



VALERIE PUBLISHES REPORT INTO HIGHER RATE PHONE NUMBERS

On 3 January 2014 Valerie published a report into the use of higher rate telephone lines by Government departments.

Valerie said: "I tabled a written question to every Government department because constituents raised concerns over the use of higher rate telephone lines particularly the lines with the prefixes 0845, 0844, and 0843. I am pleased that as a result of the questions, the Cabinet Office has issued new guidance advising Departments that cheaper alternatives to high-cost phone lines must always be offered. My report found that Government continues to make extensive use of higher rate numbers. Government departments with access to the public such as the Department of Health (DH), the Department for Work and Pensions and HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) operate higher rate lines. HMRC has operated 511 0845 lines in the last 12 months, receiving 43,740,532 calls to those lines, the highest number of any Government department. I have also written to ask Walsall MBC to provide cheaper alternatives where it uses higher rate telephone numbers" Valerie's report is available to download [here](#).



Questions in Parliament

In January, Valerie asked:

- The Attorney-General whether he agreed that judges who hear evidence in a case should decide what the sentence is. Valerie's question and the Attorney-General's response are available [here](#).
- The Foreign Office Minister to raise a letter regarding political prisoners written by Mr Speaker with the Burmese Government. Valerie's question and the minister's response are available [here](#).

The Golden Temple

Valerie said: "On Thursday 16 January I asked the Leader of the House of Commons that all the Documents that are in the custody and control of the Government are released as to what happened at Amritsar in 1984 so that we have full transparency. At a lobby of Parliament on 22 January about this issue I was pleased to hear from a number of my constituents. I have also written to the Foreign Secretary to ask for the release of all documents and for a statement to Parliament. We all want to find out what happened in 1984."



Great Barr Hall

On Friday 17 January 2014 Valerie met with local residents in Pheasey to discuss the planning application for the redevelopment of Great Barr Hall and the construction of 59 large houses on the Green Belt.

Valerie said: "Great Barr Hall is an important part of our local heritage. However, plans to see the Hall restored cannot be dependent on the destruction of precious and increasingly limited Green Belt."

Health Committee Inquiry into Urgent and Emergency Care



Valerie said: "The Committee is currently conducting an inquiry into Urgent and Emergency Care. We heard evidence from the NHS Medical Director, Professor Sir Bruce Keogh whose review into urgent and emergency care suggests that there will be 2 tier "Emergency Centres" and "Major Emergency Centres". I asked if this had been agreed and Sir Bruce said they are still listening. However Professor Keith Willet, NHS Director for Acute Episodes of Care, contradicted this and said they are working towards these centres and that reconfiguration will proceed even though this issue is still under discussion."

"I asked Professor Keogh for his view on the causes of delays in the discharge process, which are putting pressure of A&E departments. I was surprised that Professor Keogh said he did not know the answer to this. Even the Chair Stephen Dorrell MP expressed surprise that work is not already underway into the cause of delayed discharges. It is crucial that NHS England addresses this issue urgently."

Health Question

At Health Questions, Valerie raised the issue of the use of trainee locums.

Valerie asked: "I am sure the Minister will agree that it is a grotesque situation where a trainee doctor working as a locum is paid as much as a fully qualified doctor. That is the result of not listening to legitimate concerns during the passage of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, so will the Minister not blame women in the work force or overpaid doctors but do something quickly to stop this drain on public money?"

The minister's response is available [here](#).

Blue Coat Infants at Number 10



Valerie and pupils from Blue Coat Infants School presented a petition at 10 Downing Street. Valerie said: "The children presented the life size teacher at the door of Number 10 Downing Street calling on the Prime minister and other world leaders to make sure every child has access to a teacher. The School have received a response from the Prime Minister."

Surgeries

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

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