



COVID challenges ahead

Despite the vaccine roll-out, the rising rates of COVID infections and the Delta variant delayed the lifting of lockdown until 19 July. The Government's 'Freedom Day' then happened with the Prime Minister self-isolating and amid confused messages on issues such as face coverings, an issue I raised in the [Commons](#). There are also concerns about the economic after-effects of COVID in Hull, with reports about levels of personal debt growing, furlough ending, and business support being phased out before the pandemic is over. The stopping of the £20 Universal Credit uplift will also hit many local families very hard. In the Commons, I raised the plight of the important arts and cultural events sector in Hull and the lack of a coherent plan to reopen the travel sector - see [here](#) and <https://parliamentlive.tv/event/index/bbac374c-b46f-477f-bac9-e0fdbbf9f949?in=13:51:14&out=13:52:50>. The NHS faces a huge treatment backlog and I also highlighted the Government's ongoing [lack of progress on social care reform](#).



Funding for Left Behind neighbourhoods

Hull City Council has joined 423 public, private and voluntary sector organisations in the Community Wealth Alliance, pushing for long-term community-led investment for 'left behind' neighbourhoods across the country. This would include Hull North's Orchard Park and Bransholme. As Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Left Behind Neighbourhoods, I have been arguing for the use of £880m in dormant assets to finance the Community Wealth Fund. I recently secured a meeting with the Communities Secretary to promote the campaign - see [here](#).

Supporting our life savers

My campaign for an NHS and Social Care workers' Covenant has continued, with an article published in the *Yorkshire Post* - see [here](#). More recently, I received an answer from a Health Minister that confirmed that between March 2020 and May 2021 over 1,500 NHS and social care workers had died from COVID in the line of duty. Given that the Government is legislating to strengthen the current Armed Forces Covenant, and introducing a new Police Covenant, I do not understand why Ministers have so far refused to do the same for our NHS and social care staff - alongside a proper pay rise.



Violence against women

I sought to strengthen the Policing, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill on the issue of 'low level' or 'non-contact' sexual offending, such as indecent exposure, which often escalates into more serious violent offences. This is what happened in the Libby Squire case in Hull in 2019 and, more recently, in the Sarah Everard case. Following discussions with Humberside Police, I wrote with Libby's mother Lisa Squire to the Home Secretary asking for action. The changes to the Bill that I asked for would require low level sexual offenders to be automatically referred for assessment before their behaviour escalates - see [here](#). Along with Lisa Squire and her local MP in Wycombe, I attended a meeting with a Minister at the Home Office to press the case for change. I also recently raised the issue of gangs sexually grooming girls and young women, in particular those in local authority care - see [here](#).



Simon Jenkins is wrong about the NHS infected blood inquiry

Letters

A scandal within a scandal

The NHS Infected Blood Inquiry that I helped to secure in 2017 has been hearing further harrowing evidence in recent weeks, including the tragic case of *Treloar College*, where 72 pupils died after receiving contaminated blood products. This was truly a scandal within a scandal. I was disappointed to have to respond to *Guardian* columnist Simon Jenkins who questioned the need for Public Inquiries - see my letter at <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jun/21/simon-jenkins-is-wrong-about-the-nhs-infected-blood-inquiry>.



Avenue Centre Saved!

For several months, there has been uncertainty about the future of the Avenue Centre in Park Avenue after Goodwin sadly decided to return the building to Hull City Council over the Summer. I have always supported keeping the Centre as a creative sector and community hub - especially as it is outside the city centre. I am delighted that after rigorous lobbying by local residents, Avenue Ward Councillors Marjorie Brabazon and Abhi Singh, with my support, we have now been informed by the Leader of the Labour Council that after much needed upgrades and renovation work the centre will remain as a local community facility.



Backing disadvantaged pupils

After recent media coverage about 'white privilege', inspired by a report from the Commons Education Select Committee, I used a Parliamentary debate to promote the success of the "London Challenge" under the last Labour Government - see [here](#). This policy raised school attainment of children from disadvantaged households and was axed under the Coalition Government in 2011. Its success should be compared with the pathetic scale of Government support for post-COVID learning recovery for children in the most deprived areas. I raised my concerns about this with the Education Secretary recently - see [here](#). The photo above was taken prior to the COVID restrictions.



Parliament after the pandemic

After 18 months of the 'hybrid' and 'virtual' Parliament, the House of Commons will return to normal during the Autumn - subject to progress on COVID. As an active MP in the Commons this is mostly welcome, as opportunities to contribute and scrutinise the Government have been reduced since Spring 2020. However, I also believe that electronic or proxy voting, and allowing MPs shielding or with caring responsibilities to take part remotely, should not be abandoned. This report only contains a small selection of my contributions in the House of Commons, but a full record can be found at <https://hansard.parliament.uk/search/MemberContributions?memberId=1533&type=Spoken>.

Here to Help

Although I am unable to hold face-to-face advice surgeries at the moment during the COVID-19 pandemic, I can still take up issues for Hull North constituents.

You can contact me by either emailing johnsond@parliament.uk or calling 01482 319135.

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