



### Hull unites against P&O's race to the bottom

On 17 March, P&O Ferries sacked 800 seafarers, some 80 in Hull, by pre-recorded Zoom message with no notice, let alone the consultation arrangements laid down in UK law. Sacked workers were removed by security contractors and replaced by lower paid overseas staff. There were even gagging clauses attached to severance payments.

These sackings were especially callous during a cost of living crisis that the Chancellor's Spring Statement showed little sign of addressing.

On the day this scandal broke, I was the first Hull MP to raise it in the Commons – see [here](#) and [here](#).

Although I was isolating with COVID during the subsequent Commons debate on 21 March, some of the points I would have made went into my *Yorkshire Post* [article](#).

The worst employers are currently emboldened under the current Tory Government to attack workers' pay and conditions in a levelling down race to the bottom. As made clear by Leader Keir Starmer, Labour is fully committed to closing the loopholes in our employment and minimum wage laws that allow Fire and Rehire – or indeed, as happened in this case, Fire and Replace.

P&O management have since admitted to a joint session of the Transport Select Committee and Business Select Committee that they broke UK law and would do so again. At the time of writing, we await detail on what action Ministers will take against lawbreaking P&O Ferries bosses. I raised this in the House on 28 March – see [here](#).

The many issues raised by this scandal will be the subject of continuing debate at Westminster beyond the imminent Easter Recess.



### Levelling up shunted into sidings

Last November Transport for the North's recommendations for Northern Powerhouse Rail were rejected in the Government's Integrated Rail Plan for the next 30 years. This also ruled out for decades any chance of rail electrification for Hull and the related improvements in rail services that Hull's continuing regeneration requires. On the same day that the Rail Plan was launched, Ministers also centralised Transport for the North's (TFN) powers back to Whitehall and cut their budget by 37%. As a result, TFN are making redundancies and I raised this in the Commons this month in [Transport Questions](#). Government ministers were still trying to claim that they fully supported TFN despite all the cuts and reduction in powers.



### Justice on NHS Infected Blood

For 12 years I have campaigned for those infected and affected in the 45-year-long NHS Infected Blood scandal. I secured the current Public Inquiry that has been proceeding since 2018, concluding later this year. Alongside the Inquiry, Sir Robert Francis has reviewed compensation arrangements. The conclusions are currently with Ministers and I now want to ensure that Infected Blood survivors are consulted on the next steps. I raised this in the House – see [here](#) – and have written, both individually and with the APPG on Haemophilia and Contaminated Blood, to the Paymaster General.



### Hull Politics students Q&A

Whenever I can, I like to support the work of the Politics Department at the University of Hull and the Hull University Politics Society. Earlier this month, I spent an evening at the Politics Society speaking and answering questions about the work of being an MP and a wide range of political issues.



### Welcoming Ukrainians

One issue on which my excellent office team and I have been working hard in recent weeks has been the Home Office treatment of Ukrainians escaping Russia's illegal invasion of their country. The Select Committee I chair has held hearings on the current visa requirements for refugees from Ukraine. We were very pleased to also hear from the Ukrainian Ambassador to the UK, lawyers providing pro bono support for refugees and Home Office Ministers. These hearings can be viewed at

- <https://parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/6d2cf6cb-eaf3-43fe-bd34-07cf9013231b>
- <https://parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/619297a2-47e1-4e86-ae34-e4a9357d0eb2>

I also raised the issue in the Commons at

- <https://parliamentlive.tv/event/index/28902686-865d-48ea-ba23-90aa2aebd061?n=12:55:46&out=12:57:36>
- <https://parliamentlive.tv/event/index/28902686-865d-48ea-ba23-90aa2aebd061?n=13:55:56&out=13:57:12>
- <https://parliamentlive.tv/event/index/c27165e6-051e-4cb9-8f07-a48c24bd44?n=10:45:07&out=10:47:29>
- <https://parliamentlive.tv/event/index/c1435a02-10ce-451b-849a-c7a2343c5112?n=16:54:33&out=16:56:31>

and had an article published at:

- <https://www.politics.com/thehouse/article/the-uks-response-to-help-ukrainian-refugees-has-not-been-good-enough-our-visa-scheme-must-change>

If you would like to help, please donate to trusted charities and aid organisations, such as the Disasters Emergency Committee: [Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal](#), [Disasters Emergency Committee \(dec.org.uk\)](#). In Hull you can donate supplies to 'Hull 4 Ukraine', who can be found on Facebook [here](#).

Please note: they do not take clothes and current advice is not to donate baby milk powder, as this can lead to infant sickness. For more about what Hull people are doing, see: [Support for Ukraine | Hull City Council](#).



### COVID not beaten yet

As we approached the second anniversary of the first COVID lockdown, a further spike in infections reminded us that the pandemic is not yet over. The Government's decision to stop general access to free Lateral Flow Tests is premature. We saw this COVID surge at Westminster too. I spent a week isolating and we had to postpone the planned Hull North CLP Zoom call with Labour's Shadow Transport Secretary Louise Haigh that I mentioned in my previous report. This is being rescheduled for after the local elections.



### Freedom at last

One of the few bits of good news in an otherwise grim month was the release and return to Britain from Iran of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and another UK hostage Anoosheh Ashoori. This came after a six-year campaign by Richard Radcliffe, supported by the families' local MP - my Labour colleague Tulip Siddiq. I joined colleagues in raising this case in the House over several years and visited Richard Radcliffe on his two hunger strikes in 2019 and last Autumn.



### Crisis in GP Access

My recent survey of constituents in Hull North showed that 58% are having difficulty accessing GP appointments locally, putting more pressure on A&Es and resulting in more hospital admissions. I raised the issue in the Commons earlier in March - see [here](#). After the decade of austerity and poor workforce planning there are similar problems - pre-dating the COVID pandemic - with NHS dentistry and pharmacies. I will continue highlighting Hull's health needs.

## Here to help

I am always happy to take up issues for Hull North constituents.

You can contact me either by emailing: [johnsond@parliament.uk](mailto:johnsond@parliament.uk) or calling 01482 319135

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