

FAISAL RASHID MP

WARRINGTON SOUTH

Monthly Newsletter: October 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 October 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

UNFAIR LEASEHOLD PRACTICES

During Prime Minister's Questions, I was given the opportunity to speak and I confronted the Prime Minister about the Government's U-Turn on Ground Rents.

I spoke on behalf of the hundreds of constituents who have been trapped by spiralling ground rents and questioned the Prime Minister on the Government's commitment to crack down on unfair leasehold practices.



I am pleased I was given the opportunity to raise the issue of ground rents with the Prime Minister, but I am disappointed with her lacklustre response.

The Prime Minister refused to answer my question on the Government's recent U-Turn on Ground Rents and she did not offer any real commitment on the reform of leasehold practices.

This is an issue that affects many of my constituents and I will be keeping up the pressure on the Government to tackle unfair leasehold practices.

Within this, I will also continue to raise another issue affecting both new and existing new-build homeowners; who are being entered into property management agreements and are being tied into paying management fees, often without their knowledge until it is too late.

The Government has continually let individuals down who are affected by these issues, and it is high time that the action that has been promised is finally taken.

HOMES FIT FOR HUMAN HABITATION

This month in Westminster I also supported the Homes Fit for Human Habitation Bill, which will help to improve property conditions for renters in both social housing and the private rented sector.

The Bill is designed to empower tenants, in both private and social housing, by giving them a route to take their landlord to court where the property is not fit for habitation.

It also modernises habitation requirements to enforce better standards in renting. The updated 'fitness standard' includes issues not currently covered by a landlord's legal repair responsibilities, including some instances of damp and infestation of rodents, insects and bed bugs.

I am delighted that this Bill has now passed its third reading. It is a vitally important piece of legislation, especially as there are now more individuals and families in the U.K. renting than ever before.

Since becoming an MP, I have been dismayed by the number of constituents who have contacted me with housing issues. Some of my constituents have been left without central heating for up to 6 months, and others have faced serious fly and rat infestations. I am pleased that they will soon be empowered to hold rogue landlords to account.

It is utterly dreadful that it has taken a tragedy as serious as the Grenfell Tower Fire to throw into sharp focus the issue of unsafe rented accommodation in this country – but I am pleased these vital conversations are finally being had.

I hope the passage of this Bill will encourage the minority of landlords who will be affected to clean up their act and fulfil their duty to

provide habitable homes to their tenants.



CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SYSTEM MY LATEST WARRINGTON GUARDIAN COLUMN

Across the country, a range of difficulties have beset the Children's Social Care system. These difficulties have come together to create nothing short of a recipe for disaster for local councils trying to protect vulnerable children.

Locally, Warrington Borough Council is struggling in the face of rising demands on Children's Social Care, and 8 years of severe budget cuts.

Levels of child poverty and material deprivation are rising across the UK. Many working families are now unable to claim working tax credits, and others have been forced into debt as housing allowances no longer cover rent.

As a roll out area for Universal Credit, these issues are especially prominent in Warrington.

Across the town, the total number of children in need has risen by 17% from 2014/15 to 2017/18.

And more children in need means more pressure on the services designed to support them, all against a backdrop of huge

Government cuts to council budgets.

In the decade following 2010, Warrington Borough Council will have been forced to make over £160 million in savings.

In Children's Social Care, officers have little choice but to reduce spending on 'early intervention' services, in order to maintain spending on the statutory later intervention services that the council has a duty to provide.

However, as more early intervention services are lost, the needs of a growing number of young people and children remain unmet and become more complex and demanding. As a result of this the pressure on our already stretched statutory services has dramatically increased.

In Warrington, our officers are working tirelessly to make the best of an incredibly difficult situation.

They have turned around low levels of recruitment. And they have employed innovative regional solutions to go some way to meet the increased demand for foster carers.

But if we want to see real change, the main ingredient we need to tackle the issue is funding.

The Local Government Authority predicts a shortfall in Children's Social Care funding of £3 billion by 2025.

This gap in funding must be plugged now, and not by local councils, but by central Government.

We have a moral obligation to provide vulnerable children and young people with the support that they need. It is high time that Government ministers stopped burying their heads in the sand on this issue and took the urgent action that is needed.

I will be listening closely to the upcoming Autumn Budget and I hope to see the Gov-

ernment use this opportunity to stabilise the crisis in Children's Social Care in Warrington South, and across the UK.

BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT AUTUMN RECEPTION

I hosted the Autumn Reception of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Business Support and Engagement. I launched the APPG back in March with a two-fold objective; to use Parliament as a platform to both support and engage business.

The Autumn Reception formed part of the APPG's programme to 'engage' business, and the event focussed on the Government's recently launched Export Strategy.

Baroness Fairhead, Minister of State for Trade and Export Promotion, who was the key note speaker of the evening, was able to provide an overview of the strategy to representatives from a range of backgrounds, as well as answer their questions on a range of topics from Brexit to building the next generation of exporters.

Other speakers included Bill Esterson MP, Shadow Minister for International Trade – who spoke about the importance of environmental protections and employment rights – and Dave Maisey, whose business – ICC solutions – is based in Warrington South.

As well as, Russ Grazier, Head of Barclays Export Credit Agency business; Joe Denham, CEO of VegTrug Ltd; Paul Alger, International Business Director at UK Fashion & Textiles.

The event was kindly sponsored by Trade Fair Support, and CEO Jolyon Potter also contributed to the evening.

I am very pleased the APPG's Autumn Reception was a huge success. It was great to have such an assortment of businesses attending the event, representing a mix of companies,

small, medium and large – alongside associations and parliamentarians.

And it was fantastic to have so many business representatives from Warrington attending the event. and I will do my best to help and support businesses in Warrington South to explore further opportunities.

As a member of the International Trade Committee, as well as chair of this APPG, I am committed working hard to support British Businesses in exploring new markets. Especially as the UK prepares to leave the European Union and British Businesses look to redefine their position on the global economic stage.

I hope the event sent a clear message that we as Parliamentarians want to do all we can to support businesses and promote ethical business practices and corporate responsibility when engaging in business activities.



IN WARRINGTON SOUTH

1950S WOMEN'S STATE PENSION COFFEE MORNING

I hosted the first of several coffee mornings due to be held for local 1950s-born women who have been hit hard by Government changes to the state pension age. Over 100 women attended the event, which took place on Friday 12th October at Bold Street Methodist Church.

The Conservative-led Government brought in changes in 2011 which speeded up the increase in the State Pension Age for women born in the 1950s. Many of the women who are affected received limited notification of the increase and some women received no notification at all. The decision to accelerate the rise in the women's state pension age has had a devastating impact on many women who were born in the 1950s, some of whom are now facing financial hardship as a result.

I have pledged to work alongside his colleagues in Westminster to keep up the pressure on the Government on this issue.

Further coffee meetings are due to be arranged in the coming months and information about the events will be sent out nearer

the time.

It is deeply unfair that 1950s-born women have been forced to bear the burden of the increase to the state pension age without any help or support from the Government.

In Warrington South over 6,000 women have been adversely affected by changes to the state pension age. Many have found themselves without a job, without a pension or pensioner benefits, and without money to live on. The women affected by this issue have been let down very badly and it is right that they receive recognition for this injustice and transitional support.

Such a large number of women joined me for the first coffee morning on this issue and that sends a very powerful message to the Government. This is not an issue that can be ignored or brushed under the carpet. This fight for justice will continue.

I will keep up the pressure on Government Ministers to bring in the transitional protection that the 1950s-born women affected rightly deserve.



WARRINGTON SOUTH SCHOOLS SURVEY 2018

I invited schools from across the constituency to take part in the survey. I received a 71% response rate with over 30 schools choosing to take part.

Headline figures from the survey include:

On staffing levels, Warrington South schools said that since 2015:

- 81.25% have had to make staffing cuts due to funding pressures.
- 87.5% said teacher numbers had either stayed the same or fallen.
- 84.38% said that teaching assistant numbers had stayed the same or fallen.
- 84.38% said the number of administrative support staff numbers had stayed the same or fallen.

On cuts to spending on other school resources since 2015, Warrington South schools said that:

- 80.65% have cut spending on books and equipment.
- 80.65% have cut spending on teacher training and support.
- 51.61% have cut spending on external student support.
- 67.74% have cut spending on extra-curricular activities.

Concerningly, schools reported plans to make further cuts in the next two years to cope with forthcoming budget pressures, including a staggering 90.63% who said they would need to cut spending on books and equipment.

Overall, 100% of the Warrington South schools that responded to the survey were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their school's current funding situation.

Every child should have access to world-class education and our hardworking teaching staff must have the resources they need to carry out their job. I believe that in life, we 'get what we pay for', and without adequate investment, we cannot have a fit for purpose education system that does our young people proud.

Children and young people in Warrington South have suffered for many years from attending some of the worst funded schools in the country. Despite government promises to reform the funding system, sadly our children are not receiving the investment in their future that each and every one of them deserves. Our school leaders are doing an excellent job in the most difficult of circumstances.

According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, the amount of per pupil spending in England's schools has fallen by 8% since 2010. And it is clear that these funding pressures are having a real impact on our schools.

Our schools are doing all they possibly can to protect pupils from the cuts, but this is getting harder and harder. In Warrington South, and across the country, underfunding means that our schools are under unprecedented pressure, which is resulting in the loss of school staff and leading to cuts to vital classroom resources and support.

Alongside my Labour colleagues I am calling on the Government to stop starving our schools of the funding they desperately need to deliver a first class education. Our schools must be provided with the resources they need, the funding cuts must be reversed and per pupil funding must be increased in real terms.

LAUNCHING COMMUNITY ACTION MONTH

This October Warrington South CLP launched our new Community Action Months in Latchford West. It was great to be joined by many Labour members and ward Councillors Maureen and Les. Out on the doorstep we spoke to a large number of local residents and discussed the ideas they have for their local area. During these monthly sessions myself, local councillors and Labour Party members will be focusing our campaigning efforts on a single ward. Each weekend we will be hosting street stalls, speaking to residents on the doorstep and carrying out local community projects. This is a good opportunity to get to grips with the issues that really matter to residents and take an active role in helping out in local communities.



A MEETING WITH CARE UK CHARITY

I visited CARE UK Charity to help with loading their 42nd container of aid which has been wholly funded by my 10k run in the English Half Marathon in September. The funds raised helped the charity buy substantial food and hygiene supplies which are being sent to the Greek Island of Lesbos where over 10,000 refugees are living in camps. Thank you once again to each and everyone who supported me in my run.



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. Please contact my Constituency Office to arrange an appointment.

To book an appointment:
Email: faisal.rashid.mp@parliament.uk
Call: 01925 351 010

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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