

FAISAL RASHID MP

WARRINGTON SOUTH

Monthly Newsletter: April 2018



Working hard for all communities in Warrington South

Our community is our strength – Together we are stronger

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IN WESTMINSTER

Welcome to my May e-newsletter with news of some of my work in Westminster and in the Warrington South Constituency as your Labour MP.

For all the latest news on my work locally and in Parliament you can also visit my website, follow me on Twitter or add me on Facebook.

With very best wishes,

Faisal Rashid

Labour Member of Parliament for Warrington South

NHS PRIVATISATION

I recently took part in a debate in Westminster on NHS privatisation. The debate was called after 238,022 people signed a petition to stop the privatisation of NHS services, including 442 Warrington South constituents.

Back in February I joined NHS campaigners outside Warrington Hospital to speak out against NHS privatisation. Similar events took place across the country. The level of public concern about this issue shows just how important the NHS is to British people.

The NHS is our most sacred and treasured institution. Founded 70 years ago on the fundamental principle that everyone is entitled to free healthcare, it does not discriminate on the basis of wealth, gender or race. Every day, thousands of lives are saved by our fantastic NHS staff at NHS hospitals.

The Government has a duty to protect the NHS and its staff, and to ensure that they can continue to provide world-class healthcare to the British public, free at the point of use.

We all use the NHS, and we all have a vested interest in ensuring that it is run effectively and efficiently. But privatisation and outsourcing are not the answer.

Privatisation forces NHS hospitals to outsource vital services to private companies, which are often more interested in making a profit than helping sick people. That is a fundamental conflict of interest.

The NHS has a duty to its patients, whereas private companies have a duty to their shareholders, but shareholders care about profits, and often the only way to make a profit is by cutting corners. That inevitably compromises the quality of care.

The Government claims that private sector outsourcing is good for the NHS and that it allows patients access to treatments based on t

he best quality of care and value for money, but evidence suggests otherwise.

The process by which private companies bid for contracts allows them effectively to cherry-pick the most profitable forms of treatment—usually low-risk elective surgeries. That is far from providing the best quality of care for patients.

The NHS is in crisis. Chronic underfunding compounded by a growing and ageing population has put an unbearable strain on the NHS and resulted last year in yet another winter crisis.

Yet the Government's only answer to the crisis is more privatisation.

The reality is that privatisation is bad for quality, budgets and the NHS. More privatisation will not help the NHS.

The only way to help it is to give it the funding that it needs.

STREET HOMELESSNESS

I also raised the issue of street homelessness in Parliament. Between 2010 and 2015, funding to homeless services was cut by 45%. This may be perceived as a main reason for the rise in street homelessness. The figures show that almost 5,000 individuals are now sleeping rough on our streets. That is a 15% increase on 2017 and a massive 169% increase since 2010. I believe that we cannot help the homeless if we do not provide the homes that they require.

SOCIAL CARE

I also spoke of how Warrington Borough Council faces funding pressures of more than £3.3 million to meet its adult social care needs in 2018-19. I believe that it is up to the Government to support councils in their efforts to provide quality social care to their communities, not to pass the buck on to council payers in my constituency or any other.

SYRIA

Given the severity of this issue, I want to make clear my stance on the Prime Minister's, and her Conservative Government's, actions in Syria; and share my very deep concerns on the issue.

Firstly, I want to say that I fully and unequivocally support Jeremy Corbyn's stance on military action in Syria. Bombs will not save lives, or bring about peace. What is urgently needed is a coordinated international drive to achieve a ceasefire, de-escalation and a negotiated political settlement under UN auspices. Not military intervention.

Those responsible for war crimes in Syria must be held to account. From the indiscriminate bombing of civilian areas, the targeting of hospitals and medical centres, the use of starvation as a weapon of war, to the alleged use of chemical weapons.

These are heinous acts of war; and there can be no rest in efforts to find a long-term solution to the violence in Syria. Both the Assad regime and Isis have been held responsible for the use of chemical weapons in the past since the start of the Syrian conflict, a war crime which I utterly condemn.

Hundreds of thousands of Syrians have lost their lives in the conflict and over a million more have been injured. According to the UN, over 13 million Syrians

need humanitarian assistance. These are the issues that we must be focussing on.

The Prime Minister's decision to press ahead with military intervention without bringing the matter before MPs, and giving us an opportunity to hold her to account, was wrong. And it completely undermines the very principles on which our democratic system was built upon.

Parliament should have been recalled and given a vote on this issue. A statement after the event is not parliamentary scrutiny. In the most serious matters of peace and security, the Prime Minister should be accountable to Parliament and not to the US or any other international government.

If Jeremy Corbyn was our Prime Minister I am sure that he would have recalled parliament to discuss the issue before taking any action.

I very much hope that we will have a Labour Government soon and that Jeremy Corbyn our Prime Minister will then be able to resolve such issues in a more inclusive and appropriate way. As Jeremy has made clear, the Prime Minister's legally questionable action risks escalating further, an already devastating conflict and therefore makes real accountability for war crimes and use of chemical weapons less, not more likely. Instead of engaging in unaccountable military action; the Government should be doing whatever possible to push Russia and the United States towards an agreement to an independent UN-led investigation of the horrific chemical weapons attack, so that we can ensure that those responsible are held to account.

I believe, like Jeremy Corbyn, that the only way to end this conflict and the terrible suffering of the Syrian people, is through genuine peace talks leading to a permanent ceasefire and a comprehensive political settlement.

IMRAN KHAN

It was an honour to welcome the humanitarian politician Imran Khan to Parliament with other MPs. It was a great opportunity to discuss best practice on democracy and advance greater relations between the UK and Pakistan.

I also got the chance to dress up and attend a fundraising event in Manchester, in which Imran Khan raised just under £1m for his Namal University!



BOWEL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

I supported Bowel Cancer UK and Beating Bowel Cancer's campaign to help raise awareness of bowel cancer symptoms, as part of Bowel Cancer Awareness Month this April.

More than 44 people die from bowel cancer every day in the UK, it is the nation's second biggest cancer killer. However, it is treatable and curable, especially if diagnosed early. Nearly everyone diagnosed at the earliest stage will survive bowel cancer but this drops significantly as the disease develops. Early diagnosis really does save lives, but only around 15% of people are diagnosed at the earliest stage. I am committed to increasing awareness of bowel cancer symptoms, both locally and nationally.

GIRLS' FOOTBALL WEEK

I was pleased to support Girls' Football Week as opportunities to develop skills in sport should be equal for all, regardless of gender. It was great to hear that this campaign was aimed at getting as many girls as possible playing the game.



BACK THE BLUE BELT

I am supporting the Back The Blue Belt campaign, which calls on the Government to create more protected areas in a number of UK Overseas Territories. I have called on the UK government to become a world leader in protecting the oceans.

Through advancements in satellite technology and developments in international law, it is now possible to monitor and protect vast areas of ocean with ever greater effectiveness and lower cost.

The UK has already protected a massive 830,000 sq. km site in the Pacific, around the Pitcairn Islands. This is one of the largest marine reserves in the world, more than three times the size of the UK.

I am delighted to support this campaign to protect these special places, and call on the Government to designate the South Sandwich Islands as a marine reserve as soon as possible.

DYING TO WORK CHARTER

I have signed the TUC 'Dying to Work' Charter, to support and protect any of their employees who become terminally ill. Since its launch in April 2016, The TUCs 'Dying to Work' Voluntary Charter now protects over half a million employees with companies such as Legal and General, Santander, Co-Op, Rolls Royce, Weetabix and the Royal Mail joining E.On and signing up along with a number of public sector bodies including NHS trusts, police authorities and many local authorities.

It is deeply concerning to think that if people with terminal illnesses are dismissed or forced out of their jobs, their loved ones will lose the death in service payments that the employee has planned for and earned through a life-time of hard work.

I am proud to have signed the TUC 'Dying to Work' Charter to protect my employees and I will be encouraging businesses in my constituency to follow suit and sign up to the TUC's voluntary charter.



FOOD LABELLING

I am also supporting a Diabetes UK campaign for improved food labelling so that clear and consistent food labelling is compulsory on all packaged

foods and restaurants across the UK..

Diabetes UK's Food Upfront campaign calls on the Government to make clear and consistent food labelling compulsory on all packaged foods and restaurants across the UK, to tackle the obesity epidemic, help prevent Type 2 diabetes and make living with all types of diabetes easier.

Currently only three in ten people feel well informed about the nutritional information of the food they buy. This makes it hard for people to make healthy food choices and is contributing to the obesity epidemic.

Clear food labels help people to make better choices and give us more control over the food we buy. Despite this, food labelling is not compulsory, and one in three food products don't have front-of-pack labels at all.

I am backing Diabetes UK's calls on this issue. The Government must do more to ensure food labelling is clear and consistent so that consumers are better informed about their purchases.



DEFIBRILLATOR CHAMPION CAMPAIGN

I also attended an event in Parliament to hear more about how defibrillators can save lives.

The event was organised by the Oliver King Foundation, which is working to increase the provision of lifesaving defibrillators across the UK, campaigning for secure legislation that will ensure every school has access to a lifesaving defibrillator and is raising awareness of Sudden Cardiac Arrest.

During the event I pledged my support to the Oliver King Foundation's campaign.



MENCAP

I had the opportunity to listen to powerful and inspiring stories with Mencap. I will continue to support opportunities which celebrate such talented athletes.



FROZEN PENSIONS

It was great to hear an update on this campaign by The International Consortium of British Pensioners (ICBP), which I will continue to support in the fight against the injustice of frozen pensions.



SWAP FOR GOOD

Research from Keep Britain Tidy & BRITA United Kingdom shows that although awareness of the environmental impacts of plastic pollution has risen, this is not yet translating into behaviour change. I am supporting the exchanging of our single use plastic bottles for reusable bottles.



IN WARRINGTON SOUTH

MY ACTIVITIES INCLUDE...

A NEW 'FIT FOR PURPOSE' WARRINGTON HOSPITAL

I am backing calls for a new centrally located and state of the art hospital for Warrington, following a meeting with the Chair of Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Trust, Steve McGuirk, where we discussed the future of the hospital.

With parts of the current hospital facility more than 100 years old, and essential maintenance costing around £2 million a year, it is a huge challenge to run an efficient and effective hospital facility. The current hospital is outdated and cannot fully meet the needs of patients or staff. We need a facility fit for the 21st Century.

Warrington patients and our fantastic NHS staff deserve a centrally located, fit for purpose facility from which to work and receive treatment. A site accessible for all Warrington residents.

For a place as large as Warrington, and which is growing, we need that facility to cater for the full-service needs of patients – including comprehensive A&E services.

Whilst the way health services are being delivered is changing, it is crucial that the focal point for these is within an updated state of the art setting that is accessible for all residents.

There are Government funds for NHS infrastructure projects available. But, as we have seen with other avenues of government funding, they don't appear to be being spread evenly. Once again, Warrington and the North West are being overlooked, while the biggest slice of the funding is going to the South East. It is high time this unfairness was addressed. There is nothing more important than the health and wellbeing of the people in our town. We deserve the appropriate services to meet the needs of local people. We know that there are growing numbers of elderly residents and those with complex health issues. Our local health services must be capable of meeting these challenges. Ultimately, a fit for purpose hospital will attract high calibre staff and will fully meet the needs of patients. As the Warrington South MP, I will be doing whatever I can to keep up the pressure on this issue.

SANKEY LEISURE HUB



I visited Sankey Leisure Hub and I was impressed to see the much improved facilities. Despite the increase in cost faced due to issues regarding the conditions of the building, I believe that the leisure hub will be an asset to the local residents in Great Sankey.

ANZAC DAY 2018

It was with great pride that I attended the special service dedicated to Anzac Day 2018. I previously attended once as the Mayor of Warrington and it is an honour to continue to be a part of the service now as the Member of Parliament for Warrington South. The service commemorates the lives of the brave soldiers who sacrificed their lives in the World War I.



APPLETON COLLEGE VISIT

I had a pleasant morning meeting the students and staff of Appleton College as I continue my pledge to visit every school in Warrington South. We had an engaging discussion.





As your local MP, if there are ever any issues I can help you with, please do not hesitate to get in contact.

I hold surgeries at my constituency office at 1 Wilson Patten Street every Friday. From 9.30am-11.30am I hold an open surgery, no appointment necessary, and then from 11.30am I hold surgeries by appointment.

To book an appointment:
Email: faisal.rashid.mp@parliament.uk
Call: 01925 657 600

I also hold roving and street surgeries every Saturday.
For further information please call my office.

For up to date information about my work:
Visit my Facebook page at facebook.com/faisalrashidMP
Or my website at www.faisalrashid.com

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