

STEPHEN TIMMS

FORTNIGHTLY NEWSLETTER FROM PARLIAMENT



Stephen launches APPG report

Stephen has launched a report written by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on TOEIC following its recent inquiry.

The inquiry concluded that tens of thousands of international students had their visas revoked after the Home Office used “*confused, misleading, incomplete and unsafe*” evidence which was provided by the US firm running English language tests, ETS.

The APPG on TOEIC, which Stephen chairs, concluded that students who had their visas revoked had no proper right to challenge the decision. Some were detained in removal centres, lost their jobs and were left homeless as a result, even though they were in the country legally.

Based on evidence gathered from affected students, legal experts and technical experts, the report states that Home Office officials themselves had said they were unsure whether the evidence against the

students was robust enough to stand up in court.

Speaking at the launch, Stephen said: *“One thing that struck me throughout our hearings was that evidence from ETS – the basis for denying visas to thousands of overseas students, often with catastrophic effects – quite simply could not be relied upon.*

“Some students have – at great cost – managed to clear their names. However, universities still see them as a risk due to the nature of the allegations made against them. As things stand, and without help from the government, their futures remain bleak. This report sets out crucial steps we believe the government must now take.”

The Home Secretary - who has read the report - has announced that he plans to make a statement to the House of Commons in response to its findings before the summer recess.

A photograph of Stephen Timms, a Member of Parliament, speaking in the House of Commons. He is wearing a dark blue suit, a light blue shirt, and a red patterned tie. He is gesturing with his right hand while speaking. The background shows the green leather upholstery and wooden paneling of the House of Commons.

A MESSAGE FROM STEPHEN TIMMS

Animal welfare

The House of Commons recently had its first opportunity to debate the main principles of the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill. It seeks to increase the maximum penalty for animal welfare offences from six months to five years.

We can be proud in this country of having some of the best animal welfare practices and laws in the world, and the Bill does what it needs to do to enhance that reputation. The landmark Animal Welfare Act 2006 is something that I am very proud of and delivering maximum

sentencing through the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill will ensure that our high standard is maintained and builds on those original foundations.

As well as backing this Bill, the Government needs to place a statutory duty on local councils to enforce the Animal Welfare Act, so that it has proper teeth, and to give local councils adequate resources to enforce the law.

This Bill has been a long time coming. I'm glad, therefore, that it will finally reach the statute books.



House of Commons
Exiting the European
Committee

The consequences of "No Deal" for UK business

Fourteenth Report of Session 2017-18
Report, together with form
ing to the report

Brexit Select Committee report

One of Stephen's biggest parliamentary commitments is membership of the all-party Brexit Select Committee.

Last week – with Stephen's support and despite opposition from Eurosceptic members Jacob Rees-Mogg and Peter Bone – the Committee published a report on *"The consequences of 'No Deal' for UK business"*.

A 'No Deal' Brexit would cause severe disruption, and put many jobs at risk. The report spells out the impact on key sectors:

- Undermining UK car-manufacturing competitiveness, imposing an average £2700 import duty on every UK-made car exported to Europe;
- Creating medicine shortages,

especially for the first three months after Brexit;

- A "disaster" for farming, with the two thirds of UK agriculture exports which go to the EU facing import duties up to 50%;
- Severely disrupting the service sector, accounting for 80% of the UK economy, threatening small firms especially;
- Leaving an "untenable" vacuum for UK-based scientific research.

Speaking after the report's publication, Stephen commented: *"All the sector representatives who gave evidence to us warned of damaging consequences from a 'No Deal' Brexit. No responsible Government should contemplate it."*

The full report can be read [here](#).

Visit by Langdon Academy

A group of year 6 pupils from Langdon Academy have visited the House of Commons.

The group watched a short introductory film about the House of Commons in the Parliamentary Education Centre, before being given a tour of the building by guides.

Afterwards, they met with Stephen in a committee room to hear more about the work of an MP. The group – based in Stephen's constituency of East Ham – were able to hear about the functioning of parliament,

the way laws are passed and all the latest news on Brexit. After this they quizzed Stephen about topics of concern.

Speaking after the event, Stephen said: *"It was a real pleasure to host the group. They obviously have a strong interest in politics both at a global and a local level and raised a variety of issues with me from climate change to litter picking."*

One said that he would like to be an MP in the future and this is something I encourage all young people to consider."



Stephen hosts arthritis reception

Stephen hosted a report launch for the charity Versus Arthritis. The new report – entitled 'Working it out' - explores individuals' experiences of the Access to Work scheme and the charity's recommendations for improving it.

The event was an opportunity for MPs to hear first-hand from people with arthritis about the difficulties they have had with the scheme. Copies of the new report were also available, detailing the recommendations produced by Versus Arthritis. These include giving people access to the right equipment to support them in their role and to claim travel costs easily, improving communication with the scheme and having a more responsive review process that recognises the changing needs of those suffering from the condition.

Speaking after the event, Stephen said: *"With a new Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work in place and a spending review expected imminently, the coming months are the perfect time to raise awareness in Parliament of how vital the Access to Work Scheme can be for people with arthritis. Unfortunately, in too many cases the Scheme has been failing some of the most vulnerable. I support the recommendations of this new report and I call on the new Minister to address these issues without delay."*



Meet the team...

If you call Stephen's office, or come along to one of his regular advice surgeries, you are likely to be helped by one of his staff.



Ali Gordon, Office Manager

"My role is to oversee the everyday management of the office and ensure that Stephen is able to offer his support to as many local individuals and organisations as possible."



Rachel Evans, Parliamentary Assistant

"As Stephen's researcher my job is to make sure that he has all the information he needs to represent East Ham in Parliament, and for his work on the Brexit Select Committee."



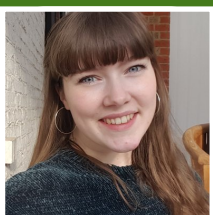
Amy Dolley, Caseworker

"Naomi and I advise on a wide range of issues on a day-to-day basis. We love meeting constituents and providing support to those who feel like they have no one else to turn to."



Naomi Grant, Caseworker

"As a caseworker it can be very rewarding to resolve long standing issues that people have experienced. It's important for constituents to be aware of how we can help."



Rachel Mander, Diary Manager

"I organise Stephen's day-to-day diary and respond to all the invitations he receives throughout the week. In short, I have to make sure he is in the right place at the right time!"