

# Marie Goldman

POINTS OF VIEW

MP for Chelmsford

## What a 'typical' day in Parliament can be like for a constituency MP

**I** OFTEN get asked what a typical day is like for an MP. As I think I've mentioned before in this column, there isn't really any set pattern. A lot depends on what's going on in Parliament – not just in the House of Commons chamber, but right across the estate. To illustrate this – and as this column is published on a Thursday – I thought I'd tell you about what I got up to last Thursday.

First off I caught the 7.52am train from Chelmsford station. I don't always get the same train in the morning – it all depends on what meetings I have and where. Sometimes, and especially on Monday mornings, I have meetings in Chelmsford before I head into Westminster. But not last Thursday.

I arrived in Westminster about an hour later. My first task was to make sure I was prepared for my response to the weekly Business Questions that happen in the House of Commons chamber every Thursday morning. These never start any earlier than 10.30am, but when exactly they start depends entirely on what gets scheduled in beforehand. I usually try to arrive in the chamber for 10.30am, just to be on the safe side.

Last week, it was preceded by an urgent question about special educational needs (SEND), submitted by my Liberal Democrat colleague, the MP for Twickenham, Munira Wilson. This was triggered by a National Audit Office report released that morning, which essentially confirmed what many, many parents across the whole country know: our SEND system is broken. This sparked quite a lengthy debate, with contributions from MPs across the house.

The Business Questions section started at 11.35am and finished at about 12.50pm, by which point I had been in the chamber for about two-and-a-half hours. I grabbed a quick comfort break, a sandwich from one of the food outlets and returned to my office in Portcullis House, where I caught up with my two parliamentary staff members. I checked through draft replies to constituent emails, and worked with my Comms Officer on some



Marie Goldman MP gives her response at Business Questions in the House of Commons chamber, which happen every Thursday morning

PHOTOS: MARIE GOLDMAN MP

draft social media posts.

At 1.30pm, I met with representatives from the National Housing Federation, the NHF. They wanted to discuss the need for housing associations, their members, to get access to public funds to help with building safety remedial works. This is a really important subject as housing associations play a vital role in building the affordable homes that we need across the country.

At the moment, they are treated differently to the private sector and struggle to access the financial support from government they need to tackle issues such as building safety – a key topic, especially in the wake of the Grenfell Tower tragedy. They are hoping MPs will support them in raising this with the new government.

At 3pm, I attended and spoke in a Westminster Hall debate about secondary ticketing. The secondary ticketing market is the resale side of the live events ticket industry. It has

been brought back into the public's attention recently due to the Oasis tickets that went on sale and were being scooped up by bots and then resold at astronomical prices on unscrupulous secondary ticketing platforms such as Viagogo (my sincere recommendation is not to EVER buy tickets from this platform), plus the dubious use of dynamic ticket pricing.

Secondary ticketing is an issue I've been involved with for 12 years, having been a victim of duplicated tickets back in 2012. I had been attending the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Ticket Abuse for many years as a member of the public. Now that I'm an MP, I'm pleased to have joined it in my more official capacity and look forward to helping to create legislation to tackle this scandal.

The Westminster Hall debate finished at 4.30pm, at which point I headed over to the House of Commons chamber to support my Lib Dem colleague, Josh Babarinde, the MP for Eastbourne, in an adjournment debate that he had secured on the issue of temporary accommodation.

Adjournment debates are short

debates at the end of a sitting day in Parliament. They are the very last item on the agenda for the day. They are an opportunity for backbench MPs to raise an important issue that affects their constituency and often further afield.

On Thursday, the day's business was due to finish at 5pm and the adjournment debate would have started at that point, but the previous items finished early.

This meant the debate started before I was able to arrive in the chamber (as, having spoken in the earlier Westminster Hall debate, I was obliged to stay until the very end).

Still, I managed to intervene (which means politely ask one of the MPs making a speech if I could interrupt them to make a related point). I wanted to highlight how the costs of temporary accommodation are crippling Chelmsford City Council's finances.

Just four years ago, temporary accommodation costs were just five per cent of the council's core spending power. Now they are nearly 25 per cent. That's a huge, entirely unsustainable increase, and it's something that only central govern-



Marie speaking in the debate on secondary ticketing



Marie speaking in the debate on temporary accommodation costs

ment can fix. I'm glad that the minister attending the debate on behalf of the Government appeared to be taking the matter very seriously and genuinely seemed to understand the issue and the points that were being raised.

The adjournment debate finished at about 5pm, which was easily the earliest I had finished in Parliament that week, so after collecting my bag from my office, I headed back to Chelmsford.

When I got home just after 6pm, I got changed into more comfortable clothes, had a quick play with my dog and then headed to the pub to meet up with other local Lib Dem campaigners and councillors at one of our monthly 'Lib Dem Pint' catch-ups.

After a quick check of social media and a couple of short responses when I arrived home, my day ended at about 10pm.

I hope that gives you an idea of what just one day as an MP can look like. None of them are the same – it's probably one of the most varied jobs out there and, of course, it's a huge privilege.

Thanks for reading.

Marie

“The costs of temporary accommodation are crippling Chelmsford City Council's finances.”

Marie Goldman MP