



Thangam Debbonaire

Member of Parliament for Bristol West

August 2019

REPORT FOR BRISTOL WEST LABOUR MEMBERS—August 2019

I am writing this knowing that by tomorrow everything will have changed, so unprecedented are the times. Our politics, our way of life, our democracy, our economy, our environment, our social values, all of these are under sustained pressure already. If the Prime Minister has his way, we will face a crisis of increasing proportions.

This is a government that will make terrible mistakes, and will avoid scrutiny at any cost.



Last week the Prime Minister announced that he will suspend ('prorogue') Parliament for five weeks starting from some point during 10 – 14 September, and thus end this current sitting of Parliament, until 14 October. This is a shameless attempt to shut Parliament out of any possibility of passing laws to stop the government from taking us out of the EU without a deal.

The most immediate task of the official Opposition and all the other MPs from opposition parties, is to work together to try to stop him from doing this. We can then continue the work of trying to stop him from taking us out of the EU in the very worst circumstances of all — with no withdrawal agreement, a so-called 'No-Deal Brexit'. There may need to be a further public vote and, if we go back to the country with a referendum, I will be campaigning for us to remain in the EU as full members.

It's also looking very likely that we face an imminent general election, for all sorts of reasons. Obviously we all want to replace this shambolic, cruel and wasteful Tory government with a progressive Labour one. But, whether we are fighting a referendum or a general election, we will be fighting on the territory of our relationship with the EU and our actions as a party will be judged, as well as those of the Tory party. And in Bristol West, we will face strong opposition from the resurgent Greens and Lib Dems—who attracted many of our voters in the recent European Parliament elections.

As Labour members, then, I ask that everyone considers now what they can contribute to the forthcoming public vote, whatever it is and whenever it is. Join me now in the campaigning which will be vital if we are to retain Bristol West, as well as take other seats in the region such as Kingswood, Filton and Bradley Stoke, Plymouth Moorview and the two Swindon seats.

Can you join in with doorknocking and phonebanking sessions? We run these all year round, whether or not there is an election, so there is almost always at least one session each week for you to join. The discussions with voters have to be happening all year round for us to stand a chance of retaining this seat but they need to increase in number. We only ever do this in a group and we can train you up — the main attribute you need is willingness to listen to other people's views.

Could you help deliver leaflets? If you can deliver to just one street, that's a big help. We already have an excellent volunteers' network leafleting across the constituency but more people make this quicker and easier and is more fun. Let me know if you can help.

Can you make a financial donation? We cannot assume that we will be given national funding — the Labour party has to prioritise paying for leaflets in seats we need to regain or where we have very small majorities.

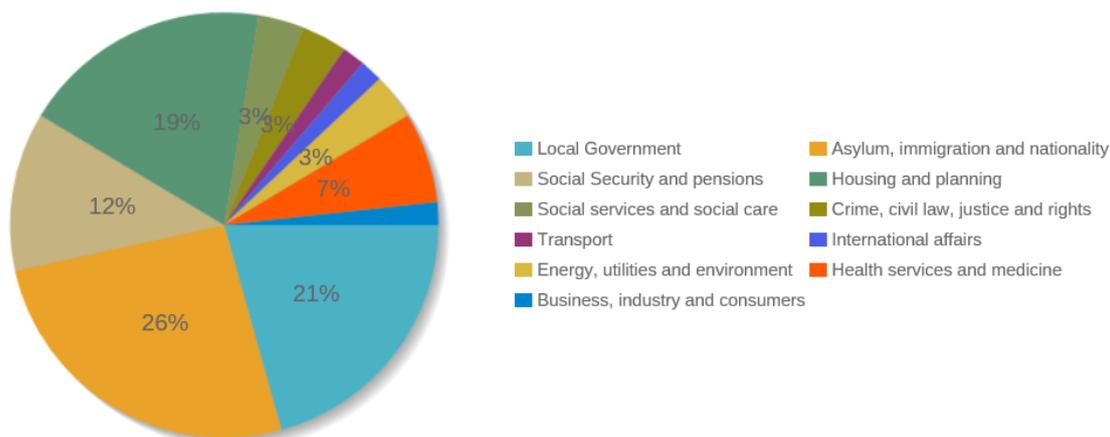
This awful Tory government has gone on too long and the prospect of us being dragged out of the EU with no deal, or a terrible deal, is awful. In my view, any Brexit at all is damaging for our country and our city. We have to work together to fight both Tories and Brexit. Thank you for your support.

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CASEWORK REVIEW AND SUMMER HIGHLIGHTS

AUGUST 2019

Breakdown of Cases by Type



CASEWORK REVIEW

My casework team opened 58 new cases in July. Local Government and Housing enquiries make up the bulk of new enquiries (40%) and immigration continues to form a significant proportion of my casework (26%).

SUCCESS! I am pleased that we have been able to help a number of people in Bristol West this month with a range of problems and concerns. These include:

- assisting constituents with the child maintenance service.
- persuading the Minister to intervene in an immigration case, resulting in a family being granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK.
- supporting a refugee who had lost her documents.
- liaising with the council with regard to refuse collection and housing applications.
- supporting EU Settlement Scheme applications, family reunion applications and implementation of immigration decisions that had been left outstanding by the Home Office.
- intervening on behalf of a constituent to ensure that they are registered with a GP following the closure of Bishopston Medical Practice.

SUPPORTING CARERS IN BRISTOL WEST

This summer, I held an MP's constituency surgery specifically for people with care-giving responsibilities. I met people who are passionate about providing the best possible life for their family. But in addition to providing care and support, they are having to navigate complex benefits systems, find secure housing, and — in some cases — experience frustrating delays with the Home Office to clarify their immigration status.

This is made all the more difficult by Tory austerity. Those who take on care responsibilities should expect support from their government, not frustration as they attempt to navigate fragmented and underfunded public services.



EVERY CHILD DESERVES THE RIGHT TO PLAY

This August, I visited two projects who are providing stimulating and fun activities for children in Bristol.



[Gympanzees](#) run drop-in play facilities in Bristol for children with disabilities. They provide exercise and play equipment so that all children — whatever their needs—can play and socialise. It was fantastic to see first-hand the work the team are doing and the equipment they have on hand for young people to enjoy.

I also visited St Paul's Adventure Playground, who all summer long have hosted children and families from across the city. Spaces and facilities like these are so important in our expanding city. I urge everyone to support their [crowdfunder and fundraiser on 14 September!](#)