



## Tessa's March 26 Update

Hello everyone,

It's been another busy month.

Thank you! Over 700 of you wrote to me about banning social media for the under 16s. This is beyond party politics: it's clear the Government can and must do far more to hold the social media giants to account for protecting our children and young people, whose health and welfare must come before these giants' mega-profits.



Here in Somerset, I joined the crew of a South West Ambulance Service on shift. It was humbling to spend time with this dedicated team and I learned a lot about their roles. It was good to hear the Health Secretary praise our Ambulance Service in Parliament for its improved response times in December.

Whilst at the Hospital, local Paramedic Science graduates at A&E explained to me how difficult it was to find a job. Only 8 of 120 graduates from their year at Uni can find work in their chosen field. Back in Westminster, I questioned the Health Secretary about this problem, which he acknowledged. I also asked the Cancer Minister about collecting data so we understand cancer treatment waiting times better – often

radiotherapy is followed by surgery or by a course of drugs, but only the first target for treatment is measured which is misleading and distorting the statistics for response times. I also asked Ministers to mandate helipads with 24/7 access for all specialist hospitals, and to consult hospitals, aircraft operators and air ambulance charities, as housing and other developments near existing helipads can affect their safe use.

In Parliament last month, I voiced my dismay at yet another Government apology for WASPI women whilst Ministers made the decision not to pay a single penny in compensation for the mistreatment of this group of women. At £1,000 to £2,950 for each woman affected, it's hardly a high cost for justice.

I've also expressed my frustration about building on flood plains and the risk to future insurance cover for homes, asked questions about Parole Board hearings, the alleged leak of Court reporting data, the veracity of data on prison capacity, the planned reductions in access to jury trials, freehold and leasehold changes for residents in care-led retirement living apartments, Parliamentary votes on the Gibraltar Treaty and treatment for those with severe and very severe ME.

I spoke about truth-telling and protection for Whistleblowers in the debate about releasing the records relating to Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor's appointment as a UK Trade Envoy.

Speaking about Bereavement Support Payments, I asked for a re-think on the unfair financial cliff-edge reached after 18 months for widowed parents, especially those with very young children.

I contributed to a debate about whether there should be a 'Minister for Men and Boys', querying the lack of data on child arrangement orders, shared parenting, paternity leave and pay, male childcaring, male victims of domestic abuse and violence at the hands of women, and highlighting the challenges and disadvantages faced by men in relation to healthcare. I emphasised the benefits of the Derek Mead Health Room at the livestock market at Junction 24, with its free health check-ups for farmers, the amazing work of Suzie Wilkinson and her colleagues from the Farming Community Network in our own area, and

the well-attended Prostate Cancer testing event at Wells Town Hall at the end of February.

Lastly, as well as a lovely visit to Weare First School, I enjoyed answering questions for an edition of “The Only Way is Wessex!” podcast and would like to thank the Wessex Learning Trust for their invitation to be their guest.

As ever, if you would like to speak to me, please do not hesitate to phone or email my office, or come to speak with me at a surgery.

Thank you.

Tessa

