



**David
Baines**
Member of Parliament for
St Helens North

Parliamentary report **Summer 2024**

Dear Residents,

Welcome to my first formal report on my work since being elected as our Member of Parliament. I intend to provide these for you on a regular basis.

It has been a very busy few weeks since the election, and I just want to say thank you once again to all those who voted for me. I will never take a single vote for granted. And, **whether you supported me or not, I will work tirelessly for you and our home in all our common interests.**

Getting started

Following the election, on the Sunday it was straight down to Westminster for a first week which involved a lot of induction meetings, my official swearing in as our Member of Parliament, and the State Opening of Parliament and the King's Speech.

The Speech set out the priorities for the first year of the Labour government, including: Great British Railways to bring our railways back into public ownership; an Employment Rights Bill; a Children's Wellbeing Bill to deliver things like free breakfast clubs at every Primary School; Great British Energy to deliver publicly-owned clean energy and cheaper bills; a Skills England Bill to create a new body to ensure young people get the skills and training they need; the Hillsborough Law; Football Governance Bill; Draft Leasehold Reform Bill; a new Mental Health Act to improve and modernise the provision of mental health care in England and Wales; a National Wealth Fund Bill to help deliver growth and a greener economy, and much, much more.

[You can read more detail about all these Bills here.](#)

Remember this is just the first year – there is a huge amount to be done after 14 years of chaos and decline, but this is the start.



In the debate following the King's Speech there was a lot of discussion regarding child poverty, and as someone who has been deeply concerned with addressing this for almost my entire working life I am pleased the issue is finally getting the attention it deserves.

Keir Starmer has announced the creation of a [Child Poverty Taskforce](#) to be led by Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson and Work and Pensions Secretary Liz Kendall and I fully support the government in its mission. The Taskforce [will report back in the Spring](#).

The last Labour government lifted children out of poverty, and I am confident that this one will too.

Raising SEND challenges and first speech

In [my first question in Parliament](#) after being sworn in I asked about the pressures facing children with special education needs, and the failures in the system which mean far too many children are waiting too long for assessment, and then when assessed they don't always get the support and adjustments they need despite the best efforts of their schools.

I also met with the Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson (pictured right) to discuss this issue which for too long has been ignored, and to raise the concerns I've had from parents and carers in St Helens North. Labour will do all it can to fix the system so that no child is left behind.

On Friday 26th July I made my Maiden Speech in the House of Commons.

I spoke about my own background growing up in Haydock in the 1980s and being the first Yicker elected to Parliament; my family; my respect for our teachers, teaching assistants and all school staff; how the communities of St Helens North played a vital role in the industrial revolution, and our potential and ambition to play a leading role in the green industrial revolution; our fantastic sports pedigree including Haydock Park Racecourse, thriving amateur clubs, Saints and more; our amazing community, faith and voluntary sector and the kindness and strength we showed during the pandemic; the crisis in our SEND system; and my intention to do all I can as our MP to give every child the tools and opportunity to reach their potential in life.

You can [read it here](#) and [watch it here](#).



Fixing the economy

On 30th July I voted to progress Labour's [Budget Responsibility Bill](#) which aims to ensure that no government can ever again act in such an irresponsible way as Liz Truss and her 'mini-budget' which crashed the economy and for which we're all still paying the price. In July, the Chancellor Rachel Reeves laid bare the consequences of that Tory economic chaos.

[You can read the Chancellor's full statement here](#), and a document [setting out the public spending audit in detail here](#).

The bottom line is this: the Tories deliberately hid a **£22billion unfunded black hole in the nation's finances for just this year**. Outside of an exceptional event such as Covid, this sort of thing is unprecedented. We knew we had an almighty mess to clean up, but this is beyond anything we – or anyone else – was aware of.

It does mean that some very difficult decisions are going to be needed, and Labour have set out some of these already, including the decision to only pay the Winter Fuel Allowance to those in receipt of Pension Credit. This is not something any of us want to do.

In February 2024 (the most recent data available) there were 2,551 claimants of Pension Credit in St Helens North. 384 of those had a partner, so there were 2,935 beneficiaries. They will continue to receive the Winter Fuel Allowance.

However, not everyone who is entitled to Pension Credit is claiming it. The Department for Work and Pensions estimates that around 800,000 eligible people in the country do not currently claim it.

We need to make sure that everyone entitled to Pension Credit is claiming it, and I encourage everyone to check if they are eligible by visiting the following link: www.gov.uk/pension-credit/eligibility or by calling the Pension Credit claim line at 0800 99 1234.

Single people can claim Pension Credit once they have reached State Pension age, whereas for people who have a partner, both partners must have reached state pension age to claim the benefit. I have contacted the local DWP, the council, and Citizens Advice to discuss how we can work together to promote Pension Credit in St Helens North and increase take up.

I am extremely angry that the Tories knowingly overspent on departmental budgets, covered it up, called an election and ran away from the problem, and I know you will be too. Labour will always be open and transparent with the public about the state of the finances and the tough choices we must take to protect our economic stability. **We now have the responsibility of doing what it takes to clear up the mess and protecting the most vulnerable as best as we can.**

Making progress

Despite the chaotic financial situation left by the Tories our new Labour government is already making progress. The Chancellor has confirmed that Labour will accept in full the independent pay review recommendations for [teachers](#), our [Armed Forces](#), police, NHS staff and prison officers, giving them a deserved and much needed pay rise of around 5-6%. And Health Secretary Wes Streeting in July announced he had [negotiated a pay deal with Junior Doctors](#) to hopefully bring an end to their industrial action.

Labour has also confirmed [plans to establish Skills England in order to help create opportunities and grow the economy](#), and we have set out plans to change the remit of [the Low Pay Commission to ensure workers get a genuine living wage](#).

I have voted to tighten the rules around second jobs for MPs and modernise parliament, and I also voted to support Labour's plans to [bring our railways back under public ownership](#) (pictured with Transport Secretary Louise Haigh, right). Like other Tory privatisation experiments, the selling off of our railways has failed. Labour is determined to fix it.



Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner has also announced details of our commitments on housing, with [increased targets to get Britain building again and tackle the housing crisis](#) and work to create New Towns, with [a new taskforce being set up](#) to drive the work forward. [You can read the Deputy Prime Minister's statement to the Commons here](#).

I fully support Labour's plans, and I have joined more than 50 other Labour MPs in joining the Labour Growth Group, which aims to support the government in delivering the homes, jobs and infrastructure Britain needs. [You can read our letter to the Prime Minister here](#).



Labour has also announced progress on delivering [compensation for the victims of the infected blood scandal](#) and the [Post Office Horizon scandal](#), both of which I strongly welcome. I also want to see progress on justice for Waspi women and I have written to the relevant Minister to ask for an update on the government's plans to support the women affected and see that justice is done.

In the constituency

Since the election I have had various meetings here in St Helens North including with St Helens Police to discuss local issues. I also wrote to the Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner to thank them and the work of the entire force in the wake of the appalling attack in Southport and the inexcusable riots which followed.

I marked National Retail Workers' Day by saying thank you to all shopworkers for everything they do. I also wrote to all headteachers, governors, staff and pupils at schools in St Helens North to thank them for their work and wish them all the best, and I also wished students the best of luck for their exam results this summer. I also had the pleasure of meeting our very own Andy Reid MBE at an event in Parliament to launch the Solidiering On Awards for which Andy has been nominated.



I've been a long time supporter of the Mobile Food Pantry and I'm proud of the work we did when I was council leader to set up St Helens Together and help the most vulnerable. It was great to visit them last week to catch up with Paul and the team.

I also enjoyed supporting the Party in the Park event organised by Park Farm Community Centre in Moss Bank. Thank you so much to all the organisers and volunteers who made it happen, and our local Labour councillors for their support. It was great to meet lots of amazing local organisations including Kate from My Outdoor Classroom, Gary and Brad from Bushi Ki Ryu Ju-Jitsu Club - Honbu Haydock and Haresfinch, Willowbrook Hospice, Roy and James from St Helens Wellbeing, Pam from Chain Lane Community Centre, and lots more!

I also visited Victoria Park in Windle, one of my favourite places, to hear some live music on the bandstand in an event organised by the Friends of Victoria Park group. It's part of their summer events programme and I thank them for all their tireless volunteering all year round.



Finally, I am pleased to say I now have a small office team in place based in Earlestown. I can now be reached via email at david.baines.mp@parliament.uk or via phone on 01744 21336, or you can write to me at the address below. Please ensure that when contacting me you include your full name, address, and any relevant reference numbers. Find out more: <https://davidbaines.co.uk/support>.

I will also be holding my first advice surgery on 6th September in Rainford. If you would like to attend, please get in touch to make an appointment.

I have already been receiving a large number of emails, calls and letters and have started helping people with housing, welfare and many other issues.

I have also been supporting residents concerned about the possible installation of new telegraph poles in Billinge by the telecoms company BRSK. I have written to the company and Ministers on behalf of residents and last week attended a meeting with BRSK, the council, and parish and ward councillors. I hope the company will be able to reassure people they are using existing infrastructure wherever possible.

If you have a problem and would like my support, please get in touch.

Best wishes,

David



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