

Working in Recess

Sir Peter Bottomley MP

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It is pleasure, not work, to congratulate Worthing Football Club. The Mackerels are now confirmed champions of the Isthmian League, securing promotion to the National League South.

This deserved success for the club is overdue; it has been three years in the making.

Two years ago, I supported the club in contesting the decision to suspend the league because of the coronavirus pandemic. Last year the same disappointing decision was made.

Worthing Rebels had been at the top and should have been promoted. Well done Worthing FC. We hope you continue to rise through the leagues.

Turning from public enjoyment to public protection, I am supporting the call by [Plan International UK](#) and [Our Streets Now](#) for sexual harassment in public to be recognised as [#CrimeNotCompliment](#)

Women should feel safe in public and in private. Females should not face or fear inappropriate behaviour or harassment. Support should be available at every level to ensure that this is the case. It is not now as 75% of girls and young women aged 12-21 have experienced some form of [#PublicSexualHarassment](#). We all recognise that this is wrong. Action must be taken to change this. That action must be louder than words.

I have long supported equal and fair access to healthcare for all, including safe legal abortion services in Northern Ireland. We have now decided on access to 'telemedicine', at-home service, carried out in private at home instead of travelling to and from hospital or abortion clinic.

Evidence submitted by clinical bodies was overwhelmingly supportive, as were views by women up and down the country. Groups concerned with violence against women and girls support the use of telemedicine, as did Dame Clare Gerada and Dame Lesley Regan, leading doctor, gynaecologist and obstetrician.

Data made the case clear: the wait before abortion has been halved, not increased. Importantly, it has been safe and not open to misuse. Sales of illegal pills dropped. Cases of complications reduced.

Abortion should be legal, safe, early and local. I speak for women and work for women. When there is choice between compassion and politics, choose compassion, especially for women and girls. I regret the number of abortions.

Within the constituency are foster parents and the children they care for. It is rewarding to discuss the role of parliament and our history with them. Even after disrupted schooling, young people know much of our distinctiveness in a world of extremes.

Recently I was talking with a young person who had been to as many schools as I had. Though not formally fostered, I had lived over two years with the local vicar and his family; another year I was with a theatrical landlady and five girls who also lived with her. Many have gained by foster parents' care and support, formal or informal. Remember the early life of former Labour MP Alan Johnson when his teenage sister had to take the place of their mother.

For all the uncomfortable delays, there has been good news for hosts waiting to welcome people from Ukraine. I treasure the photograph of a father arriving at his daughter's Worthing home. A good host tells me their guests are expected soon. On Monday I saw a Ukrainian young woman smiling by the Kindertransport statue at Liverpool Street Station.

Loved ones are reunited. New friendships are being made. Households and families are coming together. I remain concerned about delays in the scheme and slow progress on visa approvals, despite many positive results.

Those wishing to host Ukrainians can register their interest in the scheme or reach out to local charities, faith groups and organisations who make connections between individuals.

For full details, please visit: <https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk/>