

IAN BYRNE MP

**WORKING FOR WEST DERBY
STANDING ON MY RECORD**

Promoted by Maureen Delahunty
c/o 545 West Derby Road, L13 8AA

Dear West Derby resident,

Ian Byrne MP Report: 24th February - 22nd March 2024

I hope you and your loved ones are safe and well and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy Easter. In this email you can find out a little of what I have been doing in Parliament and the constituency this month.

Ian Byrne
Member of Parliament for Liverpool West Derby

Brenda McGrath

I was so sorry to hear of the passing of Brenda McGrath, a stalwart of West Derby CLP. My thoughts are with Brenda's family and loved ones. The last chat I had with Brenda was about her desire to become a Labour Party councillor and it is such a shame for the West Derby community that she will not now have the chance to realise this. Rest in peace Brenda.

In Parliament

Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) ruling on Pensions injustice

The PHSO report last week acknowledged that the blame for the pensions scandal that has terribly impacted on nearly four million 50s-born women lies squarely at the feet of the DWP. But the women I spoke to in West Derby rightly feel utterly insulted by the amount of recommended compensation. Many have been plunged into poverty through no fault of their own. I will continue to fight for justice for 50s-born women. **#WASPI #50sWomenFullRestitution**

Small victory as Household Support Fund is extended - Spring Budget

A small victory this month with the announcement from Government that the Household Support Fund will be extended for a further six months. This is, of course, not nearly long enough and I will continue to fight for this funding. Thanks to all campaigners who have fought for the continuation of the Household Support Fund and to the 35 MPs who have signed my Parliamentary Motion on this issue. The fight continues to retain this crucial support for struggling families.

Household Support Fund (No. 2)

EDM 410: tabled on 20 February 2024

Tabled in the 2023-24 session.

This motion has been signed by 35 Members. It has not yet had any amendments submitted.

Motion text

That this House expresses deep concern that the UK Government has not committed to extending the Household Support Fund (HSF) beyond March 2024; notes that via this fund the Government has invested significantly in local crisis support as a response to the cost-of-living crisis; further notes that more than £2 billion has been invested in the fund since October 2021; acknowledges this represents the largest investment in local government in England to deliver local crisis support since the abolition of the Social Fund in 2013; notes that additional sums have also been provided to devolved administrations through the Barnett formula for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland; expresses concern that almost two-thirds of councils responding to an Local Government Association survey said they could provide no additional discretionary funding to replace what is lost when the HSF ends and just under one-fifth said they would also be reducing their own local welfare discretionary funding due to financial pressures; further notes that demand for the HSF has never been higher, that foodbank usage is at record levels and one-in-four children live in poverty, and around three-quarters of councils told the LGA they expect financial hardship to increase in their area in the next 12 months; and notes a letter signed by more than 120 organisations including The Children's Society, Trussell Trust and Barnardo's who shared their fears that this will leave a large gap in support which neither local government, nor the voluntary sector, will be able to fill.

Signatures (35)

Famine in Gaza is a human-made catastrophe

Back in January I asked the Government if they believed Palestinians have a Right to Food. No meaningful action ensued. This month the UN stated that Israeli restrictions on humanitarian aid into Gaza, causing mass famine, may constitute the war crime of deliberate starvation. **You can find a video clip of me raising this in Parliament below.**



UN Security Council finally demands an immediate ceasefire in Gaza

I have consistently called for a ceasefire in Gaza and I agree wholeheartedly with the Secretary-General of the UN, António Guterres, who this week said: "*The Security Council just approved a long-awaited resolution on Gaza, demanding an immediate ceasefire, and the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. This resolution must be implemented. Failure would be unforgivable.*"

In summary: my work in Parliament this month

As your Member of Parliament I represent concerns of constituents in West Derby and hold the Government to account by taking part in Parliamentary votes, debates and questions in the House of Commons, by writing to Ministers and tabling Written Parliamentary Questions, by taking part in House of Commons Select Committees and by attending Parliamentary events and meetings.

Please find a summary below of my Parliamentary work this month. You can also find a summary of my contributions in the House of Commons on [my page on Parliament's website](#).

Debates, Votes & Oral Questions

Debates

Update: Debate on access to free school meals for children with special educational needs and disabilities

164,000+ children with special educational needs and disabilities are currently denied access to their free school meals. In January I called for and led a debate in Parliament to demand an end to this injustice and to raise the campaign work of my constituent Irene, Contact, the charity for families with disabled children, and campaigner Natalie Hay.

I am thrilled to report that the new Department for Education Free School Meal Guidance March 2024 was published this month. Thanks to the hard work of Contact, campaigners and families in West Derby, guidance now includes a section on making reasonable adjustments for disabled children, such as by offering a food voucher. It also clearly sets out expectations on what schools should do to comply with the Equality Act 2010 in the delivery of school lunches.

More than 160,000 disabled children will be able to finally to access their free meal school entitlement and many of their families will no longer have to worry about food insecurity or rely on food banks to feed their children.

Thank you to Contact and everyone involved in this campaign to ensure equal rights for disabled children. This will make a huge difference to many families in West Derby.

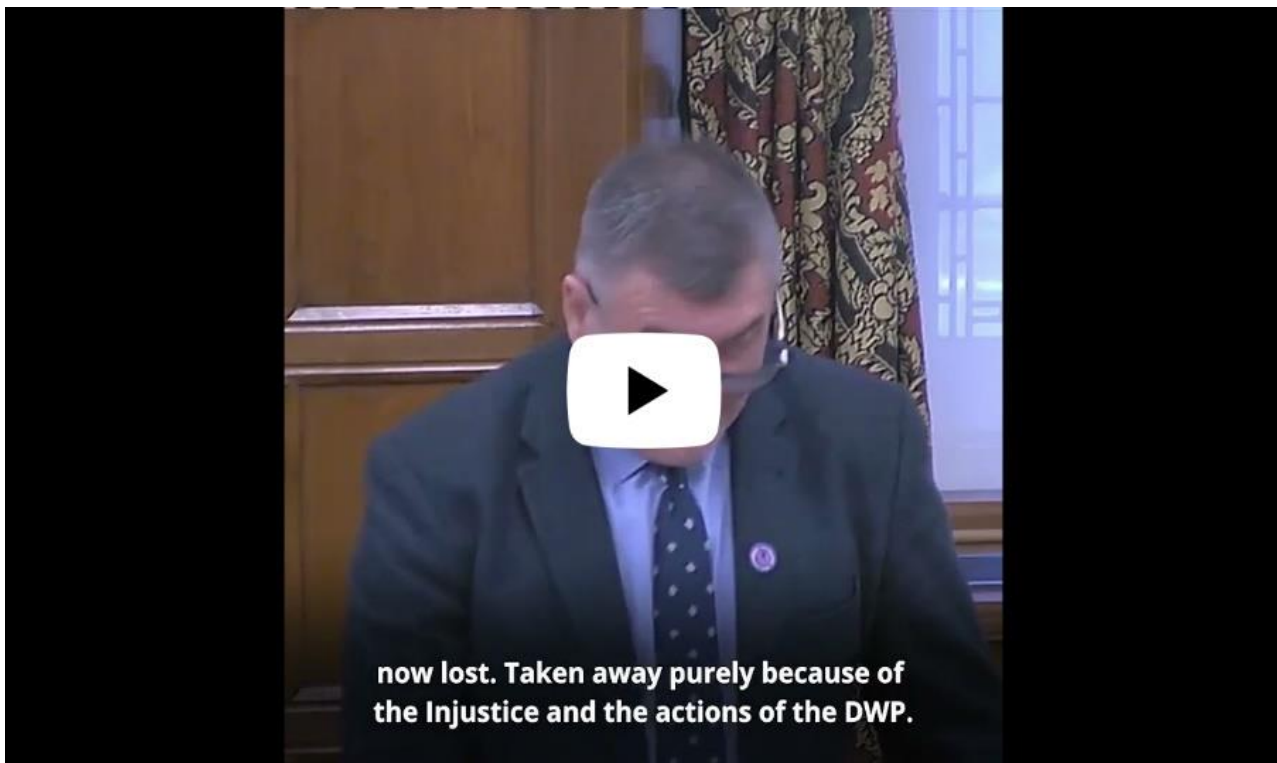


12 March: Debate on compensation for women affected by state pension changes

I spoke of my ongoing support for the 5,360 1950s-born women in West Derby who have been affected by the changes made to the women's state pension age. More than 3 million women in the UK have been left in what I believe is an entirely unacceptable situation as part of this historic wrong.

In the debate I said: *“This is an injustice that needs to be addressed urgently. It is completely unacceptable that the Government have so far refused to take action to right this wrong. There is nothing to stop the Government taking immediate action to provide compensation, as has been outlined in this place today.”* I asked the Government minister *“to begin the parliamentary process to provide the full compensation that thousands of women in West Derby and millions across the country deserve, without delay”*.

You can watch my contribution below, on YouTube, or read a transcript in Hansard.



11 March: Debate on the Government's Spring Budget

I heard nothing in the Government's Spring Budget, announced by the Chancellor on 6 March, for the 14.4 million people, including 4.2 million children, who are living in poverty in the UK. There was nothing in his Budget for social care, which is on its knees, or for social security - at a time when poverty and homelessness are rising.

This Budget was the latest in more than a decade of austerity budgets which have hollowed out our vital public services and have increased the deep wealth inequalities in our supposedly wealthy country.

In my speech in the House of Commons I highlighted that there was nothing in the Budget that will reassure parents, pupils, teachers or trade unions that the Government understands the crisis in our schools and colleges.

I said: *"There was nothing for education, at a time when one in five teaching assistant posts is unfilled and the Government have missed their overall teacher recruitment target for more than three years". "Last week I visited three schools in my constituency, and saw the magnificent efforts of the teaching teams to not just educate, but keep families afloat in my community, given the Government's absolute failure to do that... They deserve a Government who will invest in their future, not double down on austerity."*

You can watch my contribution below, on YouTube, or read a transcript in Hansard.



06 March: Debate on Kinship Care Strategy

I spoke on the economic hardships facing kinship carers and paid tribute to the kinship charter developed by Pauline Thornley of Kinship Carers Liverpool. I urged the Government to legislate to provide financial support to kinship carers in the same way as is provided for foster and adoptive parents. **You can watch my contribution below, on YouTube, or read a transcript in Hansard.**



28 February: Debate on digital exclusion

I spoke about the impact of years of austerity on our public services and on people in West Derby and across the country who are struggling to access online public services, including digital NHS services and Universal Credit, and who are unable to access online banking. I told the House of Commons that all public services must offer and promote an affordable, easy-to-access and offline way of using them – and that banks must provide face-to-face services in West Derby. I also reiterated my strong belief that broadband is an essential utility and that it should be made free and available to all as a universal public service.

You can read a transcript of my contribution in Hansard.

Events:



Motor Neurone Disease APPG

I was pleased to attend the AGM of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Motor Neurone Disease (MND). I will continue in my role as officer of this group on behalf of all in West Derby with MND and families.



Demanding Justice for people affected by the Infected Blood Scandal: I was proud to join the lobby of Parliament on 28 February to demand that Government acts to compensate those infected and affected by the infected blood scandal. **#HillsboroughLawNow**



Breast Cancer Now

I met with Breast Cancer Now in Parliament to talk about their #NoTimeToWaste campaign; aimed at increasing Breast Screening uptake. I fully support their calls on Government and NHS England to run a national breast screening awareness campaign.

Events special focus:

Supporting Lloyd Russell-Moyle MP's Bill to #BanConversionTherapy

It was a privilege to be in Parliament on 1 March to support my colleague Lloyd Russell-Moyle MP's Bill to #BanConversionTherapy and listen to his fantastic contribution in the chamber. Thank you to the many constituents in West Derby who were in touch with me about the debate.

“Conversion therapy” refers to any form of treatment or psychotherapy which aims to change a person’s sexual orientation or to suppress a person’s gender identity. It is in my view, and the view of health experts and LGBTQ+ campaigners, harmful and unethical.

The NHS and all major UK counselling and psychotherapy bodies have also concluded that conversion therapy is dangerous and have condemned it by signing a Memorandum of Understanding. The United Nations (UN) official Independent Expert on this issue has said that conversion therapy can amount to torture and called for the practice to be banned.

I am opposed to all forms of LGBTQ+ conversion therapy and will continue to call for Government to introduce legislation so that it is made illegal with no more delays and no loopholes.



Parliamentary Written Questions:

Protecting people in Gaza and the West Bank

I asked the Government a series of questions about what it is doing to enable the delivery of supplies into Gaza, and to ensure the protection of people there and in the West Bank.

I have also continued my calls in Parliament for an immediate ceasefire.

Endometriosis Action Month

March is Endometriosis Action Month. Many who experience endometriosis speak about having a long road to effective diagnosis, experiencing barriers to treatment and pain management, and a lack of support in their workplace. On behalf of all those with Endometriosis in West Derby I asked the Health Secretary what action and funding will be given to improve diagnosis times and to improve care.

Accessible homes for private renters

19% of disabled people live in the private rented sector, yet shockingly, the EHRC estimates that 1 in 3 disabled people in private rented properties live in unsuitable accommodation. Following powerful evidence given to Parliament by Disability Rights UK I asked the Government for more information about the number of issues. I asked for information on how many wheelchair-accessible homes have been built in the past year; how many Disabled Facilities Grants distributed to private rented sector tenants last year; and how many disabled people were evicted through section 21 no-fault evictions in the private rented sector in 2023.

Protection of mothers and babies from Strep B

I asked the Health Secretary what action her department is taking to protect mothers and babies from the impact of Group B Streptococcal Infection.

Improving dementia diagnostics

Almost one million people in the UK are currently living with dementia – a figure which is likely to increase to 1.6 million by 2040. It is vital the Government pushes up stagnating dementia diagnosis rates, reduces variations in the standard of care and improves system readiness for new treatments. I asked the Health Secretary several questions about what action and funding she will put in place to do this.

These are just some of the questions I have asked the Government this month. You can find a record of all my Parliamentary Written Questions

here: <https://members.parliament.uk/member/4831/writtenquestions>

Parliamentary Letters

Impact of energy bills on disabled people

I wrote to the Government's Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero on behalf of many disabled constituents who are experiencing fuel poverty in West Derby. In my letter I call on the Government to work directly with disabled people and charities to tackle the inequality of extra costs – and to respond to the calls of the charity, Scope, to bring in a discounted energy bill scheme.

Events at Manchester United

LFC fans, including Hillsborough survivors and families of the 97, are appalled by “tragedy chanting” by some Manchester Utd fans at the recent fixture. Education is key and I have written to MUFC to invite them to work with our Real Truth Legacy Project team. The Real Truth Legacy Project was started in September 2021 to ensure that *the real truth* of Hillsborough is taught across all age groups so that lies and smears about the disaster propagated by the media and state agencies are eradicated forever. **[You can find out more about the Real Truth Legacy Project here.](#)**

Events at Everton FC and the need for an Independent Football Regulator

Many constituents in West Derby have been in touch with me about the events at EFC. More than two years have passed since the fan-led review of English football found that we required independent scrutiny and legislation. **Earlier this month I wrote to the Secretary of State to urge the Government to immediately introduce an independent football regulator to safeguard the future of the game:**

UN Special Rapporteur on the Right To Food

It is now 15 months since the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right To Food Michael Fakhri said he would like to undertake a formal visit to the UK. **I have written to the Prime Minister to ask when this visit will take place.** This month new data revealed that there's been a staggering 68% increase in one year in the number of people who don't have enough food. We need a #RightToFood enshrined in UK law.

You can find out more about my Right to Food campaign here.

Committee Work:

I am a Member of two House of Commons Select Committees: *The Levelling Up, Housing and Communities* and *the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee*. As a Committee member, I scrutinise Government policy and hold them to account through a process of evidence sessions and inquiries.

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Committee:

Urban green spaces inquiry

It was a real honour to speak at Old Trafford on behalf of the Committee at a seminar about our inquiry into urban green spaces. There were so many fantastic contributions from many stakeholders on the importance of green spaces.



Inquiry on fairness in the food supply chain

As part of an inquiry session I raised the issue of affordable, healthy food and shared the view of Liverpool's Health, Matt Ashton, that, without action, food preferences will be shaped at such a young age that they will impact health. **You can watch part of my contribution below, on YouTube:**



Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (LUHC) Committee:

Disabled people in the housing sector

As part of the Committee's inquiry into the experience of disabled people in the housing sector. I asked a Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities how we can ensure that it's not a postcode lottery and that everyone has access to a wheelchair-accessible home.

I also asked how Government responds to local authorities not meeting this need. Several submissions to our inquiry asked the Government to mandate 10% of new-build homes to be Building Regulation M4(3) compliant (fully wheelchair accessible). I asked the Minister if the Government plans to do this.

You can watch part of my contribution below, on YouTube:



Early Day Motions (EDMs)

I have signed several EDMs over the past month. You can find full details of these on Parliament's website using the following link, and I thank constituents who have been in touch to ask me to sign them: <https://members.parliament.uk/member/4831/earlydaymotions>

In the constituency

St Aloysius Catholic Primary School: It was also a privilege to be invited to St Aloysius earlier this month to speak to the children about political campaigning. Opportunities such as this, to really engage with young constituents, are one of my favourite aspects of this job.

Mab Lane Primary School visit: I thoroughly enjoyed a brilliant visit to the inspirational Mab Lane Primary School, where I met with some of the teaching staff and governors who, despite the financial and social pressures they face, are determined to provide pupils with every opportunity to prosper.

St Cecilia's Catholic Junior School visit: It was good to visit St Cecilia's on International Women's Day and see a #LetGirlsPlay session by Liverpool School Sports Partnership. The enjoyment had by all was clear to see, with a brilliantly-run session and some remarkable young football talent on display.

Wear Blue For Bobby: My thoughts were with Joanne, David and the boys today on 13th March - what should have been Bobby's 16th birthday. It is a privilege to work with his family, who are making such a difference to families with Bobby's Base and the ongoing campaign to make our roads safer. **#WearBlueForBobby #SlowDownForBobby**

Exciting times ahead at Dovecot Mac: I attended a very positive meeting this month in the newly-refurbished Dovecot Mac with Barry Kushner, Nicky Allt and Alt Valley Community Trust. We discussed many issues, including the importance of improving working class access to, and harnessing talent in, music, theatre and the arts. There are exciting times ahead!

1981 March for Jobs exhibition: A huge thanks to Giz A Job grassroots community heritage scheme for the walk around the fantastic exhibition in Liverpool Central Library of the 1981 March for Jobs. This is a must-see for lovers of Liverpool's social history. I was extremely proud to see so many friends featured in the display.

LGBT Foundation meeting: Huge thanks to Paul and Gerry from the LGBT Foundation for a brilliant meeting at my constituency office earlier this month/ We discussed a huge range of social justice issues affecting our communities and I look forward to working closely with the foundation in the future.

Community MPs Surgery: Thanks to Sharon and Alt Valley Community Trust for providing a space at Dovecot Mac this month for me to hold a very busy community surgery. It was heartbreaking to hear from so many constituents who have been denied access to justice from Government depts. **#AccessToJustice**

Orchid Fever at the Liverpool Botanical Trust: A big thanks to Liverpool Botanical Trust for organising the superb 'Orchid Fever' event at Croxteth Hall. Celebrating our world-renowned botanical collection, the event was uplifting and testament to our collective efforts to safeguard a precious community resource.

Plans for new Zoe's Place: It was a privilege to see the plans for the new Zoe's Place recently. It will be an incredible asset for West Derby and the entire city. I am looking forward to working with all stakeholders of Zoe's Place to ensure that this wonderful organisation continues to prosper and serve our community so well.

A huge thanks to Huyton Asphalt: Local company Huyton Asphalt have very generously supplied Easter eggs to pantry members at the Fans Supporting Foodbanks and St Mary's Millennium Centre Easter celebration recently, complete with our resident Easter Bunny! Thanks to all at Huyton Asphalt. **#RightToFood**

Campaigns update

Taking our campaigns to Oxford University

A big thanks to West Derby constituent Joe - who I first met in 2022 at Cardinal Heenan in West Derby - for inviting me to Jesus College in Oxford University this month to address the College Law Society on the campaigns we are leading in Parliament. **#RightToFood**
#HillsboroughLawNow **#RealTruthLegacyProject**



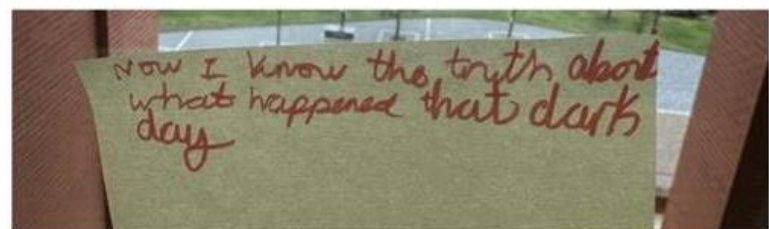
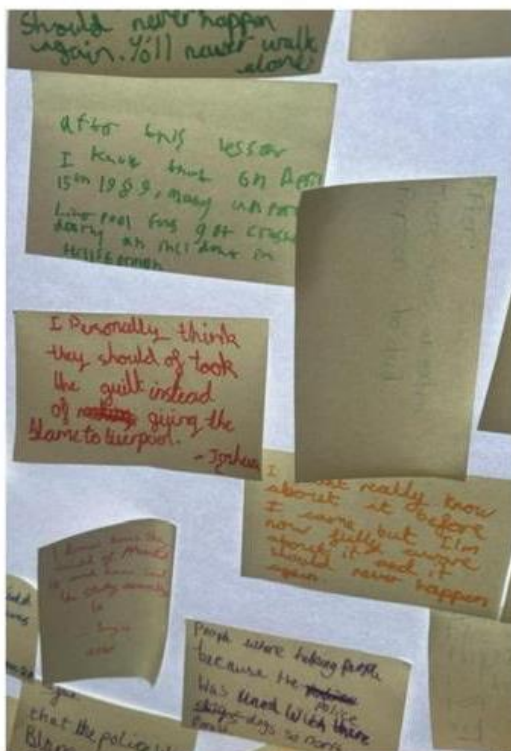
Hillsborough Law Now Campaign

It was a privilege to address LFC U18s players and staff this month on why we need a **#HillsboroughLawNow** as part of the legacy of Hillsborough in order to rebalance the scales of justice for all. Thank you to Caitlin and Ted plus all at the education team at LFC Academy for the opportunity.



The Real Truth Legacy Project

An extremely emotional, positive and humbling session of our Real Truth Legacy Project assembly was delivered by LFC Foundation at Anfield this month - an event which those present will not forget. The interactive element added by the team at the Foundation was tremendous and the messages from the children say it all. #JFT97



Tragedy Chanting

The recent tragedy chanting at football matches is just as hurtful as losing a loved one. Football brings so much joy to so many people all over the world and there's no place for it.

People may behave in this way to simply join in with the crowd and mimic others without knowing the hurt it causes.

If you hear any offensive comments at school, don't hold it in. Let the teacher or a trusted adult know.

The Real Truth Legacy Project
www.lanbyrne.org/the-real-truth

Support

Food Parcels

Any constituent struggling for food can email my office with full details, DOB and how many are in the household for a voucher code.

Food Pantry

The Fans Supporting Foodbanks mobile food pantry every Friday 10-12pm in the Millennium Centre St Mary's is £3.50 for a shop with fresh fruit and veg.

Free Food Fridays

Every Friday we collect and redistribute food that would go to waste for Free Food Fridays. Food is also shared throughout the week at Croxteth Community Garden as part of Grow West Derby. Please check the Facebook page for updates.

Access to Justice

All constituents have access to free advice and representation if needed via Vauxhall Law Centre. More information about our collaborative work can be found on the following link: <https://www.vauxhalllawcentre.org.uk/ian-byrne-m-p-advice-service>

Ask me anything

This is just some of what I have been up to locally and in Parliament. For ongoing updates, you can follow me on **Facebook** and on **Twitter** or to get involved in local projects visit my website and sign up at **www.ianbyrne.org** Email me on: ianbyrne@labour@gmail.com.

**In Solidarity,
Ian Byrne MP
West Derby, Liverpool**