



**David  
Baines**

Member of Parliament for  
**St Helens North**

## Newsletter November 2024



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

Dear Residents,

Welcome to my November newsletter. It was a busy month both in St Helens North and in Westminster. I hope you find the following information interesting, and as always if you have any questions or comments please do get in touch.

### We will remember them

Each November we remember those who have served and those who continue to do so, and in particular those who made the ultimate sacrifice and gave their life for our country.

I have had the [great pleasure of attending remembrance events locally](#) for many years as a resident, councillor and council leader. This was my first as the MP, and I had the honour of attending services in Earlestown, Haydock, Billinge, and the villages of Crank and Kings Moss.

As always, I was humbled by the dedication and outstanding work that veterans, community groups, residents, churches and local councillors do in organising fitting tributes to our service men and women past and present.

For me, this is what community is all about: volunteers and others who serve our neighbourhoods by giving their time to make sure we honour and celebrate those who came before us, so we can have a brighter tomorrow.

In Westminster, [I laid a tribute to Corporal Ashley Coates](#) in the Speaker's Constituency Garden of Remembrance. Corporal Coates was a dog handler in the RAF Police and very sadly died last year. He served in Bruggen, Lossiemouth, Episkopi (with detachments to the Falklands and Ali Al Salem), and Odiham, before becoming an active and much-loved member of our local Armed Forces Forum and a founder of our Armed Forces Veterans Breakfast Club. He is greatly missed by all who knew him.



# Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill

I would like to thank all those in St Helens North who contacted me about the assisted dying bill from both sides of the debate, and all those who gave me their time to discuss the bill and answer my questions.

In the weeks before the vote I heard the views of local hospice and palliative care specialists, doctors, individuals working in social care, community groups, faith leaders, clinicians, carers and hundreds of constituents from all walks of life.

I came into this process with an open mind and with no strong views either way. Having done so, I can say that the more I have read, the more I have listened, and the more conversations I have had, the more I have become convinced that this is the wrong bill at the wrong time.

Firstly, I have heard the concerns of those who work in end of life care and with vulnerable people who are convinced that the risk of coercion is impossible to eliminate. There are safeguards in the bill but they simply do not and cannot prevent incidents of vulnerable or frail individuals being coerced, consciously or subliminally, into ending their own lives early.

I feel the greater risk which will inevitably exist is people taking the decision to end their lives because they feel like a burden to their loved ones or to the NHS – something they are more likely to feel given the current state of palliative care and social care more generally.

Secondly, I have heard the concerns of constituents, social care workers, palliative care specialists and hospices about the current state of palliative and social care. It is a scandal. There is a huge amount we need to do in order to fix in our health system and end of life care must be high on that list.

Finally, I considered the arguments about a 'slippery slope' and while the bill is clearly defined and constricted to terminally ill adults with six months to live, the worries from many quarters about this bill opening the door to further expansion are understandable. [You can read a longer version of my statement explaining my reasons for voting against the bill here.](#)

As you will know, the bill was passed and will now progress to the Committee Stage. I am naturally disappointed with the result but the debate in Parliament was excellent, and I look forward to seeing what the Committee Stage brings. I will watch it carefully and see how it seeks to address the concerns I heard.

Throughout the discussion it has been clear that there is general agreement about the need to improve palliative care. [As I outline in this statement](#), fixing that must now be a priority regardless of the progress of the bill and I will be writing to the Health Secretary to ask for a meeting to discuss the concerns raised with me by palliative care specialists and patients in St Helens North.

# Parliamentary Update

It has been an extremely busy month in Westminster. I asked my first [Prime Minister's Question](#), raising the national scandal of child poverty. Relative child poverty rates in St Helens North increased from 2,716 children in 2015 to 4,114 in 2023 – an increase of 51%. Nationally it increased by over 700,000 under the Conservative Government. Poverty scars the lives and life chances of our children. The Labour government's [Child Poverty Taskforce](#), shows that we are taking this issue seriously.

After the Budget, [I was delighted to speak about how it can deliver on the NHS for people in St Helens North](#). I highlighted in my speech how the NHS Darzi report which described it as dealing with a “society in distress” because of disastrous austerity policies. The Budget won't fix everything overnight, but it is the start.

I was able to share the concerns and priorities of the many who have contacted me about the [current state of the SEND system at a meeting with the Education Minister Bridget Phillipson](#). I have also written to every school in St Helens North to advise them on how they can become part of the trials for [free breakfast clubs](#) which will be rolled out next year. Speaking to parents in St Helens North, I know how valuable getting help with childcare around the school day can be – these clubs could save local families £400 a year.

Labour has also announced much needed measures to reform children's social care. [I welcomed the announcements and in particular the consideration of support for care leavers](#) when speaking in the House. I also praised the work of St Helens Borough Council Children's Services Team and Cllr Nova Charlton who have taken services for care leavers from an Ofsted rating of inadequate to outstanding.

It was great to meet with both our Police and Crime Commissioner Emily Spurrell and Deputy PCC Councillor Jeanie Bell in Parliament to discuss local issues, and [I also warmly welcomed Labour's new Respect Orders and tougher punishments for anti-social behaviour](#). I was particularly pleased to hear that we will be strengthening action and punishments to tackle shoplifting and violence against shopworkers. My mum was a shopworker, so I know how hard they work and the unacceptable danger they sometimes face.

I also had a meeting with representatives of the Jewish Leadership Council, the Community Security Trust and the Antisemitism Policy Trust, to discuss how we can root out anti-semitism. There can be no place for racism in our communities.



Residents in Garswood and Earlestown have been campaigning for a long time for their train stations to be fully accessible and [I was delighted to raise this issue with Lucy Powell in the Commons.](#)

It was also fantastic to meet Tobias and others representing the [Disabled Children’s Partnership](#) in Parliament.

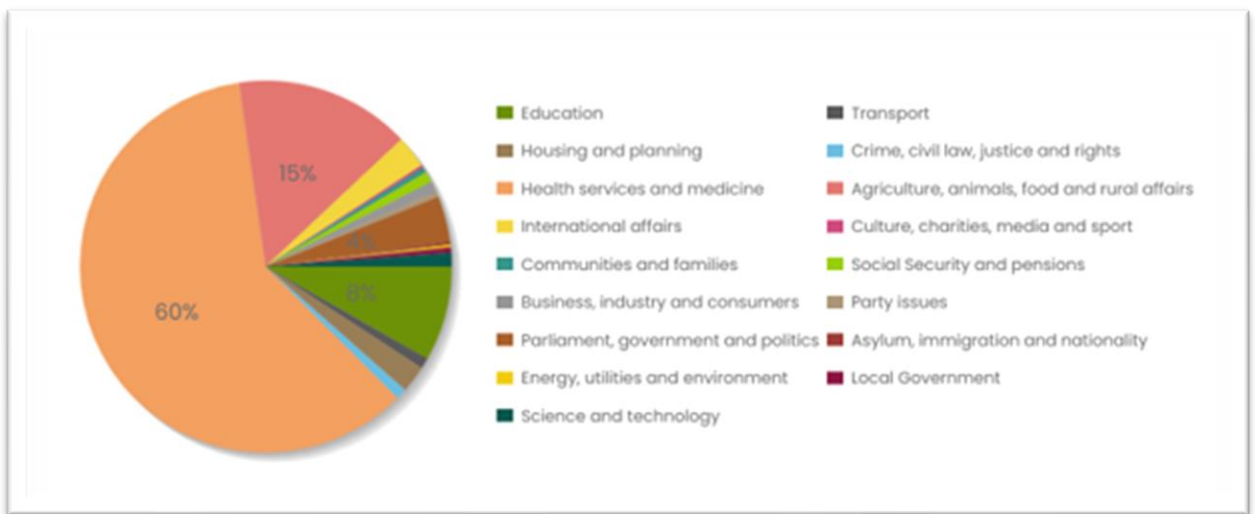
I was proud to [vote in favour of Labour’s new Armed Forces Commissioner Bill](#), which creates a new role and powers to protect and enhance welfare and wellbeing for our Armed Forces. I also voted on landmark legislation to remove the right of the remaining 92 hereditary peers to sit and vote in the House of Lords, and I was pleased to see the publication of the [Get Britain Working White Paper](#) with proposals to reform employment, tackle economic inactivity and support people into work.

More widely, I’m very happy to have been appointed to the Petitions Committee which has an important role to play in making sure that the issues that matter to the public are heard in Parliament. I also attended the first meeting of the [All Party Parliamentary Group on Dyslexia](#), and I am delighted to be elected a vice chair.



## Casework Update

This month my office and I have dealt with over 400 individual casework queries with over half of them relating to the Assisted Dying Bill. We have helped individual constituents with their housing issues, NHS appointments and preventing Section 21 evictions. Since July, we have responded to over 1700 individual queries from constituents.



# UK Parliament Week

One of the highlights of being the MP for St Helens North is working with children and local schools to engage them in politics. November was a brilliant time for this as we celebrated UK Parliament Week.

Firstly, it was my great honour [to welcome to Westminster school council representatives from Bleak Hill Primary School in Windle](#) and to take them to Number 10. It was also great to [meet](#) with Politics students [from Cowley International College sixth form in Parliament](#) who came up with some brilliant questions about the role of an MP.

I would like to thank Rainford District Girlguiding [for the invitation to come along and talk about my job](#) as MP and answer questions from the Rainbows, Brownies and Guides. The children were fantastic.

I also had a fantastic morning at Rainford Brook Lodge Community Primary School with pupils from the school as well as sixth form politics students from Rainford High Technology College and pupils from Chapel End Primary School in Billinge, [all part of the Everyone Matters Schools Trust](#).

As part of their work to learn more about politics and democracy it was my pleasure to speak to them about my job as MP, and to answer their questions about all sorts of subjects from climate change to potholes.

The pupils from Key Stage One to sixth form were outstanding and a credit to their schools, the Trust and themselves.

I would love to welcome as many local schools and groups as possible to Westminster. It is a great experience for the children and so important they learn about their democracy and feel part of it.

Please do get in touch with me via email ([david.baines.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:david.baines.mp@parliament.uk)) for more information about the opportunities for parliamentary visits, or to invite me to visit your school here in St Helens North. I would be delighted to help.



## In St Helens North

I held my latest advice surgery in Blackbrook at Chain Lane Community Centre where I met with residents to discuss various issues including anti-social behaviour and housing problems. I've also been out doorknocking and speaking with residents about local and national issues which matter to them: please do let me know your priorities [via this survey](#).

It was a pleasure to visit the [Barnfield Construction site in Haydock](#) to see the progress of work and hear about the potential of the development. There are very exciting opportunities in the pipeline and the developers have my full support in ensuring we make the most of them for local workers and the wider local economy.

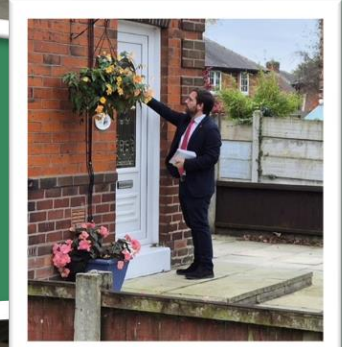
I had the pleasure of visiting Cowley to meet with staff and students who earlier this year took part in a two week visit to China as part of the Mandarin Excellence Programme. It is a fantastic experience for the children and it is clear they enjoyed it immensely.

I had the honour of [switching on Cowley's Christmas lights](#) which was accompanied by a superb performance of their school choir, and watched by Year 7 pupils from local Primary Schools including Queens Park and Carr Mill. Let the festive season begin!

## Mineworkers Pension Scheme

One highlight of the budget was confirmation that [Labour is ending the injustice of the Mineworkers Pension Scheme](#). From this month more than 500 ex-miners in St Helens North will be better off by an average of £29 a week.

Credit goes to local campaigners such as Colin Rooney (pictured) from Haydock who along with ex-miners nationally has fought for this for years. He and the thousands of others affected shouldn't have had to fight, but I am delighted that they have finally got what is theirs.



# Blackbrook by-election

I am absolutely delighted that Sally Yeoman MBE will be fighting the [Blackbrook by-election](#) for Labour on Thursday 12th December.

She has worked for years to support residents and community groups. I've worked with her closely and I've seen firsthand how much she cares about helping people and making a positive difference.

If you live in Blackbrook ward, please do give Sally your support on 12th December. You can [find out more about her and the upcoming election](#).

In the coming weeks I am looking forward to my next advice surgery in Haydock, more meetings and community visits. Please remember you can stay up to date with my work on social media – search David Baines MP – and get in touch with me using the details below if you need my support.

Best wishes,

David



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