



Chris Stephens MP

GLASGOW SOUTH WEST

MP newsletter covering some of my work
both in Westminster and in the Constituency

March 2023



Cruel and Desperate attack On Asylum Seekers by a callous UK Government

The Tory Government have announced cruel and desperate plans to try and ban migrants from re-entering the UK if they cross the Channel.

New legislation presented in Parliament by Home Secretary Suella Braverman will seek to further demonise and scapegoat people fleeing to the UK to seek safety.

Using frankly disgusting, divisive and fear mongering language, the right-wing Home Secretary spoke of "waves of illegal arrivals" and "criminals breaking into Britain", while setting out plans to make asylum claims inadmissible from those who travel to the UK on small boats.

But the reality is, this legislation will do nothing to reduce the number of deaths in the Channel or the chaos and incompetence that blights our asylum system yet will deny sanctuary to those who desperately need it.

This bill would mean turning our back on thousands of legitimately seeking safety with no legal route to apply outside

the UK.

UK Government's statistics show that two out of three people who arrive by small boat are granted asylum.

The UK Government is also stepping away from its global responsibilities and away from the compassion that allowed Suella's own parents to arrive in the UK.

Acknowledging in her own word to Parliament Suella Braverman said: "My own parents, decades ago, found security & opportunity in this country, something for which my family is eternally grateful."

It very interesting that our Home Secretary, who is a member of the party that broke the immigration system, recognised the need for compassion for her parents, but disgustingly that she wants to deny that same right to asylum seekers who just want the same opportunity.

We often hear rhetoric that people could seek asylum elsewhere. Yet our neighbours in France, Germany, and Spain take many more applications from refugees than the UK, with Germany taking more

than three times the number.

However, we really should not be surprised by this move by this uncaring and dangerous Tory Government.

From the outset, the UK government's approach to asylum seekers has been inhumane and cruel.

This latest proposal from Rishi Sunak and Suella Braverman is just their latest attempt to trash the Refugee Convention and the Human Rights Convention, as well as the Modern Slavery Act protections for victims of trafficking.

The UK government should have realised their plans will achieve nothing except extra pain and misery to families fleeing war-torn countries or places where they face persecution.

Their failure to realise this again proves the need for Scotland to have the full powers of independence so that we can build a humane asylum system that offers refugees protection, security and dignity from the moment they arrive here.



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UK budget must reverse Tory cost of living crisis



We are fast approaching the UK budget, and I am calling for the UK Government to prioritise putting money back into people's pockets – they cannot continue to hammer household incomes during a Tory-made cost of living crisis.

With only a few days until Jeremy Hunt unveils his plans, colleagues and I have called for a comprehensive package to boost household incomes and economic growth.

Scotland is a wealthy, energy-rich country, but families are being fleeced by Westminster. By refusing to act, the Tories show why Scotland needs independence, so we can escape Westminster control, rejoin the EU, and build a fair and prosperous economy.

The SNP's five-point plan would reduce bills, raise incomes and boost economic growth when many families struggle to get by. But, with energy companies making record profits and the wholesale price of gas falling, there is no excuse for failing to act.

Families are sick to the back teeth of being ripped off by the Tory government, and we are challenging the Chancellor to deliver the SNP's five-point plan:

1. Saving families £1400 on energy bills - by cutting the Energy Price Guarantee to £2000 and

maintaining the £400 Energy Bill Support Scheme to the summer.

2. Raising public sector pay and benefits by CPI - putting money into the pockets of millions of workers and delivering Barnett consequential for Scottish spending.

3. Scrapping Tory plans to raise the pension age to 68 and reinstating the Triple Lock - so no one has to struggle in old age.

4. Rejoining the European Single Market - to boost economic growth and halt the multi-billion pound long-term damage caused by Brexit.

5. Investing in green growth - competing with EU and US subsidies to attract green investment.

In addition to the headroom identified by the IFS and the billions of pounds saved as a result of the falling wholesale price of gas, the SNP is also calling for the Chancellor to scrap non-dom tax status, tax share buybacks, and expand the windfall tax, which would raise billions more to fund the cost of living support for ordinary households.

In Scotland, the SNP Scottish Government is doing everything it can with limited fiscal powers, including delivering the Scottish Child Payment,

higher energy bill support, and higher public sector pay.

The UK government must finally step up to the plate - and use its reserved powers to introduce a Real Living Wage and raise public sector pay and benefits by CPI. In doing so, it would raise the incomes of millions of workers and deliver Barnett consequential for Scottish spending.

This UK Budget is all about choices. Instead of making ordinary families pay for Westminster's failure, the Tories must fund support by scrapping non-dom tax status, expanding the windfall tax and taxing share buybacks, which would raise billions.

And if we are serious about delivering economic growth and reversing the decline, the UK government must rejoin the European single market and adequately invest in green energy.

Scotland is suffering the consequences of Westminster control. The Tories trashed the economy with Brexit, austerity cuts and thirteen years of mismanagement. And with the pro-Brexit Labour Party becoming a pound-shop Tory tribute act, its apparent independence is the only way for Scotland to secure the real change we need.



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Labour Market Activity

On the 28th of February I had the opportunity to join a debate on [Labour Market Activity](#).

Those of you that know me well will recall I came up through the Unions defending the rights of workers and it is something I am truly passionate about. For so long as I have to work in London to fight the case of the worker, until such time as the liberation of Scotland, you have my word I will work for you and your rights.

Many of you will have been subject to the increasingly harsh treatment of the DWP if you are benefits claimants, and have tried in vain to negotiate the labyrinthine rules and regulations set forth. I have no doubt in my mind that any person trying to claim benefits which they are owed walks a precarious path of pitfalls and boobytraps whilst negotiating the completion of forms, all designed to deny the meagre support the Government has at its disposal which they freely hand out to their friends, especially during the Covid crisis. (please [contact](#) my staff for help if needed)

Many people demonize the DWP staff. I will not. They work hard under sometimes ludicrous legislation and so very many are demoralised by the position they are put in by this callous Government and, not to forget, are also victims of the spiralling cost of living. The front line staff are in many cases in the same position as the people they are seeing on a daily basis. Many now use foodbanks. Their pending pay offer is insufficient and the rules around working part time and receiving benefits are so twisted the DWP staff themselves are penalised financially for taking extra hours.

Hollow rings the Governments time worn phrase "work is the best route out of poverty". Worth noting the original use of [Arbeit Macht Frei](#) (Work Will Free You) – not entirely dissimilar to the Tory clarion

call - was in a novel whereby gamblers and fraudsters find the path to virtue through labour. The Government essentially insinuating the unemployed, down on their luck or those unable to pay bills despite working are gamblers and fraudsters. It's a vicious circle of adding insult to injury being on the not-so-merry-go-round of claim, rejection, mandatory reconsiderations, sanctions and penalties. Don't forget to contact my office if you need assistance with any of these issues.

What kind of world are we part of where parents cannot afford childcare if they have to work full time? Better for them to work part time to gain the benefits needed to support a young family. I made special mention of this to the minister during the debate. I often wonder in debates on how some people can be so disconnected from the constituents they are there to serve. Every constituency in the UK has people struggling to get by. The system is broken. Possibly too broken. A clean get away and a fresh start will be the only thing to save Scotland's claimants and give them some dignity.

The latest Government wheeze is to have the unemployed attend 10 sessions in 2 weeks to receive benefits. Who will deliver this? The already stretched DWP front line staff. How does the disabled person, rejected for disability benefits, travel to a job centre without funds every day of the working week? They may be unable to use a bus. They can't afford a car. What about any restricted mobility? Ours is an urban constituency and job centres relatively close by. How hellish is this for those living in one of Scotland's vast rural seats?

The grind is now on to get people back into Offices. Despite all evidence that working outside of the office has led to better work life balance and productivity, the people must restock the cubicles! It's really not hard to see why this policy is being pursued. The Tory hegemony has

funders in big business. Big businesses that own big office spaces. Big office spaces that have sat empty costing the big businesses big money. Big rents being paid for big empty spaces.

There's been another benefit to home working: Disabled workers have had more access to work they can do, from which they may previously have been excluded. Now jobs are being lost because of unreasonable demands that people return to – in many cases – unsuitable and unadapted office spaces. Yes, Big Business and the Government are creating unemployment for those with disabilities, which will not be recompensed by government for those that lost their jobs.

And now that most pernicious of employment contracts, the [Zero Hours contract](#). Introduced by [Tony Blair's New Labour](#). It is the darling of the Hospitality & Fast Food industry, well known for paying as little as possible and exploiting every loophole in the law to do so. This regime wants to sanction someone who refuses a minimum hours contract. Should a father of a new born desperately seeking work get penalised because an employer will not guarantee him the money to support a baby in return for his hours of work? I've heard of shocking practises where employers text employees to tell them the first one to turn up at the place of work gets the hours. This dystopian UK is dissolving into a Hunger Games style battle royale for survival. I struggle to understand how this scenario has so willingly been voted into existence.

As I said before, I will continue to rail against this bizarre treatment of people who just want to be able to get by without worrying where their next meal is coming from. I hope I never have to get to my feet to fight legislation like this in an independent Scotland in a debating chamber full of callous intent and exploitation at its heart.



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SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS



Cardonald Larder

I was delighted at the success of the newly opened Cardonald Larder at Swinton Place.

On the first day people were queued out of the door to register and shop. This was the most successful opening to a larder that Good Food Scotland have had so far. They already have larders open in Nitshill, Linthouse and Kennieshead.

As Chair of the Steering Group I want to thank all of the volunteers and community organisations, Good Food Scotland and Southside Housing who have helped put this project together.

Cardonald Larder is at 12 Swinton Place, G52 2EA and is a new affordable food project. Cardonald Larder is open to all every Tuesday from 10 am until 1 pm and every Thursday from 3 pm until 6 pm. The larder will stock

similar items to the average grocery shop but at a fraction of the price and there is no limit to what you can buy. Membership costs £1 a month and once you are registered, you can start shopping (you do not need to bring any documents to register) and the membership money goes back into the larder to buy additional stock.

The aim of the larder is to help provide financial relief for households on low income by improving their access to affordable and nutritious food.

Contact Details:

Follow them on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#). Email natalie@goodfoodscotland.org or visit goodfoodscotland.org. They are open two days per week on Tuesday 10:00 to 13:00 and Thursday 15:00 to 18:00.



Working hard for everyone in Glasgow South West

chrisstephens.scot 0141 883 0875 chris.stephens.mp@parliament.co.uk



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GLASGOW SOUTH WEST

Food Support – Glasgow South West



Important - The foodbank works using a voucher referral system. In order to get help from the foodbank, you will need a voucher issued by [local agencies](#), including my office at 1612-1614 Paisley Road West, Glasgow G52 3QN.

Ibrox

Ibrox Parish Church
Clifford Street
Glasgow
G51 1QL
Mon 12:00 - 14:00

Penilee

Our Lady & St George Church
50 Sandwood Road
G52 2QE
Tue 10:30 - 12:30

Mosspark

Mosspark Baptist Church
155 Corkerhill Road
Glasgow, G52 1PG
Wed 12:00 - 14:00

Cardonald

Hillington Park Church
24 Berryknowes Rd
G52 2UD
Fri 10:00 - 12:45

Linthouse

Linthouse Housing Association
1 Cressy Street
Glasgow, G51 4RB
Tue 14:00 - 16:00



Nutritious low cost food and support to local people.

Linthouse

Linthouse Housing Association
1 Cressy Street, Glasgow G51 4RB
Thur 10:00 - 13:00

Cardonald

12 Swinton Place, Cardonald,
G52 2EA
Tue 10:00 - 13:00
Thur 15:00 - 18:00

Threehills larder

415 Nitshill Road (Entrance at the side of the block of high rise flats.)
Tue 10:30 - 13:00
Wed 10:30 - 13:00

Kennishead

60 Kennishead Ave,
Glasgow G46 8RN
Tues 10:00 - 13:00
Fri 10:00 - 13:00



Crookston Community Group

48 & 56 Beltrees Road, Crookston
www.ccg.scot 0141 882 4333
Monday to Friday 10:00 - 15:00

Govan

The Pearce Institute, 840-860
Govan Road, entrance at the war
memorial side.

Wednesday 10.30 to 15:00
Thursday 10.30 to 15:00



Pollok Pantry

Located at 25-27 Brockburn Road, G53 5BG.
Monday, Tuesday and Thursdays
10.00 - 15:00, Saturday 10:00 - 14:00

Get help with the cost of living

If you don't have enough money to live on, you might be able to get to afford essentials like bills and food. This includes the Scottish Welfare Fund and cost of living payments.

You should [check](#) if you can claim benefits - you might be able to do this even if you have a job.

Telephone: 0141 881 2462

www.cas.org.uk/bureaux/glasgow-greater-pollok-citizens-advice-bureau



Emergency Contacts

SAFETY



Ambulance, Police, Firefighters

Emergency – 999

Non-emergencies – 101



NHS 24 – 111



womensaid.org.uk



Childline
0800 1111



www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk
0808 2000 247 – Freephone, 24-hour Helpline

FLOODING



Scottish Water
Trusted to serve Scotland

Out of Hours Customer
Helpline, 0800 077 8778

COUNCIL ISSUES



Glasgow City Council Emergency Line: 0141 287 2000

Simon Community Scotland's street team 0800 027 7466. For new presentations of homelessness, Mon – Fri (9:00am – 4:45pm; 3:45pm on Fridays), please call Social Care Connect on 0141 287 0555

UTILITIES



0800 092 9290



SCOTTISHPOWER
0345 058 0002
(Mon to Fri, 9am – 5pm)
Emergency – 105



Gas Emergency
0800 111 999

nationalgrid

National Power
Cut Helpline 105



British Gas
0800 111 999

GOVERNMENT



Department
for Work &
Pensions

0800 169 0310 (JSA ESA)
0800 328 9344 (UC)



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

0845 850 289

ANIMALS



03000 999 999



0800 917 2509

MENTAL HEALTH



116 123



0800 83 85 87



08000 28 22 33



0808 808 1677



0800 12 44 222



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ChrisCast – Weekly Politics & Local News From a Glasgow MP

ChrisCast is our weekly podcast from Chris Stephens MP. What do you want to know about the work of an MP? Do you have a Community project you would like mentioned? You can send me your suggestions alistair.shaw@parliament.uk

 christephens.scot/podcast/



Newsletter

Our regular newsletter from Chris Stephens MP is available to download from our website, or you can sign up for our newsletter. The newsletter will inform you of what I have been doing in the Glasgow South West Constituency and in Westminster.

 christephens.scot/#newsletter



Constituency Work in February



CASES OPENED 257



EMAILS RECEIVED 990



CASES CLOSED 346



EMAILS SENT 901

Working hard for everyone in Glasgow South West

    christephens.scot  0141 883 0875  chris.stephens.mp@parliament.co.uk



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GLASGOW SOUTH WEST



Monthly Advice Surgeries

If you have a problem or require advice please contact my office to book an appointment at the surgery at the time and location which suits you best.

If you require help or advice out with surgery times please contact my office on **0141 883 0875** or email **chris.stephens.mp@parliament.uk** and we can arrange an appointment within the constituency office with one of my casework team.

To book an appointment call
0141 883 0875 or email
chris.stephens.mp@parliament.uk

Constituency Office

1612-1614 Paisley Road West
Glasgow G52 3QN
Open: Mon, Tues & Thur, Fri 9.30am-5pm
CLOSED Wednesday and weekends

First Thursday of the month

12.30 pm - 50p Church, Priesthill Rd G53 6QL

First Friday of the month

6.30 pm - Sainsbury's, 10 Darnley Mains Rd,
Glasgow G53 7RH

First Saturday of the month

10 am - Cardonald Library,
1113 Mosspark Drive G52 3BU

Second Friday of the month

11 am - Pearce Institute,
840-860 Govan Road G51 3UU

1 pm - Crookston Community Group,
56 Beltrees Road G53 5TF

Third Saturday of the month

10 am - Ibrox Library, 1 Midlock Street G51 1SL

12 noon - The Wedge,
1066 Barrhead Road G53 5AB

Fourth Friday of the month

12 noon - Corkerhill Community Hub
11 Corkerhill Place G52 1RD

2 pm - Riverside Hall,
29-31 Clydebrae Street G51 2AJ

Fourth Saturday of the month

12 noon - Tesco, Silverburn,
751 Barrhead Rd, Glasgow G53 6AG