

None, One, Some, Many, Most and All

Sir Peter Bottomley MP

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There are times when traditional and modern approaches are similar. On Monday when the House of Commons was suspended for a week, I used the morning to speak by telephone with many constituents. Their backgrounds varied; they represented the full range of current circumstances; what they had in common was interest, often concern, for others.

I was grateful for the suggestion to put on my website www.sirpeterbottomley.com an article responding to enquiries about the nutrition for children at home and at school.

It is not possible to accept all invitations. I declined the request to chair a Westminster Education Forum on priorities within compulsory education on sex and relationships. My contributions would be that a row need not be followed by a continuing rift and that continuing consent is an essential element of intimacy; I could add that the only habit we cannot inherit from parents is celibacy; if we adopt it for ourselves, no one inherits it from us.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on ADHD is having a series of hearings. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder affects 1 in 20 people in the UK. In recent years we became aware of the hidden challenges of this condition and its correlation with obesity, eating disorders, increased risk of diabetes, increased risk of stroke, high blood pressure and early onset cardiovascular disease.

The positive neurodiversity perspective highlights that an estimated 35% of entrepreneurs have either ADHD or dyslexia or both. Many people with ADHD can lead happy, healthy and successful lives when the condition is managed successfully. In this field I follow the lead of others.

Worthwhile activities are what every child needs. I respect the contributions of older teenagers and of adult leaders in so many fields, including though not limited to sports. Guides, Scouts, the cooperative Woodcraft Folk and the Boys Brigade are with Cadet Forces in the range that I wish could be part of the lives of all young people.

It is a genuine delight this week to be connected remotely to the presentation of awards by West Sussex's Lord-Lieutenant Susan Pyper, with East Sussex's Peter Field, to the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association. I join in honouring Cadet Flight Sergeant Benjamin Butler of 45F (Worthing) Squadron in the Sussex Wing Air Training Corps, Cadet of the Year, and the admirable Lieutenant Neil Cockcroft RN who has created the popular Northbrook Metropolitan College Combined Cadet Force.

The military services, like the civil services, serve all; they are open to all. The Reservists' magazine arrived this week. It included articles on the range of contributions made during the Covid-19 months. We can be proud of these voluntary endeavours.

In the voluntary sector, a great organisation can grow from a simple start. One person can spot the difficulties faced by another, whether known to them or not. The Samaritan had not previously known the mugging victim on the Jericho road and he may not have known the inn-keeper he trusted to care for the victim. He thought none should be left abandoned.

In 1871-81 a young civil servant Edward Rudolf was superintendent of the Sunday school at St Anne's church, South Lambeth road. See the hiddenlives.org.uk website article: A brief History of the Waifs and Strays' Society. When I chaired its successor The Children's Society, I too was a Sunday school assistant in the same church.

Voluntary service can lead to a career; let us allow all children the opportunities that should not be limited to the many.