

SUPPORTING CONSTITUENTS ALL YEAR AROUND

I hope you had a good Easter break.

During March, I've been busy listening to residents across Cardiff East. I've been out with my team doing street surgeries in Adamsdown, Llanedeyrn, Llanrumney, Pentwyn, Penylan, Plasnewydd, Rumney, Trowbridge and St Mellons.

If I haven't made it to your street yet and you have an issue to raise with me, please don't hesitate to get in touch using the contact details below.

jo.stevens.mp@parliament.uk
02921 329736











SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE ACROSS CARDIFF EAST WITH THE COST OF LIVING

This month has seen a whole raft of UK Labour Government measures coming into effect to help people across Cardiff East with the cost of living.

Wage Rises

From 1 April, full-time workers on the National Living Wage have seen their pay increase by £900 a year, whilst those aged 18-to-20 on the National Minimum Wage have had a pay rise of £1,500.

Extra rights and protections at work

From this week, if you are ill, you'll be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) from the first day of your illness.

This means you don't have to make yourself even more ill by going into work (and spreading your illness) because you can't afford to lose four days' pay. And for the very first time, 1.2 million workers, the majority of whom are low-paid women, get access to SSP.

Paternity and parental leave will now be available from your first day at work, removing the old requirement to be in a job for months before qualifying for support and meaning that new Dads get to spend the most important time with their new baby and partner. And a new right to leave for bereaved Dads and partners.

Lifting children out of poverty

We have abolished the two-child benefit limit, which will help lift 3070 children in Cardiff East out of poverty and 450,000 across the UK.

This will make a huge difference for children. The Child Poverty Action Group have described parents telling them that their children will now have better quality food, clothes that aren't completely worn out, be able to go on a school trip without getting into debt, have a new mattress and have swimming lessons.

Pension Increases

Because of our commitment to the Triple Lock, State Pensions are increasing by up to £575 this year.

Lower bills

Energy bills are being reduced by ban average of £117.

The energy price cap has been reduced and will be frozen until the end of June. £53 million of support for people who rely on heating oil has been announced.

Rail fares have also been frozen for the first time in 30 years.

Because of the war in Iran and its impact across the Middle East and on economies globally, I know constituents are concerned about the cost of car journeys. Fuel duty has been frozen until September and what happens then is being kept under very careful review.

Drivers in Cardiff East can compare the cost of fuel offered by all petrol stations across the UK as part of the UK Labour Government's scheme to help people to shop around for the best price.

To compare the prices in your local area, click here.

Increases to Universal Credit (Standard Allowance)

Finally, 17,000 people across Cardiff East receive Universal Credit, many in working households. The Universal Credit Standard Allowance is being increased by 6.8%.

Watch my videos for more.

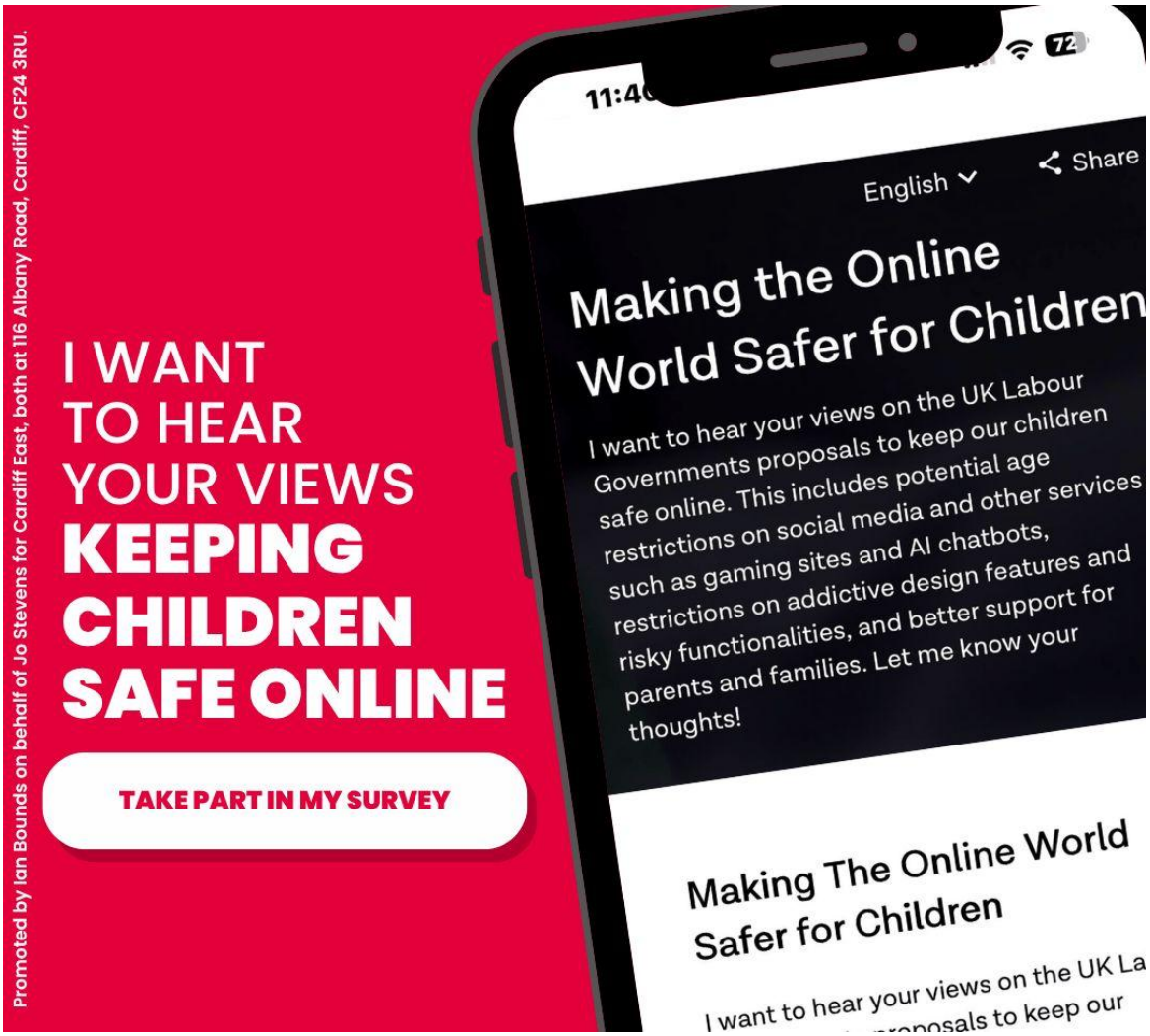
NEWS FROM CARDIFF EAST

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE ONLINE

I know how much parents in Cardiff East worry about what their children see on their phones. Technology is moving fast and it's hard to keep up.

That's why I'm asking for your views. The UK Government is consulting on a range of measures to keep our children safe online, including an outright ban on social media for under-16s and a 'curfew' on addictive features like infinite scrolling.

We need to get this right for the next generation. Please take 5 minutes to share your views. Click here to take part.



CARDIFF LABOUR COUNCIL - LOWEST COUNCIL TAX IN WALES

Fourteen years of Tory and Liberal Democrat austerity decimated council budgets and many services. The UK Labour Government has ended austerity.

Providing a record budget settlement for Welsh Government has meant better settlements for our local Councils. This month, Cardiff Council has been able to set a budget with no cuts to frontline public services for the first time in over a decade.

Residents will rightly ask, what does this mean for me? Cardiff Labour Council's budget puts fairness, growth and residents first and we have the lowest Council Tax in the whole of Wales.

The budget secures:

- £14.1m extra for schools
- £2m extra for highways (pavements, roads and potholes)
- £14m extra for street cleaning
- £500,000 extra for neighbourhood regeneration
- £8.9m extra for children's services
- £8.6m extra for adult social care services

Read more about Cardiff Council's budget here.



A NEW HOSPITAL FOR CARDIFF

The University Hospital of Wales in the Heath has been the backbone of our NHS in Cardiff for more than 50 years, but the building is no longer fit for purpose. Anyone who works at the Heath or has been there for treatment or to visit someone, can see the conditions of the buildings.

Welsh Labour believes people in Cardiff East deserve world-class clinical health facilities, and our NHS staff deserve a workplace that matches their dedication and expertise. That's why, if Welsh Labour is re-elected in May, UHW will be replaced with a modern hospital fit for the future.

But this is a political choice. Plaid Cymru claims Wales cannot afford this investment, while Reform refuses to be honest about their plans for our NHS. Welsh Labour is the only party with a bold and deliverable plan for the future of our NHS in Wales.



CARDIFF EAST'S SCHOOL FOOD HERO

Huge congratulations to Kerry Bratcher from St Illtyd's Catholic High School who is Cardiff East's School Food Hero.

Kerry has been a fixture at the school since 2006, working her way up over the years to lead the catering team. The pupils are at the heart of everything she does, and she consistently goes the extra mile to ensure every child is well-fed and supported.

Thank you, Kerry, for almost two decades of service. It's clear from the many public nominations submitted, that you've made a lasting impact on the entire school community.



WELSH RESTAURANTS OF THE YEAR AWARS

Its great news that 14 of our local restaurants and cafes across Penylan, Roath and Cyncoed were shortlisted for the Welsh Restaurant Awards.

Six local businesses took home an award on the night:

- Bodega (Cyncoed)
- Sushi Life (Roath)
- Casablanca (Roath)
- Taco Bull (Roath)
- Hotpot Spot (Roath)
- Shaam Nights (Roath)

A massive congratulations to all our winners and finalists. It's wonderful to see these hard-working Cardiff East businesses get the recognition they deserve.



ACTION ON VETS' FEES

Thousands of pet owners across Cardiff East will benefit from the first major overhaul of the veterinary sector in sixty years.

Following an investigation initiated by the UK Labour Government, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) found that vet fees have risen at nearly twice the rate of inflation.

Under new regulations starting later this year, pet owners will see several key changes:

- Upfront Pricing: Vet practices must publish a "comprehensive" price list for standard services, including consultations and common procedures.
- Written Estimates: For any treatment expected to cost £500 or more, you will receive a written estimate in advance and an itemised bill.
- Transparency on Ownership: Businesses must clearly state whether they are an independent local vet or part of a larger corporate group.
- Easier Comparisons: Price and ownership info will be available through the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons' "Find a Vet" service, making it easier to compare local practices.

These reforms will help pet owners understand exactly what they are paying for and choose the best value, quality care their pets deserve.

PENYLAN LIBRARY TRANSFORMATION

Penylan Library has been completely transformed.

I dropped in at the library recently with Councillors, Dan De'Ath and Lee Bridgeman to hear more about the services the library is now able to provide; from study spaces and a new community room to a refreshed children's area for story time and an expanded non-fiction collection. They've really maximised the space and the library is much lighter and brighter.

If you haven't been in lately, it's well worth a visit to see the difference for yourself.

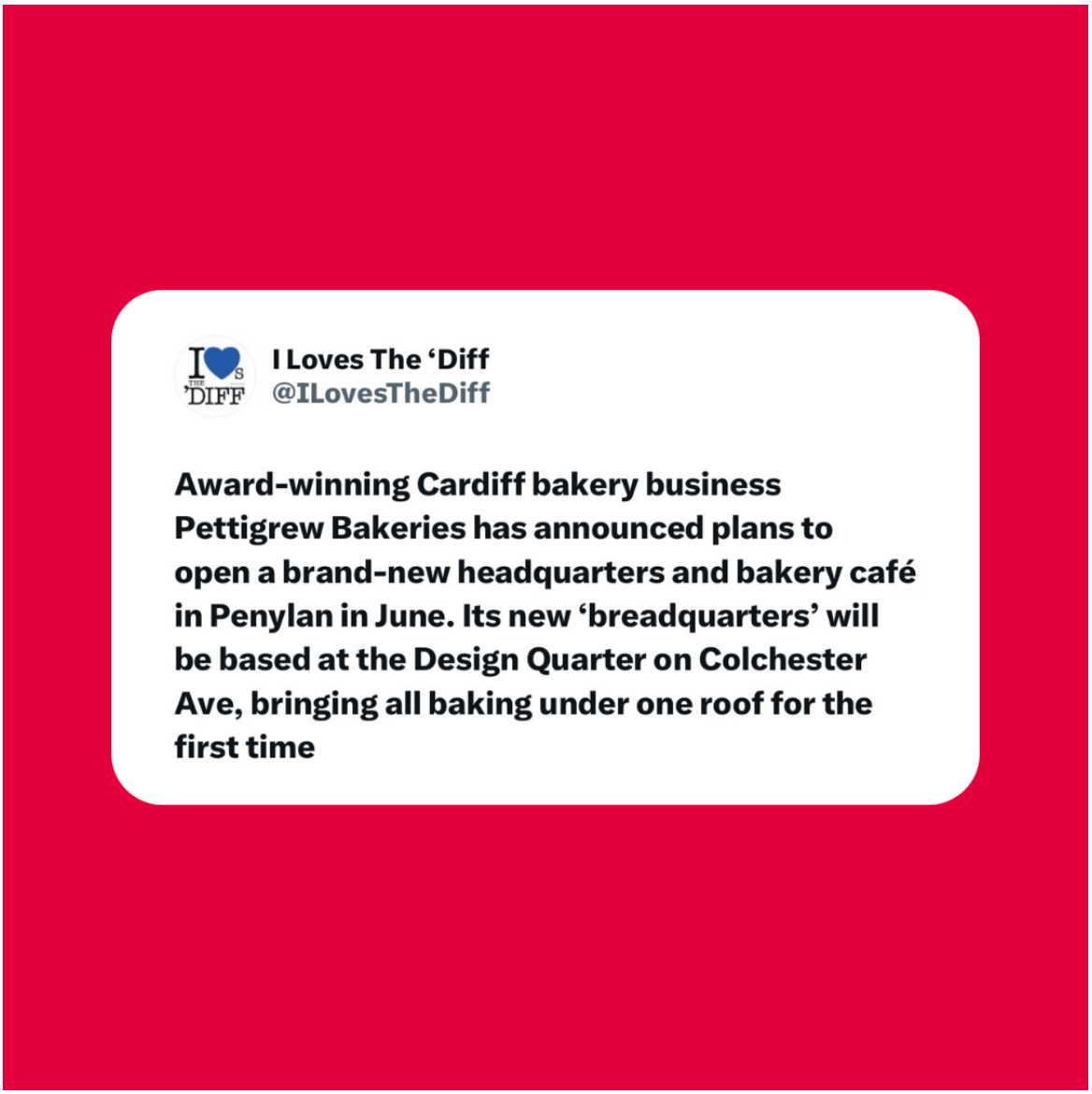


PETTIGREW BAKERIES HQ

Pettigrew Bakeries was established almost a decade ago, following the success of the Pettigrew Tea Rooms which have locations across Cardiff.

I'm really pleased that Pettigrew have chosen Penylan as the home for their new headquarters. The award-winning independent bakery is a brilliant addition to the local businesses that call Cardiff East their home.

I look forward to welcoming them to Penylan very soon.



CARDIFF CHILDREN'S LITERACY FESTIVAL

Strong reading skills are one of the best indicators of a child's future success. Research shows that reading for pleasure is one of the most powerful drivers of academic progress by age 16.

However, many are still being left behind. Only 40% of children from working-class backgrounds leave primary school reading at the expected level. For boys, the gap is even wider, with only a quarter reading for fun.

Cardiff Children's Literacy Festival is back again this year, with lots of authors and illustrators sharing their stories, plus workshops, crafts, and games. This is a brilliant way to introduce children to a world of imagination.

Book tickets here.



2026 FA COMMUNITY SHIELD

The FA Community Shield is returning to Cardiff's Principality Stadium for the first time in twenty years. This is a huge win for our city which will bring top tier footballers and tens of thousands of fans supporting local hotels, restaurants, and shops.

The match will draw a global audience, showcasing Cardiff as a world-class sporting destination with a proven track record of hosting the Rugby World Cup and Champions League finals, to name just two examples.



SUPPORT CARDIFF FOODBANK

I've been a supporter of Cardiff Foodbank for a long time and I know many Cardiff East constituents are too.

Supporting Cardiff Foodbank has never been easier.

Download BanktheFood app and get regular updates about their most needed items and information about where you can find your nearest drop-off points. Download the app here.



NEWS FROM ACROSS WALES

A NEW CHAPTER FOR WALES

I was at Newport Market for the launch of Welsh Labour's Senedd election campaign alongside Eluned Morgan and our brilliant candidates from across Wales.

This year marks a new chapter for Wales, focused on delivering the security and opportunities that people across Cardiff East and Wales deserve.

The First Minister unveiled five key election pledges:

- Tackling the cost of living through cheaper bus fares, lower energy bills and expanding childcare.
- Creating Jobs for the future with an Energy Independent Wales and a new Lifelong Retraining Guarantee.
- Launching a new deal for our NHS with £4bn to build new hospitals, same-day mental health support and a focus on women's health.
- Protecting the planet by cleaning up our rivers and seas, growing our National Forest and cracking down on fly-tipping.
- Delivering a fairer future ending homelessness, a pay-rise for the lowest paid workers and raising school standards.



BACKING OUR STEEL COMMUNITIES

The UK Labour Government is committed to our Welsh steelmaking communities, including constituents who work at 7Steel and Tata.

In March we published our UK Steel Strategy, with the aim of boosting domestic steel production so that 50% of steel used in the UK is made here. Of that 50%, half is expected to come from Wales.

There are changes to tariffs and quotas for any steel imported into the UK, that we make here. We're cracking down on the dumping of "dirty steel" from abroad and giving our steel producers a fairer playing field.

There are changes to public procurement for steel to back our steelworkers and steel communities. Welsh steelmaking now has a secure and bright future ahead.

Read more about the UK Labour Government's Steel Strategy here and watch my video from the launch here.







PORT OF PORT TALBOT DEVELOPMENT

Port Talbot will be at the forefront of a pioneering new clean energy industry, backing thousands of good jobs and driving growth across South Wales, thanks to a £64 million grant from the UK Labour Government.

This investment will help the deep water port at Port Talbot be developed into the UK's first specific floating offshore wind port and is expected to bring thousands of jobs and over a billion pounds of investment to the area.

The UK Labour Government has also backed steelworkers and the community in Port Talbot and downstream at Llanwern with £100 million in direct support, and £500 million for the construction of a new Electric Arc Furnace ensuring that the town will manufacture clean steel into the future.

Thanks to our investment, the work of trade unions and local businesses, and the dedication and spirit of local people, Port Talbot and the whole region has a very bright future.

Read more about this investment here.









NHS WAITING LISTS FALLING

Waiting lists have fallen for eight months in a row. This is the most sustained period of reduction on record.

This follows the largest budget settlement for Welsh Government from the UK Labour Government since devolution began.



LOCAL GROWTH FUND

I recently joined the First Minister, Eluned Morgan to launch Wales's Local Growth Fund in Ebbw Vale. This is a UK Labour Government Fund of over half a billion pounds for communities across Wales, to drive productivity and increase jobs and opportunities for people.

It is another example of the UK and Welsh governments working together in partnership to deliver for our communities.

Read more about the Local Growth Fund here and watch a video from the launch here.

WELSH DEFENCE SECURITY CLUSTER

In an increasingly uncertain world, Wales's vital role in the defence of the United Kingdom is becoming ever more important.

With the signing of the £50 million UK Labour Government Defence Growth Deal for Wales and the establishment of the Defence and Security Cluster, we are ensuring that Wales is best placed to contribute both to our country's national security, but to also drive economic growth through increased defence spending and manufacturing.

Read more about the establishment of the Defence and Security Cluster here.





SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE INTO WORK

More young people in Cardiff East will get the support they need to find their first job through the expansion of the UK Labour Government's Youth Hubs.

These hubs will provide tailored training and direct links to employers with live vacancies. Local providers understand our community best,

which is why funding is being devolved to the Welsh Government to ensure support is delivered where it's needed most.

To back this up, a new Youth Jobs Grant will give businesses £3,000 for every 18–24-year-old they hire who has been looking for work for six months.

These changes will ensure every young person in our area has the opportunity to learn, earn, and succeed. Read more about UK Labour's plan to get more young people into work here.



EXPANDING THE EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE

The Welsh Labour Government is expanding the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) to help more 16- to 18-year-olds stay in education.

From September 2026, income thresholds will rise to £24,570 (one dependent) and £27,273 (two+ dependents), making an additional 1500 students eligible for the £40 weekly payment.
Our two Labour Governments are committed to removing financial barriers like travel and meal costs to ensure every child has the opportunity to stay in education.

Read more about the changes here.



COAL TIP SAFETY

I joined Deputy First Minister Huw Irranca-Davies in Tylorstown to reaffirm the commitment of our two Labour Governments to coal tip safety and maintenance.

Managing the legacy of our mining industry is a top priority. To ensure these sites remain safe, the UK Labour Government has provided £143 million in funding, alongside the Welsh Labour Government's investment of over £110 million this Senedd term. Watch a video from my visit here.





SAFER STREETS

Our UK Labour Government is taking action to cut crime and keep our streets safe through investment in recruiting more officers. I recently joined the Policing Minister in Butetown to see how the "Clear, Hold, Build" strategy by South Wales Police is delivering results for the local community there.

This strategy is also being rolled out at my request and that of our Labour Councillors Grace Ferguson-Thorne and Owen Llewellyn-Jones, in Adamsdown. By clearing out criminal activity and reclaiming public spaces, South Wales Police are working to ensure Adamsdown is safer for everyone.

As part of this work, facial recognition technology is being used to help officers identify and catch those who cause harm. This is a key part of the plan to ensure every neighbourhood is a safer place for everyone. Watch my video from the visit here.

WREXHAM CITY OF CULTURE

Wrexham has officially been shortlisted for UK City of Culture, and as the only Welsh city in the running, I hope the whole of Wales is behind them.

Wrexham is a cultural powerhouse, home to a new Creative Industries Hub, the new National Football Museum, and Wrexham AFC which has become a global phenomenon in recent years.

A successful bid could secure up to £10 million in UK Labour Government funding and potentially generate over £200 million for the wider region by boosting tourism and investment.

Pob lwc, Wrexham! We’re all rooting for you to bring the title home to Wales.



INVESTING IN ANGLESEY FREEPORT

I was in Anglesey in March to mark the UK Labour Government's £25m seed capital funding to improve infrastructure, attract inward investment and create employment opportunities in Anglesey Freeport. I also got the chance to visit the site of one of the first Freeport projects.

What is a Freeport? It's a designated geographical area in which business who locate and invest can qualify for incentives such as tax reliefs, business rate reductions and incentives to create jobs and employ people. Anglesey's Freeport is expected to create 5,000 new jobs by 2030.

This significant announcement follows the UK Labour Government's recent announcements of the UK's first new fleet of small modular nuclear reactors on Wylfa and a North Wales AI Growth Zone, which taken together will be transformational for people in North Wales, providing opportunities for generations to come.

Read more about the announcement here and watch a video from my visit here.

REGENERATING SWANSEA CIVIC CENTRE

The UK Labour Government has announced a £20 million investment to transform Swansea's iconic seafront.

I was excited to announce this funding alongside Swansea West MP, Torsten Bell and Councillor Rob Stewart, which will drive the regeneration of the Civic Centre and the creation of a new waterfront district.

The project will turn the area into a major destination, providing better leisure facilities, homes, and workspaces for local people. Read more about the project here or watch a video from my visit here.

NEW JOBS IN LIFE SCIENCE

Wales's life sciences sector is thriving and is a sector we want to see grow through the UK Government's Industrial Strategy. I visited Norgine in Hengoed, to announce a major expansion of their facility, which will create 44 new skilled jobs and secure the production of essential medicines here in Wales.

This is a massive vote of confidence in our world-class Welsh workforce and a key part of our mission to drive economic growth. Watch a video from my visit here.

SUPPORTING THE CREATIVE SECTOR

I recently spoke at the launch of Media Cymru's 2026 showcase year at Outernet London, celebrating Welsh talent, technology and collaboration in the creative industries.

Wales punches well above its weight in TV and culture. The UK Labour Government is working alongside the Welsh Labour Government to support our homegrown creative industries and unlock opportunity for this important sector.



OPENNING THE LONDON STOCK EXCHANGE

I was proud to open the London Stock Exchange to celebrate the incredible Welsh women leaders shaping the future of Wales's economy in financial technology services.

This UK Labour Government is committed to working with innovators to attract investment and create high-skilled employment right across Wales.

By supporting the brilliant women leading these companies, we are ensuring that Wales remains at the forefront of global technology and financial innovation. Watch a video of my visit here.





EXPANDING CHILDCARE FOR ARMED FORCES FAMILIES

A new Defence scheme to transform support for forces families with young children will be rolled out across Wales from September 2026.

The UK Labour Government will provide a reimbursement of childcare costs for eligible working UK Armed Forces families with children aged 9 months until they reach 3 years old in Wales.

This major boost for UK Armed Forces families will save forces families living in Wales up to £6,000 per year for each child and will help with the cost of living as they serve to protect the nation.

Read more about the expansion of the Ministry of Defence's Early Years childcare reimbursement scheme here.



A PAY RISE FOR THOUSANDS OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Teaching assistants are at the backbone of our schools. The Welsh Labour Government has moved thousands of teaching assistants from level 1 to level 2 roles, recognising the important contribution they make.

The next Welsh Labour Government will build on this recognition of teaching assistants with a commitment to ensure that they are paid year-round, not just in term time.

Read more about the support Welsh Labour is offering to teaching assistants here.

NEWS FROM PARLIAMENT

SPRING STATEMENT

The Chancellor's latest Spring Statement shows that Labour's economic plan is working. After years of instability, we have fixed the foundations of our economy and are putting more money into the pockets of families across Wales.

Growth: The UK now has the fastest growth in the G7. By the next election, families are set to be over £1,000 a year better off in real terms.

Lower Borrowing: With six interest rate cuts and borrowing at a six-year low, we are spending £3 billion less on debt interest. This is money that can be reinvested in our communities.

IRAN CONFLICT

The UK Government has long supported diplomatic negotiations to prevent Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon and strongly condemned the regime's appalling treatment of its own people.

The Prime Minister has been very clear that he will always take decisions in the UK national interest. He will always do what is best for the people of the UK. That is why our steps are very clearly limited to taking defensive action to protect British lives and UK interests.

With hundreds of thousands of UK nationals in the region, we have also been working around the clock to support them and get those who need to leave, home to the UK.

Every step the UK Government takes will continue to be shaped by our national interest and protecting working people from economic shocks.

We are responding to this crisis with the calm, level-headed leadership this situation demands - clear, consistent, and focused on our national interest:

- Protecting our people in the region and our allies without being drawn into a wider war.
- Protecting people here at home from the impact on the cost of living.
- Working towards a swift resolution to the conflict.



LATE PAYMENT CRACKDOWN

Late payments can be extremely difficult for small businesses, forcing them to decide if they can afford to keep their business running or pay employees.

There is no excuse. The UK labour Government has announced the strongest, most robust changes to payment laws in over a generation. The new laws will transform the fortunes of small businesses and make their day-to-day operations much easier.

Read more about our action to tackle late payments here.

PUBLIC SECTOR FRAUD

Every pound stolen by fraudsters is a pound taken away from our schools, hospitals, and communities. That is why the UK Labour Government is relentless in its crackdown, using smarter data and expert investigators to protect every penny.

In the last year alone, we have recovered £7.53 billion for the taxpayer. We are also intensifying the hunt for COVID-related fraud, already recovering nearly £400 million.

To accelerate these efforts, we are establishing the Public Authorities Fraud Investigation and Enforcement Service. This new unit will recruit elite investigators to recover funds and tackle the estimated £55 to £81 billion lost annually to fraud and error.

These measures are part of our commitment to a more agile state that ensures public money serves taxpayers. Read more about the measures we are taking here.

REMOVING HEREDITARY PEERS FROM THE HOUSE OF LORDS

The UK Labour Government was elected on a clear manifesto commitment to remove the right of hereditary peers to sit and vote in the House of Lords.

This change to hereditary peers is long overdue. No-one should have the automatic right to sit in the House of Lords and make laws, simply on the basis of the family they were born into.

The Bill will become law in May, after which no peer will be a member of the House of Lords on the basis of their hereditary peerage.

Read more about the removal of hereditary peers here.

HILLSBOROUGH LAW

The families of Hillsborough victims have suffered unimaginable pain and have been denied the justice they deserve for more than three decades.

The UK Labour Government is addressing this injustice by delivering the Hillsborough Law, ensuring justice for victims of all public tragedies.

I'm pleased the Senedd has backed this vital Bill that creates a legal Duty of Candour, boosts legal aid for victims and introduces a new criminal offence of misleading the public.

It is deeply disappointing that Plaid Cymru chose to abstain on the vote. This should be about justice, not party politics. Labour is focused on

protecting the public and ensuring governments and public bodies learn from public tragedies.

Read more about the Hillsborough Law here.



ORGREAVE INQUIRY

For over four decades, mining communities have lived with unanswered questions.

The UK Labour Government has delivered on our manifesto promise to ensure the truth of Orgreave finally comes to light. We have launched an independent inquiry, chaired by The Right Reverend Dr Pete Wilcox to examine the events at Orgreave Coking Plant on 18 June 1984.

We are breaking the silence that has lasted for generations. Read more about the establishment of the Orgreave Inquiry here.



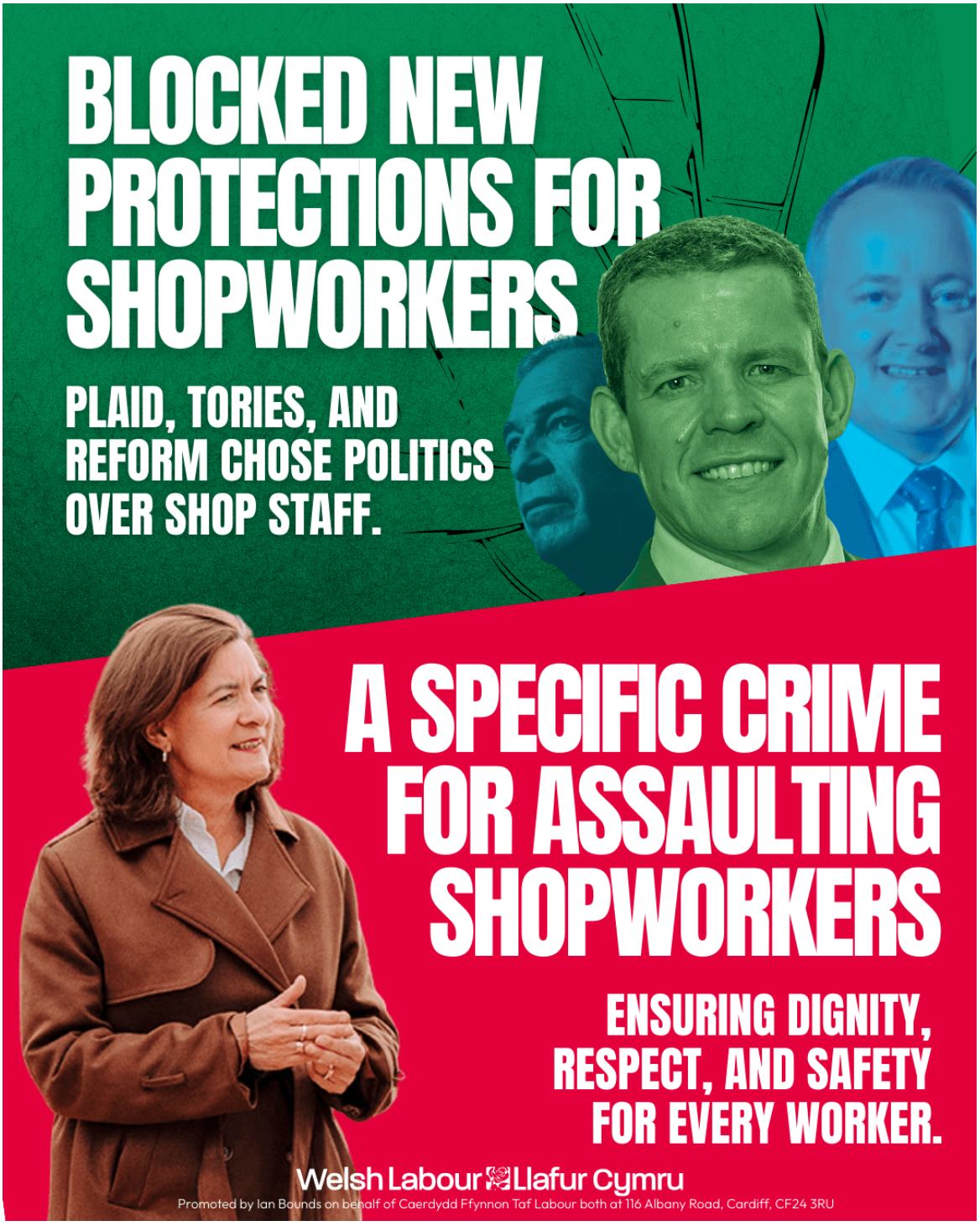
PROTECTING SHOPWORKERS

The UK Labour Government is taking decisive action to protect shopworkers workers by introducing a standalone offence for assaults on shop staff.

This new law ensures that those who face violence while at work receive the legal protection they deserve.

Shockingly, Plaid Cymru joined forces with Reform and the Conservatives in the Senedd to reject this vital measure applying in Wales.

Labour remains committed to delivering security, dignity and respect for all workers across Wales.


BLOCKED NEW PROTECTIONS FOR SHOPWORKERS
PLAID, TORIES, AND REFORM CHOSE POLITICS OVER SHOP STAFF.
A SPECIFIC CRIME FOR ASSAULTING SHOPWORKERS
ENSURING DIGNITY, RESPECT, AND SAFETY FOR EVERY WORKER.
Welsh Labour Llafur Cymru
Promoted by Ian Bounds on behalf of Caerdydd Ffynnon Taf Labour both at 116 Albany Road, Cardiff, CF24 3RU

Labour