

eNews

from Rt Hon Valerie Vaz MP

March 2024

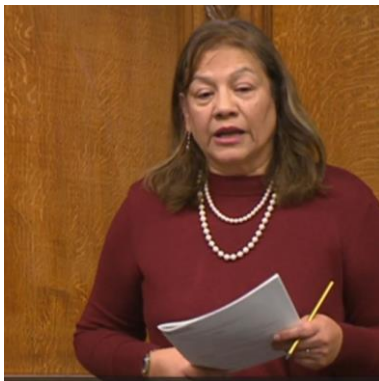


Bentley & Darlaston North - Darlaston South - Pleck - Palfrey - Paddock - St. Matthew's - Pheasey Park Farm



Easter Blessing: I would like to wish you all a peaceful Easter.

Health and Social Care Questions



At Health Questions on Tuesday 5 March 2024 in the section on Primary Care I asked a question as many constituents are finding it hard to get appointments with GPs. My question: "Equal access to primary care is so important, but the use of physician associates is downright dangerous. Does the Secretary of State agree that patients have the right to see a qualified GP and not be fobbed off with a two-tier primary care system?" 🌀

The Budget: 6 March 2024



I spoke in the Budget debate on Tuesday 12 March 2024. I noted that the Chancellor borrowed from Labour policy by abolishing non-dom status, trailed for some time by Labour. He said nothing about water companies pouring effluent into our rivers. They broke the law and awarded themselves £10 million in bonuses but want to charge us £156 extra to plug a financial gap. Schools are struggling with dilapidated, toxic buildings or a lack of staff; grants to local authorities are cut, and the council is forced to raise council tax; £1.7 billion spent on hospital beds because patients cannot be discharged; you can read my full speech on my website: 🌀

Update on Israel and Gaza.

I was a signatory, with a cross party group of 135 MPs and Peers, of a letter calling on the Foreign Secretary and Business Secretary to immediately suspend export licenses for arms transfers to Israel. I also signed a 2nd letter to the Foreign Secretary of 115 MPs and Peers coordinated by Caabu on famine in Gaza, demanding Israel stops using starvation as a weapon of war, demanding the restoration of UK funds to UNRWA and on the UK government to put pressure on Israel as it continues to block full access of humanitarian aid into Gaza, in breach of international law 🌀

National Insurance Contributions (Reduction in Rates) (No.2) Bill



On 13 March 2024 we debated the Bill which introduces a cut in the rate of primary (employee) Class 1 National Insurance contributions (NICs) from 10% to 8% and a cut in the rate of self-employed Class 4 NICs from 8% to 6%. These cuts will take effect from 6 April. I have long considered the tax burden on working people is too high and should come down in a responsible way. But the reduction in NICs still leaves working people worse off; the Chancellor set out in the Budget a goal to abolish NICs, with no suggestion of how he would pay for this. This unfunded tax cut of £46 billion would leave a chasm in the public finances. 🌀

Caldmore Primary School



The Premier League approached Walsall FC Foundation about a project providing Kits for Schools. So, on Friday 15 March I was delighted to visit and meet the girls' team at Caldmore Primary wearing their kit. It was great to see the team in a kit in the School's colours. The girls were excited about football, their kits, and an upcoming tournament. 🌀

Strikes(Minimum Service Levels: Fire & Rescue Services(Eng) Reg 2024



There was a vote in the House without a debate on the Wednesday 13 March 2024:
That the draft Strikes (Minimum Service Levels: Fire and Rescue Services) (England) Regulations 2024, which were laid before this House on 8 February, be approved.
I voted against it and the result Ayes: 291 Noes: 147 but the Question was agreed. 🌀

The WI - Inspiring Women



The Women's Institute published on 26 March 2024 an important report on "Understanding the Experiences of Autistic and ADHD women. I spoke to Pippa Simov about her experience. There is an under diagnosis. Between 150,000 and 500,000 people aged 20 to 49 years old may be autistic but undiagnosed. It is estimated that the most common age for women to be diagnosed with ADHD is late 30s to early 40s compared to aged 7 for boys. 🌀

Delves Junior School - #The Joy of Moving



I visited Delves Junior School on Friday 15 March 2024 to see FerreroUK's unbranded social responsibility programme the Joy of Moving. Programme is delivered by Walsall FC Foundation as part of Ferrero's long-term partnership with the English Football league. The first part of the programme was a classroom-based activity where the children learn about the different food groups using the Eatwell Guide. In the hall the children formed teams where each member of the team picked up cards of each food group. It was good to see the children active and using their knowledge in a game which made them move.🌀

The Safety to Rwanda Bill



The Bill returned to the Commons on 18 March 2024. I supported all ten amendments, all defeated. The Bill now returns to the Lords for further scrutiny. It is reported that the removal of the first 300 asylum seekers will cost nearly £2 million per person. This is £570 million of taxpayer money and accounts for just 1% of the 30,000 asylum seekers who crossed in boats last year; there is no plan for the remaining 99% of cases that are ineligible to be processed under the Illegal Migration Act 2023. The Bill is unaffordable, unlawful, and unworkable. It will not fix the chaos of our asylum system.🌀

World Book Day 2024



I was delighted to drop into the World Book Day launch in the Attlee Suite. I am a World Book Day Champion and I support their mission to promote reading for pleasure. The National Literary Trust found that 1 in 15 children do not own a book of their own. The theme this year is to encourage children to just pick up any book and read... just for pleasure. 🌀

Speaker of the Republic of Korea.



There was a reception hosted by the Rt Hon Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP on the 20 March 2024 for the Speaker of the Republic of Korea Kim Jin-Pyo and members of the Korean parliamentary delegation. It was good to exchange views. The Korean Ambassador to the UK was also present. 🌀

St Patrick's Day Event



I was delighted to attend St Patrick Day's celebration hosted by Conor McGinn MP and Karen Smyth MP in the Terrace Pavilion to meet the Irish Diaspora. His Excellency Ireland's Ambassador to the UK Martin Fraser was present and it was good to extend greetings on this special day. 🍀

NATO Parliamentary Assembly : Delegation from Kosovo



I was pleased to meet a delegation from the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo on 19 March 2024. The delegation consisted of Ms Arbereshe Kryeziu Hyseni MP Chair of the Foreign Affairs and Diaspora Committee, and other members of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Ms Time Kadrija MP; Ms Fitore Pacolli Dalipi MP and Mr Gazmend Gjyshinca MP. With other members of the NATO PA, there was a useful exchange of views on NATO and other international issues. 🌀

Trade (Comp and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership) Bill



On 19 March 2024 the Bill was debated. In July 2023, the UK formally agreed to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), an Asia-Pacific trade bloc of 11 other countries: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada Chile Japan Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru Singapore, and Vietnam. I support the UK's accession to CPTPP. I supported amendments to publish a report, give Parliament a vote on any new country joining on security issues, impact on sectors of the economy and on jobs in the UK of a country's accession to the agreement. 🌀

Breaking News: Emergency WASPI APPG meeting

I attended an emergency meeting of the Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) APPG with co-chairs Peter Aldous MP and Rebecca Long-Bailey MP to discuss the next steps on the Statement made by the Minister on the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman report published on Thursday 21 March 2024. The report called on the Government for the report to be discussed in Parliament. The APPG discussed a number of steps including meeting with all the groups to hear their views and a meeting with the Minister. The Government must set out a timetable for Parliament to discuss the report and the level of compensation. 🌀