

View from the House

This was the first week back to the House after the Conference season. I am pleased to say after many months of campaigning, the Labour Party have a new leader, Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP.

After the debate on Tuesday 12 October, I presented a Petition on the floor of the House. This was sent to me by the Friends and Users of the Archway Centre. They are concerned that the cuts and there already have been some, have affected the service.

They were also concerned that further cuts would mean the users would be left in the community without support. Petitioning Parliament in this way draws attention to the issue as it becomes a matter of record in Hansard and is also forwarded to the relevant Government Department and Select Committee. I have also written to the Mental Health Trust.

There was a lobby of Parliament by the Science is Vital Group last Saturday. I asked the Minister David Willetts in the Chamber if he had received the petition and whether he had met the Group. He said he would be meeting with them.

It is vital that funding to science is not cut as other countries such as the United States, Germany France and Singapore are all increasing their funding in science now.

On Thursday I took part in a debate initiated by the Backbench Committee. The motion for debate was to call on the Government to provide proper compensation for those who died or contracted a disease having been given contaminated blood.

One of my constituents, Valerie Moule's husband, Ivan, was a haemophiliac. Having been given contaminated blood, he contracted Aids and sadly was one of the first to die in 1989.

Almost 2000 people have died having contracted diseases through no fault of their own. Many MPs from all sides had constituents who were affected. In Ireland compensation has been paid to the victims.

Following an independent inquiry by Lord Archer of Sandwell, paid for privately, the recommendations have not been implemented. For example one of the recommendations is free prescriptions for those affected.

Sadly to the disappointment of the campaigners who were sitting in the Gallery, the Government voted against the motion and it was lost. Described as one of the worst treatment scandals in the history of the UK, hopefully the Government can find the money to compensate these innocent people and their families.

Valerie Vaz MP