into Epilepsy. The Epilepsy Passport is an easy-to-carry paper record of relevant and up-to-date clinical information about a child or young person's epilepsy – including an emergency care plan, medication history and key professional contacts – which can be used by medical staff when families access emergency healthcare and to provide information to schools, residential or respite care services.

The Epilepsy Passport is a world first and is an excellent innovation in epilepsy healthcare.



MALAYSIAN MP WORK SHADOWING



I was pleased to welcome Datuk Mas Ermeyati Binti Samsudia MP, Deputy Minister of Tourism and Culture in Malaysia to the House of Commons. The Commonwealth Parliament Association UK (CPA) hosted a delegation of women parliamentarians from the women's Parliamentary Caucus of Malaysia which was established in 2008.

Ermi shadowed my work. We had a brief tour around Parliament on my way to my office. I explained how I do my job as an MP in Westminster and dealing with constituents in Walsall South. This included responding to queries from constituents.

ASSISTED DYING BILL

The House of Commons sat on Friday 11 September 2015 to debate the "Assisted Dying Bill". I heard from many of you, some who were for the Bill and others who are against the Bill. I considered all the representations that were made to me.

The Bill proposes a major change both to the criminal law and to principles underpinning medical practise. An assisted dying law would send a message that if you are terminally ill taking your own life is appropriate to consider. The law as it stands is in line with social attitudes on suicide – that it is not something to be encouraged or assisted. We should provide people with proper care and help terminally ill people to live and die with dignity.

I voted against the Bill which was defeated Ayes: 118 ; Noes: 330 a majority opposing the Bill of 212. 69% of MPs attended the Commons to vote and so it would be unlikely that the Bill is presented again in this Parliament. I appreciate the time you took to let me know your views.

Surgeries

Valerie holds regular surgeries. To arrange an appointment, please call the Constituency Office on 01922 635835

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ENGLISH TUITION CUT (ESOL PLUS)



I met representatives of Walsall Adult and Community College (WACC) immediately after it was announced in July that all funding for English Language tuition for jobseekers had been withdrawn with immediate effect. They told me WACC will lose £380,000

from its budget as a result of the decision. I wrote to the Skills Funding Agency on 30 July 2015 asking for this short-sighted decision to be reviewed but I am yet to receive a response.

The rate of Jobseekers' Allowance Claimants in Walsall South is currently 4.3%, well above the national rate of 2.5%. The 2011 Census found that there are 2,575 households where no residents have English as a main language. This represents 6.88% of households and is well above the national average of 4.28%. Many of my constituents will now not benefit from WACC's English Language tuition.

ESOL is delivered by WACC at Whitehall Junior School and WACC's Centre at Weston Street within walking distance of the heart of the BAME community in Palfrey, which is particularly important for women. WACC is an excellent college which was rated as Outstanding by Ofsted in 2012/13.

I asked a question on this at Questions to the Leader of the House.

NEWS IN BRIEF

IN PARLIAMENT

QUESTIONS:

- To the **Leader of the House** why the Government abruptly cut the ESOL plus Mandation Fund. He responded that he would ask the Skills Minister to write.
- To the **Justice Secretary** what assessment he had made of the tailored curriculum plan for women entering prison that was introduced in October 2014. He responded that courses have not met prisoners' specific needs.
- To the **Home Secretary** whether rather than raid the DFID budget, could we consider using the seized Syrian assets, both in the region and for cash-strapped councils. She responded that the Syrian assets are the assets of the people of Syria and that they should decide how they are used.



EARLY DAY MOTIONS (EDMs)

I have signed the following notable EDMs:

- EDM 443 calling for a reversal of cuts to Feed-in Tariffs that will affect important subsidies for solar power.
- EDM 107 in support of community pubs, urging the Government to freeze beer duty, give all pubs in England planning protection and introduce a new statutory code of practice to support pubs tied to big beer companies.

NHS e-PETITION DEBATE



I chaired my first Westminster Hall debate as a member of the Speaker's Chairs Panel in Westminster Hall on 14 September 2015 on the motion "that his House has considered the e-petition relating to contracts and conditions in the NHS". This was in response to [e-petition](#) that received 220,516 signatures. This is the first time an e-petition has been debated in Westminster Hall.

A new e-petitions system was set up in July 2015 which enables members of the public to petition the House of Commons and press for action from the government. Petitions are on the [e-petitions website](#) for 6 months and if they reach 100,000 signatures they will be considered by the new Petitions Committee.

The Committee will then decide whether more information is required, whether to refer the petition to another Parliamentary Committee or the Government, or whether the petition should be debated in Westminster Hall where 3 hours on a Monday are reserved for debating e-petitions to which the Government must

WE ARE WALSALL CELEBRATION



WE ARE WALSALL organised a unity celebration near St Pauls at the Crossing on Saturday 15 August 2015. There were speeches and musical interludes.

I met and spoke to some of those who attended and they were from a broad range of political views. From the stage I said that we must continue to work for social, economic and political justice. Many people face racism and discrimination every day. We must all be allowed to practise our religious beliefs and to continue the fight for unity and diversity in Walsall. It was heartening to see people from all the faiths.

DARLASTON TOWN 1874 FIRST MATCH



A sunny Saturday afternoon on 15 August 2015 at Bentley Pavilions was the perfect setting for the first home game for Darlaston Town 1874 FC. Kington Town scored first but such was the spirit of the home team that a goal from Sammy Giles gave the home supporters a memorable 1-1 draw for their first game.

The home supporters leaned against the newly painted railings to cheer on Darlaston Town 1874 and offered some advice to the team. I'm not sure if they heard but after half time with heads up they had some creditable shots on goal particularly after the equaliser. The heat took its toll on the players.