

View from the House

During the Conference season the parties in the Coalition Government can revert to their own policies. Nick Clegg said there would be no ditching the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA). But the Justice Secretary said that there would be legislation on the HRA in May next year.

Given this difference I was keen to find out the Government's position. So I asked the Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) whether he had any discussions with the Justice Secretary about the HRA and if it would be repealed next year. The DPM gave me an unequivocal response. The HRA would not be repealed during the course of this Parliament under this Coalition Government.

The HRA enacts into UK law those rights signed by the respective governments to the European Convention on Human Rights after WW2. It is a salutary reminder that every single one of those Articles was breached during WW2.

A group of people who through no fault of their own find themselves in a crisis and cannot deal with it deserve to have their rights protected. They need support and help. So I was very concerned by the threat to the Residential Facility at the Broadway North Centre.

The facility provides a vital service to many people who are experiencing mental health crises, offering crucial respite care. It means people do not have to be admitted to hospital or police cells at such difficult times. The police are often saying they have no alternative but to section people. Broadway North is a vital resource for society.

A report was presented to Cabinet in June recommending closure. The report failed to demonstrate that the alternative private providers would have sufficient beds available to cope with peak demand more cost effectively than the existing residential provision. In my view the decision made by the Council was flawed as it did not take into account relevant considerations and did not undertake a meaningful consultation with the service users. Do add your voice and tell the Council it must not close or be privatised.

So there are no recycling sites for paper or cardboard in Walsall South. I have been told that from my office in Lichfield Street I have to drive to Bloxwich or Aldridge. It is absurd that we have to drive to recycle when there was a perfectly accessible site at Morrisons in the Town Centre.

Valerie Vaz MP
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