



David Baines MP

Member of Parliament for
St Helens North

Newsletter Summer 2025

Representing Billinge and Seneley Green, Blackbrook, Haydock, Moss Bank,
Newton-le-Willows, Parr, Rainford and Windle



INSIDE THIS EDITION:

AIM HIGH! Aspiration Week at Lyme Primary School



**Minister welcomed
to Glass Futures**



**Campaigning for
victims in Parliament**

And more...

Online: davidbaines.co.uk | On social media: @DavidBainesMP



Dear Residents,

Welcome to my Summer newsletter which you can now encourage your friends and family to subscribe to [via this sign-up form on my website](#).

I hope you find it interesting and please do feel free to contact me anytime using the details on the back page if you need my support.

Backing local industry

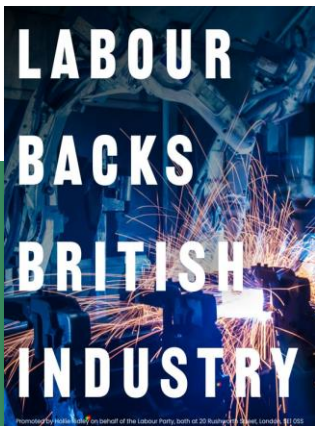
Alongside Deputy Leader of the Council Kate Groucutt it was a pleasure to welcome Minister for Industry Sarah Jones to St Helens. We met with representatives from local companies in a range of sectors including defence, research and development, energy, skills, advanced manufacturing, and more. Thank you to Glass Futures for hosting

[The discussion was really valuable and all those present got a chance to raise their priorities directly with the Minister.](#) A common theme was the need for confidence and certainty to encourage investment. Labour's new Industrial Strategy was welcomed, and there was a good discussion about the need for investment in power infrastructure and planning reform.

One thing that should concern us all and which was raised yesterday is Reform's opposition to net zero, renewable energy and infrastructure. Last week their Deputy Leader Richard Tice wrote to energy companies threatening them that a future Reform government would rip up any guarantees about investment in clean energy projects.

Glass Futures is a world-leading research and innovation project aiming to decarbonise the global glass industry. It is the biggest and most exciting industrial development in St Helens for decades.

It's one thing to be willfully ignorant about climate change, which is bad enough, but it's a different level of stupidity to be dismissive of the economic opportunity the green revolution is already bringing.



Recognising the State of Palestine and seeking peace

Hundreds of people in St Helens North have contacted me appalled and sickened by the catastrophic situation in Gaza. I share their horror, their anger, and their heartbreak at the scenes we are seeing on a daily basis.

I have previously called for [the UK to recognise the State of Palestine as part of efforts to secure a two state solution](#). It was in the Labour manifesto, and so I am pleased that today the Prime Minister has confirmed we will do exactly that in September at the UN General Assembly unless Israel meets our conditions: end the appalling situation in Gaza; reach a ceasefire; make clear there will be no annexation of the West Bank; and commit to a peace process to deliver a two state solution.

The UK government will make an assessment of progress in meeting these conditions before the General Assembly meeting. It is right that we use whatever leverage we might have to try to influence an end to the man-made catastrophe taking place. No one side will have a veto over our recognition of Palestinian statehood.

Hamas terrorists must also act: agree to a ceasefire and disarmament; release the remaining hostages; and accept they can never have a role in governing a Palestinian state.

The Palestinian people deserve to live free from the grip of Hamas and free from the violence and devastation which has plagued their homeland. The Israeli people too deserve peace and security. I will continue to urge the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary to ensure that the UK does all it can to achieve that.

You can read the government's statement regarding Palestinian statehood and the humanitarian crisis here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/statement-on-the-humanitarian-crisis-in-gaza-and-the-recognition-of-a-palestinian-state-29-july-2025>.

Please do get in touch if you would like more information about this important issue or to share your views.

Welfare reform

In July the Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment Bill [passed its second reading in Parliament](#). Readers will recall from previous newsletters that I have been holding meetings with relevant local organisations and heard from hundreds of residents who would be affected by the changes. Almost everyone I've heard from agrees the system needs reform, but the Bill tabled just wasn't the right balance. The Bill eventually passed following significant government changes made in response to widespread concerns raised by disabled people, charities, and many MPs including myself.

KEY PROTECTIONS SECURED

- Current PIP recipients are safe – everyone already receiving PIP will remain on the existing system with no changes
- Universal Credit health element protected – existing recipients AND new customers with 12 months or less to live or meeting Severe Conditions Criteria will see benefits rise at least in line with inflation from 2026/27 to 2029/30
- Four-point PIP rule removed from the Bill – this proposal has been taken out and no changes to PIP will be made until the completion of the review

The Bill as voted on will deliver an end to unnecessary reassessments for all those with the most severe, lifelong conditions who are unlikely to recover won't be forced through Universal Credit reassessments, and it will deliver the biggest ever update to the base rate of UC too.

Minister Sir Stephen Timms is [leading the first comprehensive review of PIP assessments](#) in a decade. This will be co-produced with disabled people and their representative organisations, ensuring their voices are heard at every stage.

The review will examine:

- Whether current assessment criteria properly reflect the reality of living with disability
- How PIP can better support independence and full participation in society
- What additional evidence should be considered beyond functional assessment
- How to ensure fair access to the right support at the right level

YOUR VOICE MATTERS – HERE'S HOW TO BE HEARD:

- Contact my office directly – if these changes affect you or your family, get in touch. I'm here to help navigate any concerns via david.baines.mp@parliament.uk
- Connect with local disability organisations – groups will be gathering vital evidence and will be part of consultations.
- Participate in the review process – extensive consultation with disabled people is planned. I'll keep you updated on how and when you can contribute.

I know this whole process has been extremely worrying for disabled people and their loved ones and among the things I hope is learnt from this is the importance of clear, consistent and caring language and information.

I will be doing all I can to encourage that from all involved. We need a social security system that gives the best possible support to those who need it, and treats everyone with dignity.

It's time to fix our broken paternity leave system

Two weeks. That's all the time our system gives new fathers to bond with their children and support their partners through one of life's most transformative moments. Two weeks to adjust to sleepless nights, learn to change nappies, and begin building the foundation of a lifelong relationship with their child. Two weeks before they're expected to return to work, leaving their partners to navigate the challenges of early parenthood largely alone.

As your MP, I've heard too many stories from fathers who felt forced to choose between being present for their families and maintaining financial stability. I've spoken with partners who felt overwhelmed and isolated after their loved ones returned to work far too soon. These aren't isolated cases – they're symptoms of a system that fails to recognise the fundamental importance of those crucial early weeks in a child's life.

That's why I'm hosting a roundtable on August 11th at 6pm to hear directly from dads and carers about their experiences with paternity leave. The Labour government has launched a review of parental leave, and we have until August 25th to make our voices heard. This is our chance to push for real change, something I have already done in meetings with the Education Minister.

I've been a long-time advocate for improvements in paternity leave and men's mental health more broadly. Through my work with organisations like the Dad Shift Campaign, Movember, and Dad Matters St Helens – whose incredible work I recently praised in the House of Commons – I've seen firsthand how our current system falls short.

If you're a parent in St Helens North, I want to hear from you. Whether you can join us at the roundtable on August 11th or simply want to share your experiences, please get in touch at david.baines.mp@parliament.uk.

If you can't attend the event, you can still contribute to the [government review](#) by filling out their survey before August 25th.

This is about more than policy – it's about the kind of society we want to build for our children. One where fathers are valued as equal partners in parenting from day one, where mothers don't have to shoulder the burden alone.

The time for change is now. Let's make sure our voices are heard.



Parliamentary Update

In Parliament I have asked questions about [support for our Armed Forces](#), funding for the [council and local services](#), and [parental leave](#).

July also marked Rugby League Shirt Day. I was proud to be wearing a special Blackbrook Royals JRFLC 50th Anniversary shirt. I played for them when I was a kid and they're a great club doing great things on and off the pitch. The event is ran in conjunction with RL Cares. [Find out more here](#).

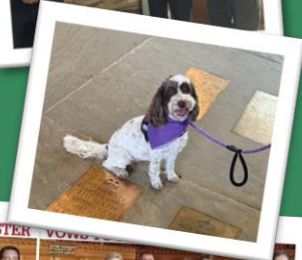
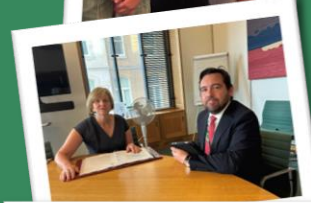
I was proud to open the Lessons4Life event where they launched a report about education and what needs to be done to help all our young people become happy and healthy with proper time and investment given to their personal development. Children are more than statistics and we need to prepare them for life, not just exams. [You can read the report here](#).

I [met the Education Secretary](#) with colleagues from parliament and the Dad Shift to discuss getting more men working in Early Years education, and I met with Transport Minister to discuss our ongoing campaign for [changes in the law regarding eye tests and the impact on driving](#).

I also met with trustees from the [British Coal Staff Superannuation Scheme \(BCSSS\) in Parliament](#) to discuss the ongoing issues that continue to affect its members. I know this is of great importance to many people across St Helens North. I will continue to raise this issue with Ministers.

I met with families and campaigners including those representing my [constituent Marie McCourt whose daughter Helen was murdered in 1988](#) to fight for further changes in the law to respect victims and their families and ensure vile killers get the punishment they deserve. Thanks to the Mirror for covering our campaign.

Finally, congratulations to Pippa, the brilliant therapy dog at St Aidan's Primary who was nominated for the national School Dog of the Year. St Aidans pupil Hope Colley loved her cockerpoo Pippa and received great comfort from her while being treated for a brain tumour. Before she died, Hope revealed that she wanted Pippa to become a therapy dog to help other children – and it is brilliant to see how much joy Pippa brings them each day. [I am so pleased that Pippa had the recognition the school deserves](#).



SEND Review and roundtable

There's a lot of talk in the media about rumoured changes to SEND and EHCPs in particular. [Please listen to my update](#) which I hope will give some clarity and reassurance.

My very first question in Parliament just after being elected last July was on support for children with SEND and the importance of making sure no child is left behind. As a former teacher but more importantly as a dad, this is personal for me. I know how important it is to hundreds of families in St Helens North and millions across the country too.

While we wait for the White Paper later this year the Labour government has already been working to improve things, putting over £1bn into high needs SEND support and giving £740m to support councils to create more specialist places in mainstream schools. There is a lot more to do and I want to make sure we get it right for SEND children and their families.

If you're interested in finding out more about the roundtable I'll be organising please email me at david.baines.mp@parliament.uk

Getting answers from Ministers

If there is an issue you'd like me to raise with Ministers on your behalf, please do get in touch and let me know – see my contact details on the back page. In July I've raised child poverty, Palestine, and concerns about the number of police officers on our streets:

Question

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to help ensure the adequacy of the number of police officers in Merseyside police.

Answer

The Government is committed to ensuring police forces are supported to effectively tackle crime. We are clear that visible policing is essential to restoring public confidence in the police.

As was set out in the Police Funding Settlement for 2025/26 Merseyside Police will be provided with a total of £14.8m to support maintenance of a total of 4,172 officers (headcount).

In addition, Merseyside Police has been allocated £6.67 million from the £200 million provided for 2025-26 to support the start of Neighbourhood Policing growth. Based on its funding allocation, Merseyside Police's projected growth in neighbourhood policing during 2025-26 will be 97 police officers (full time equivalents).

In St Helens North

At the start of the month I held my latest advice surgery in Garswood, and on the first anniversary of my election as our MP I also [had the pleasure of visiting Garswood Primary School to see their free breakfast club](#). They're one of the first 750 in the country to be trialling this which is being delivered by the Labour government. Thank you to Mrs Potter, all the staff and especially all the fantastic pupils for a lovely welcome to your wonderful school. It was the perfect way to celebrate the one year anniversary of the Labour government and a clear indicator that things are changing for the better.

[The next round of funding for Newton-le-Willows has been approved](#) as £20million will be invested in the town over the next decade, making an already fantastic place to live and work even better!

This is all part of the [Plan for Neighbourhoods programme](#) set out by the Labour government, which will see £1.6billion invested nationally to help revitalise local areas and fight deprivation. I'd like to thank the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board and the hundreds of local residents who have taken part in engagement events so far for developing and making this 10-Year Regeneration Plan possible.

One of the best parts of this job is visiting our amazing schools and meeting so many fantastic pupils and school staff. I had the privilege of speaking to children at Lyme Community Primary in Newton-le-Willows as part of their 'Aspiration Week'. I spoke about my background, how I became an MP, and what the job involves. The children from Year One all the way through to Year Six had lots of great questions!

Finally, in July government announced a full public [inquiry into Orgreave](#). This is long overdue — and deeply welcome.

As someone who grew up in Haydock during the 80s, in what was and remains a proud working-class community shaped by mining, I remember how the events of that time were felt not just in South Yorkshire, but in places like St Helens too.

Justice delayed is justice denied, and for too long, those who lived through Orgreave have carried unanswered questions and unresolved pain. This inquiry is a vital step in uncovering the truth and restoring trust and another reminder that this government is on the side of communities like ours.



Helping people in St Helens North since the election



In July my team and I have responded to over 550 requests for support from local people.

We have responded to cases varying from concerns about Gaza, to Welfare Reform, to housing, education, and local road maintenance. We have dealt with hundreds of individual cases including:

Help with Housing

Having been contacted by a constituent raising concerns regarding their housing banding with Under One Roof, we helped ensure that a foster family received correct housing banding befitting their circumstances.

HMRC Navigation

Helped provide support for a constituent by getting a response from HMRC to confirm that they had received and processed their voluntary national insurance contributions.

Road clearance

A constituent raised concerns of litter and overgrown vegetation in an alleyway, we raised these concerns to the council, who have since cleaned the alley way,

Passport Support

My team helped a constituent's relatives abroad in the renewing of their passports from Brazil by raising to the Passport Office the issues of delay in processing their applications. Having raised the delays, the application process has now been completed and a response has been provided to them.

If you need my help, please get in touch – see my contact details on the back page.

Modernising our democracy

The announcement by the Labour government around voting are a huge step forward for our democracy. In the biggest change to the electorate since 1969 through the new Elections Bill, the reforms will mean:

- 16 and 17 year olds able to vote from the next general election
- Voter ID cards to be extended to include bank cards to help make sure everyone can exercise their democratic right
- Tougher new rules to guard against foreign political interference and abuse of campaigners

I warmly welcome these measures and you can [read more about it here](#).

Finally, as ever, I encourage you to get in touch if you need my support or if you have a question, and please do tell me your priorities too. Remember you can follow what I am doing as your Member of Parliament [via the dedicated news page on my website](#) and on social media – search David Baines MP on Facebook, Instagram, Threads and Bluesky.

Best wishes,

David

David Baines MP

Member of Parliament for St Helens North



david.baines.mp@parliament.uk



01744 21336



Suite 2 Westway House, 42-44 Bridge Street,
Newton-Le-Willows WA12 9QT

Online: davidbaines.co.uk | On social media: @DavidBainesMP