

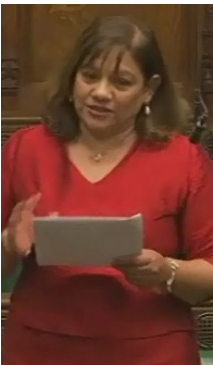


VALERIE HOLDS ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON WOMEN IN SCIENCE

On Wednesday 13 June 2012, Valerie held an Adjournment Debate in the House of Commons on 'Government policy for women in science'. The Universities and Science Minister, the Rt Hon David Willetts MP, responded.

Valerie said: "In my view, science generally and women in science are under threat. The Biochemical Society has conducted a survey in which women scientists expressed a number of concerns. Those women scientists cited inflexible funding structures, which mean that women are unable to take time out, perhaps to look after children, without being left behind."

"The UK Resource Centre for Women in Science (UKRC), which has had its grant cut by the Government, has identified that 5.3% of all working women—or one in 20—are employed in a SET occupation, compared with one in three men. Nearly 100,000 female STEM graduates are either unemployed or economically inactive. The minister responded positively."



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VALERIE TOURS ECOHOUSE DEVELOPMENT WITH SHADOW HOUSING MINISTER

Valerie visited the Accord Low Carbon Homes development at Whitworth Close in Darlaston with Shadow Housing Minister, Jack Dromey MP.

The visionary development combines low carbon technologies, which can reduce energy bills by up to 50%, with a cooperative model which will give residents a real stake in their own community. Unlike traditional homes, the homes at Whitworth Close are constructed from timber panels containing plumbing, wiring and

windows, manufactured at Accord's factory in Walsall.

Valerie said: "Given the twin challenges of the climate crisis and the chronic housing shortage in the UK, it is vital that we see many more developments such as Whitworth Close. Energy efficient new housing should play a key role in the regeneration of Darlaston. This is a view that I know is shared by many Darlaston Residents."

VALERIE SPEAKS IN WESTMINSTER HALL ADOPTION DEBATE

Valerie raised the issue of equalising the rights of adoptive parents in a Westminster Hall Debate on Adoption initiated by Sheryl Murray MP for South East Cornwall and responded to by Tim Loughton MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families.

Valerie said: "I was pleased to be able to raise the issue of equalising rights of adoptive parents at the Adoption Debate. Adoptive parents have been disadvantaged for too long by the lesser rights afforded to them in the time after they adopt. The arrival of a new adoptive child in a home is a extremely significant event in a family's life that is comparable to the birth of a child."

"In the previous session, I introduced a Ten Minute Rule Bill entitled Adoption (Leave, Pay and Allowance Arrangements) Bill (HC Bill 212), which set out to equalise the employment rights of adoptive parents with those of birth parents."



VALERIE VISITS LOCAL SCHOOLS



Valerie visited Moorcroft Wood Primary School and Rough Hay Primary School.

At Moorcroft Wood Primary School, Valerie was shown around by Head Teacher, Mr Andy Nicholls. Mr Nicholls has introduced a number of exciting changes including the appointment of a Writer in Residence, the opening of a new School Library and an annual visit to Llandudno for the whole school.

At Rough Hay School Valerie was invited by Deputy Head Girls, Simran Athwal & Megan Botfield to open Sports Day .

Valerie said: "I was very impressed with the pupils at both Schools. It was a pleasure to meet them. Their enthusiasm is testament to the dedicated members of staff who have worked hard to teach the children in a way that means they clearly enjoy going to school and learning."

Surgeries

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

HOUSE OF LORDS REFORM

On Tuesday 11 July 2012, Valerie voted for the Second Reading of the House of Lords Reform Bill.

Valerie said: "I support the principle of reforming the House of Lords and holding those who have a significant role in creating our laws to account. However, I have a number of concerns about the details of the Government's plans for the House of Lords. I would have voted against the Programme Motion had it been put to a vote. The time the Government has set aside for debate on this important constitutional change is wholly inadequate."

VALERIE RAISES DARLASTON ROAD CROSSING



The Darlaston Road Zebra Crossing in Pleck was raised by Valerie on Thursday 5 July 2012 in the House of Commons.

Valerie said: "I asked the Leader of the House of Commons, the Rt Hon Sir George Young MP for an urgent debate on accessing funds for upgrading dangerous crossings. He said that he would look at what progress the Government could make. I look forward to his response."

VALERIE MEETS WITH RESIDENTS AND COUNCIL OFFICERS AT STAFFORD ROAD IN DARLASTON

On Friday 22 June 2012, Valerie held a meeting with residents of Stafford Road, Darlaston and Council Officers to discuss ongoing problems with traffic, the road surface, parking and noise.

At the meeting, Valerie and residents explained to representatives of Walsall MBC the various problems and asked them to set out the steps they would take to improve traffic calming.

Valerie said: "The meeting was lively and residents put their points across to Council representatives who agreed to look at what action can be taken to improve the situation on Stafford Road."

VALERIE ATTENDS TENNIS CLUB CENTENARY

On Saturday 16 June 2012 Valerie attended Walsall Tennis Club's Centenary Tournament at its premises in Birmingham Road.

Valerie said: "The Club is a wonderful resource which has enabled people from Walsall South to play tennis and compete in local tournaments for generations."

GOVERNMENT U-TURN ON FORESTS

Last year, over half a million people signed a petition against the Government's plans to sell off England's forests and Ministers were forced to set up an Independent Panel on Forestry to look at the issue.

The Secretary of State for the Environment, the Rt Hon Caroline Spelman MP, has now announced that the public forests will not be sold off.

Valerie said: "The Government's latest u-turn shows how poorly thought out the original plans were. I hope the Nation's forests will now remain publically owned for generations to come."

VALERIE HOSTS EPILEPSY EVENT AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS



On Monday 2 July 2012 Valerie co-hosted a seminar with Sam Gyimah MP entitled 'Getting results for pupils with epilepsy.' The event was sponsored by the Joint Epilepsy Council and included speakers from various advocacy organizations as well as Emma Parrott, a young person who discussed the impact

that Epilepsy has had on her educational progress.

Valerie said: "This event is important for raising awareness of the impact of Epilepsy on children and their educational development. With 500 avoidable deaths per year, better assessment and treatment for children with Epilepsy is critical to helping each child reach their full academic potential. Hearing Emma share her experience with Epilepsy helps us to recognize that children with Epilepsy are talented individuals and that each child matters."

VALERIE DISCUSSES FE LOANS WITH STUDENTS FROM WALSALL COLLEGE



Students from Walsall College met with Valerie on Friday 22 June 2012. They are concerned about the Government's plans to require students aged over 24 studying for A-Level equivalent qualifications to take out loans to pay their course fees.

From the start of the 2013/14 academic year, students aged over 24 will need to take out loans to cover course fees of up to £4000 a year. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills' own research predicts that at least 20% of students affected will leave their courses as a result of the changes.

At Walsall College, 1,070 students at would have been affected if the policy had been in place in 2011/12, of whom 65% are women.

Valerie said: "I was pleased to meet with Students from Walsall College. They were justifiably concerned that the Government's plans would put people like them off studying for important qualifications."

VALERIE WELCOMES AUNG SAN SUU KYI'S ADDRESS TO PARLIAMENT



On Thursday 21 June 2012, Valerie met Daw Aung San Suu Kyi following Daw Suu Kyi's address to both houses of Parliament in Westminster Hall.

After meeting Daw Suu Kyi, Valerie said: "Aung San Suu Kyi is an inspiration. She has worked tirelessly and at great personal cost for 25 years to secure the same basic rights for the people of Burma that we in the UK take for granted. Daw Suu Kyi's dedicated and courageous efforts have helped bring about the important progress seen in Burma over recent months, including the first free and open elections for a generation."

Valerie has taken a close interest in Burma during her time in Parliament, tabling 9 Early Day Motions (EDMs) and asking a number of questions to Ministers regarding the situation in Burma. Most recently, Valerie called on the Government at Foreign Office Questions on 19 June 2012 to press for further progress in Burma.