

## **BRIEFING – February 2008**

### **Johann Lamont MSP**

#### **Welcome to Holyrood Briefing**

I hope you find the information here of interest. This briefing is distributed across the constituency. If you know of any group or organisation that would like to be added to the mailing list, please get in touch.

#### **THE MISSING £34 MILLION**

Speaking in the Scottish Parliament recently, I highlighted the fact that £34 million has been made available to the Scottish Government to spend on the needs of disabled children but Ministers have been unable to show where the money has been spent.

Following a hugely effective campaign by the families of disabled children, a report *Aiming High for Disabled Children: Better Support for Families* was produced which focussed on the need for a massive change in the way that services and support are provided to the families of disabled children.

The report included recommendations on respite support for families and the need for parents to be involved directly in shaping those services. The UK Government made £340m available - and Scotland's share was £34m. In Northern Ireland and Wales, the money has been directed to deliver on the recommendations in the report, but not in Scotland.

In Parliament, I asked how could, "the budget presented by the Executive, driven as it is by tax cuts, benefit the most vulnerable and excluded in our communities".

I went on to focus on the struggles of families to support children with disabilities and sought an assurance that, "the £34 million is not a windfall that the government will use to fund its tax cutting priorities but is recognised as critical funding to change the lives of vulnerable children".

This issue remains an important one. Parents of children will continue to fight for the rights of their families to be met and I shall certainly be doing all I can to help.

#### **KEEP WELL**

I am delighted that a Keep Well project will run in Pollok over the next 2 years.

The aim of this project is to help people aged 45 to 64 in improving their health. It is especially aimed at combating heart problems and diabetes.

The programme will have over £1 million funding and will support doctors in identifying people who have health problems and helping them overcome these problems. In particular, they will target support in smoking cessation, weight control and ending alcohol abuse.

There will also be help in referring people for support in handling their finances and achieving employment.

I am hopeful that this will contribute to tackling some of the deep seated and long term health problems in the constituency.

### **JOHANN LAMONT SPEAKS OUT**

The Scottish Parliament tries to be open and accessible – and it certainly welcomes a broad range of visitors.

This month we celebrated the role our trade unions play in our communities and in the work place with a week long series of meetings and events.

I had the privilege to meet the trade unions and families campaigning for stronger legislation on corporate manslaughter. We heard moving testimonies from families who had lost loved ones because of dangerous work places and their demand that companies should be held to account for their failure to protect their employees.

The meeting made a compelling case for action and I shall certainly be keen to support measures that tackle this problem.

When we go to work, we are all entitled to know that our health and safety are paramount.

### **THANK YOU**

As ever, in the run up to Christmas, I had the privilege of choosing a design for my Christmas card.

While plans have to be made early - and Primary 7 pupils across the constituency have to think about Santa and snow in October - it is always a real pleasure to select designs which show off our young people's talents so well.

The winners were:

**Heather Ramsay  
Lourdes Primary**

**Bronwyn Gilgallon  
Darnley Primary**

**Thomis Faulds  
Hillington Primary**

**Phillip O'Neill  
Howford School**

I know from the comments of many constituents that the final result brought a smile to many faces!

I also had the great privilege of visiting lots of primary schools on either side of the New Year - and I want to thank Hillington, Howford, St Monica's, Lourdes, Craigton and St George's primaries for making me feel so welcome. Schools across the constituency do great work all year round - but it is hard to beat a visit to our primaries preparing for Santa to savour the festive spirit.

### **CONTACT DETAILS**

If you wish to find out more about any of the issues highlighted, or wish to raise any other matter with me, please contact my office:

by telephone on **0141 270 1890**,

by fax on **0141 270 1891**,

in writing to

**Constituency Office, The Wedge, 1066 Barrhead Road, Pollok, Glasgow, G53 5AB**

or by e-mail to

**[johann.lamont.msp@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:johann.lamont.msp@scottish.parliament.uk)**

### **SURGERIES**

Friday 8th February - 2.00pm - Labour Rooms, 996 Mosspark Drive, Cardonald

Saturday 9th February - 10.00am - The Wedge, 1066 Barrhead Road, Pollok

Friday 15th February - 2.00pm - The Wedge, 1066 Barrhead Road, Pollok

Saturday 16th February - 10.00am - Labour Rooms, 996 Mosspark Drive, Cardonald

**Johann's website** : [www.johannlamontmsp.org.uk](http://www.johannlamontmsp.org.uk)