



Kate Osborne MP
Monthly Newsletter
July 2023

Hello,

I am writing to update you on my work in Parliament and around our Jarrow constituency throughout July. We have seen another extremely busy month politically, celebrating the NHS's 75th birthday, further waves of industrial action and the Government forcing through more of their vile unworkable policies. Locally we have seen some brilliant community events – from the Carr Ellison Festival to the Love South Tyneside Awards! I've been on many visits and have been working hard behind the scenes supporting constituents with housing issues, benefits and universal credit issues and more.

NHS:

This month we marked the NHS's 75th birthday – a beloved national institution. Thirteen years ago it was the best in the world yet now it's in crisis – not enough staff, funding, or beds – and too much privatisation. In honour of 75 years of our National Health Service, I committed to continue fighting to ensure health is put before profit. You can watch my video on this [here](#).

Parliamentary Question

I asked the minister what he was going to do to tackle health inequalities as people in the North die younger and spend longer in ill health – paid less, unable to afford prescriptions and left relying on paracetamol instead of prescribed medication.

He disgracefully responded about obesity and smoking - dismissive stereotyping people in the North. Watch his disgraceful response [here](#) and my second question in full [here](#).



Kate Osborne MP labels Tory Minister a “disgrace” and calls on the government to scrap unfair prescription charges

© 12th July 2023 Health, Kate Osborne, NHS, Parliament

“It is quite frankly insulting to dismiss the fact that people in the North East have a lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality & worse health by talking about obesity and smoking”

Kate Osborne MP

I then asked the Minister and Government to scrap unfair prescription charges – they really showed the contempt this Government hold the North in.

It is quite frankly insulting to dismiss the fact that people in the North East have a lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and worse health by talking about obesity and smoking. You can read more on this in my piece for Labour Outlook [here](#).

NHS Parliamentary Awards

In celebration of our NHS, I was proud to have nominated South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust's Health Literacy Team and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board's Bye Bye UTI community pharmacy pilot project team for an NHS Parliamentary Award. Both were successfully shortlisted, and it was brilliant to meet both teams in Parliament to celebrate with them.



KATE OSBORNE: Our NHS used to be the best in the world - now it's in danger of collapsing

In one of my regular columns for the Shields Gazette I discussed further how the systemic destruction of services by successive Tory Governments has created crisis in our NHS. You can read this column in full [here](#). This month I also spoke at a Socialist Campaign Group policy seminar on how we save our NHS. You can watch this seminar in full [here](#).

NHS Prescription Charges:

I signed my name to a motion calling on the Government to scrap prescription charges – our NHS is a universal service free at the point of need and access to medication is a

fundamental right. No patient should go without necessary medication because of the added costs.

Prescription charges

EDM 1344: tabled on 19 June 2023

Tabled in the 2022-23 session.

This motion has been signed by 14 Members. It has not yet had any amendments submitted.

Motion text

That this House welcomes the latest report from the Prescription Charges Coalition entitled Continuing to pay the price published in March 2023 which demonstrates that vital medicine is unaffordable for many people living with long-term health conditions in England and that there has been an increase in the number of people taking time off work because they are unable to afford their medicine; is concerned that the report shows that the NHS services which people rely on are overstretched; restates its commitment to the NHS as a universal service free at the point of need and its belief that access to medication is a fundamental right; is deeply concerned that increased NHS waiting times are likely to leave people with long-term conditions relying on medication longer to manage their pain and health conditions; expresses its concern that some patients are not collecting prescriptions that they need because of the cost; and calls on the Government to scrap prescription charges.

NEAS

North East Ambulance Service has been underfunded and understaffed for years – but that does not excuse management from being more concerned about protecting their reputation than patients. There has evidently been serious failings that cannot be excused by financial concerns.

I have sought assurance from the Trust that the recommendations put forward in Dame Marianne Griffiths independent review have been complied with. Read more [here](#).

News

Kate Osborne MP speaks out after North East Ambulance Service neglect and cover ups

The North East Ambulance Service covered up fatal paramedic errors on multiple occasions.

Senior Doctors and Consultants Strike

I joined BMA Senior Doctors on strike at the RVI – defending our NHS. The first consultants strike in almost 50 years as they have lost 35% of pay since 2008. I am proud to stand with

all NHS workers taking action against this Government's deliberate and systemic underfunding of our beloved health service.



#SaveTicketOffices

Government consultations usually last three months – it's disgraceful that this Government attempted to rush through closure of ticket offices, leaving jobs, disabled and vulnerable passengers at risk. Their flawed process is now falling apart and they have extended the consultation to the 1st of September.

These proposals should be scrapped altogether - make sure you have your say!

I submitted my objections to the proposed closure of ticket offices at Northern Trains, Transpennine Express and LNER and have set out below why I believe these ticket office closures must be rejected. You can read my full submission via my website here: [Objections to the proposed closure of ticket offices at Northern Trains, Transpennine Express and LNER - Kate Osborne MP \(kate-osborne.co.uk\)](https://www.kate-osborne.co.uk/objections-to-the-proposed-closure-of-ticket-offices-at-northern-trains-transpennine-express-and-lner)



I signed my name to a motion calling on Government to scrap proposals with The Rail Delivery Group for mass closures of rail ticket offices. It's vital we ensure ticket offices stay open for accessibility and safety of passengers!

Future of railway ticket offices

EDM 1418: tabled on 05 July 2023

Tabled in the 2022-23 session.

This motion has been signed by 12 Members. It has not yet had any amendments submitted.

Motion text

That this House notes with concern the planned mass closure of rail ticket offices, leaving many of the over 1000 train stations unstaffed; recognises that railway ticket office staff are a vital resource for many passengers who might struggle to manage online booking processes and for the security of children, women, disabled and other vulnerable passengers on the rail network; further notes that station staff including ticket office staff are essential to the smooth running of the rail network; agrees with the Royal National Institute for the Blind that the closures would be hugely detrimental to the blind and partially sighted; notes that the future of ticket offices is a key item in the ongoing rail worker dispute; and therefore calls on the Secretary of State for Transport to reject The Rail Delivery Group's proposals in full.

RMT Strike Solidarity

It was once again good to see Mick Lynch and RMT members on the picket line at Central Station this month fighting for good pay and secure jobs!



RMT Parliamentary Group:

As well as on the picket line I joined the RMT Parliamentary Committee in Parliament where we discussed the ongoing dispute around pay & conditions for rail staff – as well as Government proposals to close ticket offices.



School Teachers Review Body

This month I wrote to Rishi Sunak and Gillian Keegan MP urging them to publish the School Teachers Review Body report without further delays. Whilst they have now done this it still leaves schools with a huge shortfall in funding. I will continue to speak up for school staff and students who deserve so much better than they are getting from this Government.

Kate Osborne MP
Member of Parliament for the Jarrow constituency



House of Commons
London, SW1A 0AA



The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP, Secretary of State for Education
The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, Prime Minister

7th July 2023

Dear Secretary of State and Prime Minister,

RE: School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) Report and Pay Dispute

I am writing today in relation to the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) report and the ongoing dispute over pay.

On a day that thousands of teachers across the country including teachers working in my Jarrow constituency, are taking strike action over their pay and working conditions, trade unions in the education sector have raised concerns with me around the disrespect they feel they have been shown by Government Ministers refusing to show them the STRB report, despite being required to publish it within the next few weeks.

The concealing of this report will cause huge disruption and leave headteachers unable to plan their budgets for the next school year. In previous years headteachers have reported that delayed viewing of the STRB caused them huge issues.

Concealing the report in this way can only add to the existing recruitment and retention crisis in education. I have been contacted by constituents and I have met with the National Education Union and the NASUWT in my constituency and they have all raised with me their concerns over recruitment and retention.

Last month, the Sunday Times reported that the STRB was advising a 6.5% increase in teacher and leader pay, yet teachers are now being met with silence from the Government as you continually decline to reveal the content of the report nor Ministers' response to its recommendations.

This is unacceptable, with the education sector already struggling to cope with a worsening recruitment and retention crisis, the Government's refusal to enter talks with the unions is irresponsible and deeply unhelpful.

With inflation remaining at more than 10% as well as the ongoing cost of living crisis caused by this Conservative Government, the pay rise proposed is nothing short of insulting.

I urge you to publish the STRB report without further delay, and ensure that you enter serious talks with the unions to resolve the ongoing pay dispute in a way that reflects the hardwork and increasing workload of teachers. These decisions are having a negative impact on the schools and individuals within my constituency who deserve to feel like education is being given the priority it deserves.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kate Osborne'.

Kate Osborne MP
Member of Parliament for the Jarrow constituency

Impact of rising energy costs – Post Office

Rising energy costs are having a devastating impact on the Post Office network. Mr Hudson from West Boldon Post office informed me that his energy costs have doubled to £900 per month. I wrote to the Minister calling for urgent action from his Government otherwise many Post Offices may be forced to close. You can read my letter in full below.

Kate Osborne MP
Member of Parliament for the Jarrow constituency



House of Commons
London, SW1A 0AA



Kevin Hollinrake MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Enterprise, Markets & Small Business)

(Correspondence sent via email)

11th July 2023

Dear Minister,

I am writing to you today in relation to the devastating impact that the rising commercial energy costs are having on the Post Office network.

I have been contacted by one of my constituents, Mr Hudson, who is a postmaster at West Boldon Post Office in my constituency. Mr Hudson tells me that his energy costs have risen from £450 per month to £900 per month – double the price he used to pay.

This level of increase is not sustainable for my constituent or others in the Post Office network, especially when many postmasters and mistresses are struggling to survive with the level of remuneration they get paid from the Post Office.

At a time when the Energy Bill Relief Scheme ceased at the end of March and was replaced with a less generous scheme, this has left postmasters and mistresses up and down the country greatly concerned about how they are going to pay for increased overheads.

Many postmasters and mistresses are now struggling to even pay themselves a minimum wage and some are being forced to shut their doors and close their business. This is leaving huge holes in communities where the much-loved service is needed, especially to the elderly and more vulnerable.

When senior executives in the Post Office are being paid huge bonuses, how is this fair?

I therefore ask you as Secretary of State to urgently look into a solution to redress the balance of payments to postmasters and mistresses in the face of rising energy overheads and other bills and work with representatives from the Communication Workers Union on this?

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Kate Osborne MP
Member of Parliament for the Jarrow constituency

Planning Application: Battery Storage Facility in Boldon

I have written to the Leader of South Tyneside Council Tracey Dixon expressing concerns regarding the planning application (REF: ST/0486/23/FUL) requesting the construction and operation of a large Battery Energy Storage System on greenbelt land next to Mount Pleasant Farm in West Boldon. You can read my letter in full below and submit your own views to the planning department [here](#).

Kate Osborne MP
Member of Parliament for the Jarrow constituency



House of Commons
London, SW1A 0AA



Clr Tracey Dixon
Leader of South Tyneside Council
Cc: Planning Department at South Tyneside Council

(Sent by email only)

28th July 2023

Dear Tracey

RE: PLANNING APPLICATION REF: ST/0486/23/FUL

I have been contacted by residents, businesses, local organisations and local Councillors who are all expressing concerns regarding the planning application ref above, requesting the construction and operation of a large Battery Energy Storage System on greenbelt land next to Mount Pleasant Farm in West Boldon.

I strongly believe that we must retain as much greenbelt and greenfield land as possible across the Borough and I fully understand and share the concerns that have been raised with me on this hugely important issue. Our greenbelt land and our green spaces are hugely important and we should not lose these valuable areas under any circumstances.

The proposed industrial development is not just on greenbelt land, but also close to the West Boldon substation and West Boldon Lodge, which is part of the National Grid environmental education centre network. Schools regularly visit the nature site where outdoor educational lessons are given by Groundwork. I agree with concerns that the placement of this large-scale industrial development would mean that the woodland area would be negatively impacted by being sandwiched between two pieces of critical infrastructure, both with potentially high levels of risk of attracting unwanted attention including anti-social behaviour, fire and other risks associated with national infrastructures.

Battery storage facilities carry a significant fire risk, and people are also concerned about the risks of flooding, water contamination from runoffs into already contaminated water, noise pollution as well as hazards from the release of flammable and toxic gases.

These could all have a serious impact on the local community, biodiversity, and wider environment.

The area itself is surrounded by farmland and greenbelt and I strongly believe the erection of this industrial development would negatively impact on the local area, as well as reduce our hugely important greenbelt land.

In terms of tackling climate change, which of course should be a priority for us all, these types of units are reported to have a high carbon footprint, so I think the council need to assess whether allowing the building of this storage facility aligns with their aims to reach net zero by 2030.

Therefore, with this in mind, I would be grateful if you could look into this matter and consider the points raised when looking into this application further.

Yours sincerely,



Kate Osborne MP
Member of Parliament for the Jarrow constituency

AkzoNobel Strike

Solidarity with workers in my constituency taking strike action over pay at AkzoNobel UK. I wrote to AkzoNobel last month and have again written asking for an urgent meeting to making clear it is unacceptable that they put production and profits over the health and safety of employees our community.

AkzoNobel staff in Gateshead begin four-week strike action over pay dispute

Staff at AkzoNobel, in Gateshead, staged a peaceful demonstration outside the Stoneygate Lane factory, in Felling



A peaceful demonstration by members of the Unite and GMB unions at Akzo Nobel in Felling, Gateshead regarding a breakdown in pay negotiations (Image: Craig Connor/ChronicleLive)

Wardley BioGas

After receiving reports from Jarrow constituents about a foul smell coming from Wardley Biogas Plant I immediately contacted Gateshead Council, the Environment Agency and BioConstruct, the owners of the plant, to report these concerns and asked for an urgent investigation into the cause of the smell.



Following on from my correspondence Bioconstruct responded to explain their flare operations are a normal process and pointed out other possible local causes of the odour, however they apologised for any inconvenience caused.

Due to my office's intervention the Environmental Agency attended first thing on Monday morning and whilst they did not detect any odour, whilst they were on site, they did identify that:

"Due to the failure to replace the carbon filter material, the filter in the upgrading plant had now become saturated resulting in odour being released from the upgrading plant itself. Once this was noticed by staff, further excess gas was diverted to the emergency flare to be burnt, reducing the risk of pollution. Burning of gas from the upgrading plant was still ongoing at the time of the inspection. New carbon was due to arrive on site on 11 July to allow for a full carbon filter change, returning the site to normal operations. It was later confirmed that a carbon filter change was successfully completed the following day on the 12 July."

Because of this the Environmental Agency will undertake a full investigation and summary report is undertaken to allow for a better understanding into the cause of the odour release, what failures, if any, have occurred and what preventative actions should have been taken. If any breaches of the permit are identified this will be accurately recorded in a compliance inspection report with required actions to be taken and an appropriate enforcement response considered at that stage.

In addition to their investigation outlined above, the Environment Agency have met with Gateshead Council to discuss their forward approach to regulation and will work together to

ensure any impacts from both the site activities and the land-spreading activities are communicated early and handled appropriately by the lead authority.

I am glad that by my intervention that an investigation is underway. I will be asking to meet with BioConstruct over the summer to discuss the ongoing odour and what prevention measures they are continually putting in place.

If any constituents would like a copy of their full responses, please do email in kate.osborne.mp@parliament.uk.

Pay in the North East

This month I tabled a motion to Parliament regarding the TUC report that found the North East is the lowest paid region – earning 7% less than the average in England. Thank you to all 24 colleagues who have signed their name to this important motion ([you can view who has signed here](#))

We need to tax wealth and the wealthy – not workers.

Pay in the North East

EDM 1449: tabled on 10 July 2023

Tabled in the 2022-23 session.

This motion has been signed by 20 Members. It has not yet had any amendments submitted.

Motion text

That this House notes the Trades Union Congress (TUC) analysis which shows that the North East still has the lowest average weekly earnings of any region in the UK; notes the analysis reveals workers in the North East region earn 7% less, on average, than the UK median wage; further notes that, in some parts of the North East this pay gap is even wider; agrees that the findings show the devastating impact that years of wage stagnation have had on workers in the North East; further agrees with the statement that workers are facing a real pay emergency with real wages worth less in the North East than they were in 2010; and welcomes the TUC's call to tax wealth and the wealthy, not workers.

BBC Newcastle: Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence in Schools & Universities

I spoke with BBC Radio Newcastle about sexual harassment and sexual violence in our schools and universities following the Women and Equalities Select Committee report. It is a disgrace that it took testimonies of thousands of school-aged children for Government, Ofsted and some schools to acknowledge the seriousness of this. You can listen to the full interview [here](#).

Post Office Horizon IT Scandal

It has been more than three years since Jarrow constituent Chris Head, and I delivered a petition to 10 Downing Street demanding an independent inquiry into the Post Office Horizon Scandal. Victims need more than just warm words from Ministers – Postmasters need full compensation now. The Urgent Question this month on the scandal saw the Minister acknowledge the truth of the issues but it was not enough. My full statement on this is below:

POST OFFICE HORIZON IT SCANDAL

It has been more than three years since my constituent Chris Head and I delivered a petition to 10 Downing Street demanding an independent inquiry into the Post Office Horizon Scandal.

Today's Urgent Question heard:

- Compensation schemes are a mess
- Post Office Management & board are still withholding information and disgracefully taking bonuses - including taking bonuses for taking part in the scandal inquiry!
- 62 Postmasters died waiting for justice
- Some postmasters compensation doesn't even cover their legal fees.

The Minister acknowledged the truth of these issues but warm words aren't enough.

Postmasters need their full compensation now and the disgraceful Post Office board need to be sacked.

It is grotesque and completely unacceptable that the people responsible for the false prosecutions remain unpunished, Post Office and Fujitsu need to be held to account and this Government need to stop awarding new contracts to Fujitsu!



Hitachi Construction Machinery UK

Great to visit the Hitachi UK HQ in my Jarrow constituency this month. As one of our major local employers it was great to have a tour of the factory and the construction machinery and to hear about their plans for expansion, apprenticeship schemes and more job creation locally.



Global Justice Now Drop in

Big Pharma are extracting billions in excess profits from the NHs and are lobbying Government to hike the NHS medicines bill by £2.5bn. I joined Global Justice Now in Parliament to offer my support to their campaign to drive profiteers out of our NHs and give our health workers a pay rise!



The State of Health and Care for Older People in 2023

I was pleased to join Age UK's Parliamentary launch of their report "The State of Health and Care for Older People in 2023". We discussed how many people in the Jarrow constituency are unable to get the care and support they desperately need, stuck on waiting lists to be assessed before they can get support.



Community Pharmacy

Medicines supply remains a vital issue for community pharmacies with disruption causing problems accessing medicines in a cost effective way. I met with Community Pharmacy England and front line pharmacists in Parliament this month to discuss how they are working to alleviate some of the issues caused by this disruption.



YMCA Awards

It was great to join YMCA for their awards ceremony celebrating their 25th Anniversary in Parliament this month. Exercise is vital for health and wellbeing, with benefits for our bodies and mental health – it was good to meet Darcey Bussell who was leading a fitness session at the event!



Space APPG

Pleased to drop into the Space APPG in Parliament this month to discuss the new technology and investment in the North East. I had some really good discussions with someone of the businesses in Jarrow who work with this APPG – plus its always good to play with model satellites!



Network Rail drop in

I met with Network Rail in Parliament to learn of their work to increase the understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment on public transport. I tried the VR headset which had multiple examples of the types of harassment women and girls face. No one should face sexual harassment whilst travelling.



UK Sport Reception

It was great to join UK Sport's Parliamentary reception – with one year left until the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games it was good to hear from athletes how their prep from Paris is progressing!



City and Guilds

In Jarrow, City and Guilds have trained 4909 people in the last three years and helped to equip people with the skills they need that are essential to individuals, employers, and the economy. Although efforts are being made, more needs to be done to tackle the skills gap. It was great to hear more about this in Parliament this month.



Durham Miners Gala

It was excellent to be back at the Durham Miners Gala this month with comrades old and new! A brilliant day filled with solidarity – even the rain couldn't dampen our spirits! I was really pleased to see our very own Save South Tyneside Hospital Campaign Group from the balcony.



Premier Rugby Community Awards

It was fantastic to attend the Rugby Community Awards in Parliament and celebrate with those shortlisted for an award – I really enjoyed my chat with Evan from Gloucester rugby!



Windrush Day: UNISON

I joined UNISON's Windrush Day event in Parliament this month – it is so important we remember and celebrate the huge contribution that the Windrush generation have made to our country whilst remembering and recognising the injustices and discrimination they have faced.



Transport for the North

I met with Transport for the North who are consulting on a refreshed Strategic Transport Plan – great to hear about ambitions for transport in the North improving social inclusion, economic improvement and decarbonisation. You can take part in the consultation:

<https://transportfornorth.com/stp>



Magic Breakfast

Great to catch up with Magic Breakfast in Parliament this morning – they do excellent work in promoting the importance of school breakfast provision and already supply healthy breakfasts to many pupils across the Jarrow constituency. No child should be too hungry to learn.



Support for small businesses with energy and cost of living

In the Jarrow constituency we have some brilliant small businesses – but many are facing burdens caused by Tory economic chaos. I joined Smart Energy and Citizens advice in Parliament to discuss these issues and hear what support is available to small businesses with rising energy costs and the rocketing cost of living.



Renters Reform Bill

Housing always tops my casework from constituents. I met with Shelter to join their call to Government to stop delaying the Renters Reform Bill. 172 families receive a section 21 notice per day – leaving families distressed and at risk of homelessness.



It was interesting to hear about the benefits of Refillable Glass Bottles in Parliament – according to Zero Waste Europe, we go through 5 billion one-way bottles per year. We must all make environmentally conscious choices around our use of single use materials and consider refillable!



Hebburn Carr-Ellison Festival

As we have now entered recess from Parliament, I had a great first day of recess in our wonderful Jarrow constituency, spending time at Carr-Ellison Park for the festival organised by Clegwell and Hartleyburn QAVS.



Northern Pride

It was an honour to address #NorthernPride this month. In my speech, as well as celebrating all that we are, I apologised to our community for the vile rhetoric being used by Rishi Sunak and his Ministers.

We will not stand by and watch our trans siblings attacked by this Tory Govt - we will stand together and fightback. You can watch my speech in full [here](#).



This vile Tory Government will never break our community spirit and solidarity. As seen at the Gala, Jarrow Rebel Town Festival and Northern Pride. We will stand together and

celebrate the fights that came before us and we will continue to fight in the days, weeks, months and years ahead. Read more on this in my piece for Labour Outlook [here](#).



With solidarity and pride, we can defeat the Tories' divisive and discriminatory agenda – Kate Osborne MP

© 22nd July 2023 Anti-Migrant Bill, Equality, Kate Osborne, LGBTQ, Pride, Right to Strike, Solidarity

"Their clear goal is to make the next General Election a distraction culture war to cover up their disastrous 13 years of chaotic rule that has led to this cost of living crisis and rampant inflation."

Advice Surgeries:

I hold regular advice surgeries to speak with constituents about issues affecting them. My surgeries are by appointment only – so if you would like to book a slot, please email kate.osborne.mp@parliament.uk

General Election Fighting Fund:

You can help with our General election plans by making a donation online here:

https://actionnetwork.org/fundraising/keep-jarrows-red-flag-flying-2?source=direct_link&

Donations will go towards the next general election campaign – 10% of all donations will go to our local foodbanks. (Donation policy can be read in full via my website)

Stay up to date with my work via my social media channels:

Website: www.kate-osborne.co.uk

Twitter: @KateOsborneMP

Facebook: @KateOsborneMP

Instagram: @KateOsborneMP

Tiktok: @kate.osborne.mp

If you need assistance with anything, please don't hesitate to contact me via kate.osborne.mp@parliament.uk or by calling my office on 0191 466 1509.

Yours sincerely,

Kate Osborne MP