



# Carolyn Harris MP

Member of Parliament for Swansea East

## Ending 2023 with a record-breaking Everyone Deserves

As you will have seen, everyone deserves a Christmas was our biggest yet, with 1200 hampers delivered across Swansea and the surrounding areas. Along with providing for festive events throughout December and delivering 100 cooked dinners to those who were alone or vulnerable on Christmas Eve, we really were able to reach more households than ever before. I cannot say thank you enough to all those who donated or volunteered their time to make this happen. I honestly believe that our little part of South Wales demonstrates better than anyone, the difference that can be made by a community coming together and helping each other.

It was lovely to be able to have a little bit of downtime once all the parties, hampers and dinners were finished and spend Christmas and new year with the family – recharging the batteries before returning to Westminster in early January for the start of what we expect to be a General Election year.



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## Returning to Westminster

There was no time to ease gently back into the world of Westminster this year as I had been selected to sit on the Criminal Justice Bill Committee, meeting four times per week throughout January. The Bill had some crucial amendments tabled, and it was our responsibility as the committee to scrutinise the legislation and consider each of the new clauses.

I, myself, tabled a new clause to make it an offence to enable or profit from prostitution. Whilst it is illegal to, for example, place a prostitution advert in a phone box, our laws have failed to keep up with technology, meaning that those same adverts can quite legitimately be placed online on pimping websites. These are website dedicated solely to advertising people for prostitution and the biggest ones are making millions of pounds profit. My amendment sought to outlaw this scandalous practice.

The Committee Stage is now complete, and the Bill will return at Report Stage at a date yet to be confirmed. I have re-tabled my amendment to be considered again at this Stage.





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## In the chamber

Whilst the Bill Committee dominated most of January, I was fortunate to be drawn for the opening Question in Welsh Orals this month. These give all Members of Parliament, but especially those of us with Welsh constituencies, the opportunity to ask a Question to the Secretary of State for Wales and his Ministers, about things that are affecting our communities.

My question was on the cost of living and specifically, the impact on older people. I referenced a study on pensioner poverty in Wales by the Bevan Foundation, which found that with nearly a quarter of Wales' population being aged 65 and over, there are more Welsh pensioners experiencing poverty than anywhere else in the UK. I highlighted the shocking statistics of one in ten pensioners skipping meals and one in five going without heating and asked what the Government's plans were to bring an end to this dire situation.

I was disappointed by the weak response I received from the Secretary of State, who after a brief mention of pensions and payments, focused his response on something I had not asked about.



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## Back in Swansea

It is always good to get back home at the end of the week and take the opportunity to visit businesses and charities in and around Swansea that are there to support constituents. So, I was delighted to come home at the end of the first week back of the new year and take a trip down the road to the Air Ambulance Base and Headquarters in Dafen.

The Wales Air Ambulance Charity is entirely funded by donations, so it is vital that we all show our support for this crucial emergency service. They have some of the most advanced air ambulances in the UK which means they can get to those that need them quickly – saving precious times and, consequently, saving lives. With on-board critical care practitioners, they administer treatment at the scene – including blood transfusions, anaesthesia and emergency surgery – before transporting patients to hospital.

Whilst we all hope never to be in a position of needing to use their services, it is so important that we support the charity and the great work that they do. It was an honour to pay them a visit, have a look round





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and speak to the team about the difference they are making to our communities.

Towards the end of the month, I took a trip to join my friend and colleague Jessica Morden MP in her constituency of Newport East, on a visit to the Budweiser Brewery. Employing over 500 people, they invited me along for a tour and then to speak to staff about menopause in the workplace.

I always relish the opportunity to go into businesses and speak to employers and employees about what more they can all be doing to ensure their workplace is supportive of those experiencing symptoms of the menopause. Keeping these women in work is beneficial to everyone – the women themselves, the businesses and wider society – so it really is important that employers are aware of what they can do to help.

I always enjoying sharing the knowledge that I have, but I also love to hear what these companies are already doing so that I can share their best practice with others. It was also great to don the high vis jacket and sturdy boots and get shown around the brewery and learn more about their business.

As we head into February, my team and I are now starting to plan for Everyone Deserves an Easter 2024, so keep an eye out next month for more details about that.

