

# Catherine West MP



WINTER 2015

Labour Member of Parliament for Hornsey & Wood Green

## STANDING UP FOR OUR JUNIOR DOCTORS



I spoke out in Parliament on the Government's shambolic handling of the junior doctors contract negotiations and wrote to Jeremy Hunt urging him to re-engage in a meaningful dialogue with the British Medical Association and NHS staff. Lots of local doctors have told me what these changes would mean for them. One said they'd lose around 30% of their salary and struggle to keep paying their rent and bills. Another couple, both doctors, said one of them would have to leave their job because their income would fall so much they couldn't afford childcare. I'll continue holding the Government to account and am urging everyone to support the petition at <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/108782>

## WE MUST DO MORE TO HELP REFUGEES

Since the tragic death of little Aylan Kurdi made front page headlines and shone a light on the desperate measures families are taking to escape war torn Syria, I've been contacted by well over a thousand local people appalled by this Government's inadequate response to the deepening humanitarian crisis. Britain has a proud history of helping people in need, yet as families and children lose their lives fleeing the war in Syria or spend another freezing winter in camps it is clear that we must do much more. I attended the urgent debate in Parliament and have written to urge the Prime Minister to take a leading role. Our current response is feeble and falls far short of what is required. I was delighted to join Labour's Leader Jeremy Corbyn MP and speak at the Refugee March & Rally in Parliament Square, organised by a local resident, and I fully support the Refugees Welcome in Haringey campaign.



## Standing up for the things that matter

As 2015 draws to a close, here's an update on some of the things I've been doing in my first six months as your Member of Parliament. Every week I hear from local people who are angry and frustrated at the actions of this Tory Government. Whether it's their disregard for environmental issues, feeble response to the deepening refugee crisis or attempts to slash tax credits for millions of working families. Despite Labour being in opposition nationally, I've been working hard to fight for the things that matter to my constituents and a fairer future for all.

With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year

Catherine West

PS: want to know more about what I'm doing in Parliament? Visit my website at [www.catherinewest.org.uk](http://www.catherinewest.org.uk) to read my weekly updates.

# WHY I VOTED AGAINST TORY CUTS TO TAX CREDITS

11,200 children in Hornsey & Wood Green are growing up in families who receive tax credits. Pay rates have simply failed to keep up with the cost of living. The Tory Government's decision to break their promise and cut this vital lifeline will push yet more children into poverty and hurt many working families. Across the country, over three

million families stand to lose around £1,300 a year and 500,000 families stand to lose their tax credits entirely. I voted against these cuts to tax credits because I don't believe people should be penalised for working. Join me and support the campaign at [www.labour.org.uk/page/s/tory-tax-credit-cut](http://www.labour.org.uk/page/s/tory-tax-credit-cut)

## DEFENDING OUR HUMAN RIGHTS

As your MP, I will oppose any attempts by this government to scrap our Human Rights Act. These basic human rights to life, liberty, a fair trial and protection from torture are the mark of a civilised democracy. Tory threats to scrap the act and potentially pull out of the European Convention of Human Rights are damaging both for our country and for our international reputation.

In my new role as Shadow Foreign Office Minister, I have been working hard with Labour's Shadow Foreign Secretary Hilary Benn to urge the Government to take robust action on human rights abuses across the globe. The freedom to practice our religion is one of the most fundamental of human rights. For many people around the world religious belief defines who they are. I dedicated my first question at the despatch box to this very issue, during the state visit of President Xi of China, and specifically called on the Foreign Minister to raise the case of Zhang Kai and other persecuted groups with his counterparts in Beijing.

*Raising questions on human rights in China at the despatch box.*

I joined my colleague Valerie Vaz, MP for Walsall South in the chamber to raise an urgent question with the Foreign Secretary on Burma and their recent elections. The people of Burma have faced decades of brutal oppression under military rule. Recently they held their first openly contested election in 50 years, in which Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi's NLD party secured 90% of the vote securing a majority for the first time. You can read my speech at 'In Parliament' on my website.



### KILL THE BILL

I was in Parliament to meet local residents on the TUC rally against the Trade Union Bill. This shabby bill is yet another attempt to roll back our rights at work. Workers in the UK are already some of the least protected in Europe and there are serious problems in our workplaces of low pay, discrimination and unfair dismissal. These are the things I want to see this Government addressing - not making it even harder for workers to protest about injustice.

## Hornsey Town Hall

It's fantastic to see the vibrant arts scene that has developed out of Hornsey Town Hall and I want a long-term future for this unique site that safeguards it. I supported the successful campaign to have Hornsey Town Hall listed as an asset of community value and have been working with campaigners who want to see the local community at the heart of any restoration. I would love to see a not-for-profit organisation, such as a housing association step forward to take on this much-loved site. You can support the Hornsey Town Hall Appreciation Society campaign at <https://hthas.wordpress.com>





## Don't lose your right to vote

The Tories are rushing through changes which mean one million people could lose their chance to vote. It's a particular concern in areas like ours where lots of people live in the private rented sector and move around frequently. With Sadiq Khan standing to be London's Mayor in next year's important election, make sure you don't lose your chance to have a say by registering to vote now at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)

## KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY SAFE

Across Haringey, we've lost 132 police officers and 60 community support officers since 2010. The last thing we need is further cuts to our Safer Neighbourhood Teams yet once again local policing is at risk. Metropolitan Police cuts propose scrapping our dedicated Police Community Support Officers. The success story of London's policing over recent years has been its community safety presence, with an emphasis on prevention and 'bobbies on the beat'. I spoke out against these cuts in Parliament and oppose any attempts to take police off our streets.

I meet regularly with Joanne McCartney, Assembly Member for Enfield & Haringey and Labour's Lead on Policing & Crime at the GLA, who is working to hold the Tory Mayor to account. I also meet regularly with Haringey's Borough Commander and have raised issues recently including gangs, anti-social behaviour and safety in Finsbury Park. I held a special advice surgery following the tragic shooting in Wood Green. If you have any concerns about safety in our area that you'd like me to raise with the police, please do get in touch.



## TACKLING THE HOUSING CRISIS

The housing crisis is the biggest challenge facing London yet under this Tory Government we're seeing fewer affordable homes built and private rents soar. I voted against the Housing Bill, which will only make the problem worse by forcing councils to sell off high-value homes and preventing them insisting on affordable housing for rent in new developments. I want to see a big increase in housing supply through building genuinely affordable homes and bringing empty homes back into use. Private renters need the option of longer tenancies with

controlled rent rises so they can feel secure in their homes and put down roots in the community. Support the campaign at [www.labour.org.uk/w/tory-housing-bill](http://www.labour.org.uk/w/tory-housing-bill).

I spoke about the Noel Park estate in my maiden speech and welcome the £6 million GLA funded programme to deliver much-needed improvements - although it falls a long way short of what's required. I'll continue to push for Government funding to bring all homes on the estate up to decent homes standard.

## DEFENDING OUR PLANET



MEETING LOCAL STUDENTS ON THE CLIMATE CHANGE LOBBY

I was proud but not surprised that so many people from Hornsey & Wood Green, including students from Woodside School, joined the biggest climate change lobby of Parliament in June. Since my election, it's the issue I've been contacted on more than

any other. By making it more difficult for onshore wind farms to get planning permission and pushing forward with huge cuts to the 'feed-in-tariff' that risk decimating the solar industry, this Tory Government is making bad decisions for our planet, for our economy and for our hope of hitting 2020 renewables targets. I'm excited that my new Shadow Foreign Office brief includes climate change and

have been making the case for an ambitious Paris deal with tough emissions targets for all countries and greater support for developing countries.

**"This Tory Government is making bad decisions for our planet, for our economy and for our hope of hitting 2020 renewables targets."**



*I'm proud to be a Breast Cancer Care Ambassador and fully support the call for data collection to help improve the care available for people living with incurable secondary breast cancer.*



*The Holocaust Educational Trust invited me and other community leaders to join hundreds of London's sixth formers and teachers on a journey to Auschwitz Birkenau, a harrowing experience where man's inhumanity to man is laid bare.*

*We've got so many fantastic local businesses across Homsey & Wood Green. I celebrated 'Independents' Day' by visiting Nail Spa Cha Rene.*



*Of the eight cyclists killed in London in the first half of this year, seven had been hit by a lorry. I'm a cyclist myself and welcomed the chance to spend a morning at Homsey Water Treatment Works finding out how Thames Water have modified their vehicles to make them safer. I've also joined the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Cycling.*



*I joined CND on the 70th anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing to support the call for these horrors never to be repeated. I believe we need a global ban on such weapons as part of a commitment to nuclear disarmament. I look forward to the review of Labour's policy on Trident renewal which will begin next spring.*

*I was pleased to welcome local members of the Homsey Pensioners Action Group to Parliament in support of the National Pensioners Convention 'Fair Care' campaign.*



# Contact and surgery details

Since my election I've heard from thousands of people on policy issues and intervened to help over 800 local residents with their problems. If you'd like to contact me about any of the issues in this newsletter, or if you've got a problem I can help with please do get in touch.

- **GET IN TOUCH**
-  Catherine.west.mp@parliament.uk
-  020 7219 6141
-  @CatherineWest1
-  Catherine West MP  
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- **SURGERIES**
- Visit one of my regular advice surgeries on the second and fourth Friday of the month from 10am-11.30am at Wood Green Library. I also hold pop-up surgeries in different locations across the borough, details are on my website at [www.catherinewest.org.uk](http://www.catherinewest.org.uk)

