

Alan Campbell MP

Community News March 2021



Good afternoon

I hope you are keeping well and staying safe.

In this edition of my community news, I will first address some issues that local people have been in touch about in relation to Wednesday's Budget. You will also find details of some of the recent meetings and events I have attended online as well as details of the work of local and national organisations I am supportive of. There are also links to various organisations that may be of help for people. Please be assured that all links have been tested and are safe to click through to. I do hope you find it informative and useful.

If you need to get in touch please call 0191 2571927 or email

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You can also find useful information on my website at

www.alancampbellmp.co.uk or on Facebook at;

https://www.facebook.com/AlanCampbellForTynemouth/?eid=ARCt_uybFykBHP9Ze74JblWM5zGUiDhFgl8FizrUZK7Zmr1vijiCM68TFI_cGhOnsm_TvNnVuiYMhiLm

I continue to write my fortnightly column for the News Guardian, you can access these [here](#).

With all best wishes

Alan Campbell MP

Tynemouth

Budget 2021



There were a number of important announcements in Wednesday's Budget. Here are some of the issues local people have contacted me about.

Furlough

The furlough scheme, previously due to end on 30 April, will now continue until the end of September. Anyone on furlough during that time will continue to receive 80% of their salary from the government, capped at £2,500 a month. However, employers will have to contribute 10% from July and 20% in August and September towards the hours their staff are not working.

More help for the self-employed

The Chancellor announced details of the fourth and fifth payments for the self-employed income support scheme (SEISS). The fourth payment, which covers February, March and April, will cover up to 80% of average monthly profits and is capped at £2,500. The fifth and final payment of the scheme will cover May to September, and its size will depend on how much turnover you have lost over the period. Further details will be announced in due course

The fourth and fifth grants will take into account 2019 to 2020 tax returns and will also be open to those who became self-employed in the 2019 to 2020 tax year. This means that some customers may be able to claim, even if they were not eligible for previous grants.

To qualify, you must have filed your 2019-20 Self Assessment tax return by 2 March 2021, at the latest.

Although this will certainly cover some of those who have been previously excluded from any support I am still looking at the detail to see how far it will go to help people in our area.

Universal Credit

Many people got in touch to raise their concerns about the government's initial proposals to scrap the £20 per week uplift to Universal Credit.

Although I am pleased the uplift will be extended for 6 months I am very disappointed it will not be made permanent.

Figures show 39% of all universal credit claims since 2013 were made last year. Scrapping the uplift in September will lead families into real poverty. It is also taking money out of the economy which could be spent in local businesses and on our local high streets.

VAT and Business Rates

I received lots of correspondence regarding VAT and business rates. I am pleased the Government listened and extended the VAT cut to 5% for hospitality, accommodation and attractions across the UK until the end of September, followed by a 12.5% rate for a further six months until 31 March 2022. The year-long business rates holiday, which was due to finish in England at the end of this month, has been extended by the government until 30 June.

What the Budget didn't do

I was disappointed that there was no support for small breweries announced. No pay increase but rather a pay freeze for key workers. No

extra funding for schools to deal with Covid or any extra funding for the NHS or adult social care.

Freeports

It is hugely disappointing that the Government has not backed plans for a North East Freeport which would have helped secure the future of Port of Tyne and Port of Blyth and which was backed by Nissan. This would have helped to create employment after the twin blows of COVID and Brexit but now the concern must be to avoid job displacement to Teesside. Once again there was nothing from the Government for communities north of Teesside which brings into question the Governments promises on levelling up.

Concerns about 'Levelling up Fund'



The Governments “levelling up fund” is meant to go to hard pressed former industrial areas and coastal communities in the North. Out of 45 awards made in the Budget 40 are going to constituencies represented by Tory MP’s – none north of Teesside. Five Cabinet Ministers constituencies will benefit including the Chancellor who funded the scheme and the Communities Secretary whose department makes the decisions on who gets it.

This is taxpayers money meant for the future of our towns not the political future of Tory MP’s.

I have written to the independent National Audit Office asking for an investigation.

Vaccines Update



I get regular updates from the Vaccines Minister on progress with the vaccination programme.

There are in effect two parts to the vaccine programme – the national part through which people are invited to the Centre for Life to receive the jab – and the North Tyneside/local response which has a number of centres including The Parks.

There were some stories about vaccine going elsewhere but that was unfounded. The North East has received all the vaccines needed to meet the national targets.

Because we have done so well and gone faster than many other areas of the country I have made the case for letting us get on further and faster but the national target does make sense, even if it is a little blunt in its approach.

Supplies of vaccine may be sufficient but they are not unlimited. When I met with the Minister and these points were raised he described vaccine supplies as “lumpy” by which he meant they were produced in batches not least because this vaccine is natural rather than a chemical. As a result managing the roll out can be problematic. The method of distribution is also a Push model which means the centre pushes them out when they have them rather than a Pull model which allows regions to draw them down when they want them.

Overall, though, supplies are increasing and the rollout is working. The NHS deserves huge congratulations for its impressive and speedy rollout of vaccines to those in the top priority groups. Thanks must also go to North Tyneside Council and local healthcare providers who have done a great job here on North Tyneside. I pay tribute to all those involved in the effort.

Lobbying for the local fishing industry



The post Brexit deal negotiated by the Government has left many fishing communities in deep trouble. Despite making big promises to the industry the deal has hit fish exporters hard. North Shields is England's biggest prawn port and more than 95% of the catch is exported to France and Spain. Exports are now subject to new red tape which costs money and takes time. Prawns have to be taken to a "hub" – in the case of North Shields to Glasgow – before being taken by lorry to the continent. This can add between 1 and 3 days to the journey – which makes it very difficult to get them to market in time. I am taking this up with Ministers including the DEFRA Secretary and Fisheries Minister as a matter of urgency who have set up a task force to look at what can be done. To add insult to injury Ministers referred to this as "teething problems" when according to fishermen and exporters the deal leaves ports like North Shields in existential danger.

Access to Vaccines for Carers



COVID-19 vaccinations for unpaid carers

- Are you providing support to a family member or friend, who could not manage without your support due to age, illness, disability or substance misuse?
- Are you worried about what will happen to them if you catch the virus and aren't able to care for them?

In recognition of the vital contribution carers have made throughout this pandemic, unpaid carers have been included in **Priority Group 6** of the Covid-19 vaccination roll out programme.

North Tyneside GP Practices and North Tyneside Council are working together with North Tyneside Carers' Centre to make sure carers get access to the vaccine.

You may not think of yourself as a carer as you see yourself as a husband, wife, son, daughter, relative or friend of someone who needs your help, however, you can still be included as a priority for the Covid vaccination.

If you are aged 16 – 64 years and want to be included as a priority for the vaccination, **you must register with North Tyneside Carers' Centre** at www.norhtynesidecarers.org.uk or by telephoning **0191 643 2298** between 10am – 4pm, Monday to Friday.

North Tyneside Carers' Centre also provides a range of support to help you in your caring role including:

- Advice line and live chat
- Access to range of resources and information
- Carers assessment
- Online support groups
- Online wellbeing sessions and social activities
- Online workshops e.g. planning for an emergency
- Digital/IT support to get online
- Befriending service
- Support into work/training/employment

If you are already registered with the Carers' Centre, you do not need to contact them. You will automatically receive an invite to book your vaccination when it is your turn.

Unpaid carers have now been included in Priority Group 6 of the vaccine roll-out but you must register with North Tyneside Carer's Centre if you are not already.

If you are aged 16-64 with caring responsibilities, you can register online at;

<https://www.norhtynesidecarers.org.uk/adult-carers/covid-19-carer-vaccination-referral-form/>

Or ring 0191 6432298 between 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday.

Restoring Railways Funding Bid



I am the lead sponsor of Transport North East's bid on behalf of the North East Joint Transport Committee, which brings together members from the seven constituent authorities across the North East, into Restoring Your Railway Fund.

The bid proposes restoring a rail link through the Silverlink and Cobalt corridor.

The Cobalt, Silverlink and Tyne Tunnel Trading Estate areas in North Tyneside are major growth engines of the local and regional economy, hosting around 20,000 jobs and extensive retail facilities. Together with the Northumberland Line proposals, it will greatly improve access to employment opportunities for those without a car across North Tyneside and South East Northumberland. It will have a major impact on opening up of economic opportunities for people and communities within the riverside strip of the constituency.

Metro Funding



I have joined other North East MP's in lobbying the Transport Secretary for further support for light rail in particularly Metro though the pandemic.

The massive decrease in passengers throughout the pandemic has had a huge impact on Metro's revenue. We are asking the Government for further emergency funding to ensure Metro has a sustainable long-term future.

Holocaust Memorial Day



This year saw a different, but no less important act of remembrance. On Holocaust Memorial Day I joined households across the UK in lighting a candle to remember the victims of genocide, those who were murdered for who they were. To stand against hatred, prejudice, hostility and division in the world today.

Marine Park First School

UNICEF Vaccine Mission



I am very proud to support Marine Park First School who have launched a fundraiser to support UNICEF's Vaccine Mission. They have set an ambitious target to raise £1234 to help get a vaccine to the most high-risk people on the planet.

It is a hugely worthwhile project and I thank all staff and pupils for their amazing work.

Please help them reach their target by donating at:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/marine-park-first-school>

Meeting with Youth Member of Parliament



I recently met with Abi Tang, the North Tyneside Youth Member of Parliament.

At this time of year, a Young Person's election would usually be set to take place in March with support from schools.

However, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has meant that the projects relating to the pledges of the current Young Mayor Suzie McKenzie and Member of Youth Parliament Abi Tang, have had to be put on hold since starting their terms of office in March 2020.

The closure of schools during the first national lockdown in England, which began soon after their elections, as well as the current lockdown has also prevented the elections from being held this year.

As a result, both Suzie and Abi will remain in their respective roles for a further term until 2022 to allow them to fulfil their pledges and carry out the work they had originally planned but haven't yet been able to complete. As we come out of lockdown I hope they both get to do all they are hoping to achieve this year.

National Lottery

Heritage Grants Re-open



It's good news for local organisations that National Lottery Grants for Heritage have now resumed.

Organisations can apply for financial support from the National Lottery for their heritage projects from £3,000 up to £5million. They are prioritising projects that contribute to our recovery from the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis. Local groups can find out more at: www.heritagefund.org.uk

High Street Tales of North Shields



I was pleased to see North Shields feature at the launch of a major four-year-long cultural programme celebrating England's historic high streets.

High Street Tales is the first project in a £7.4million Cultural Programme led by Historic England, in partnership with Arts Council England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This programme of cultural activities is part of the £95 million High Streets Heritage Action Zone scheme, which is currently working to breathe new life into 68 English high streets including North Shields.

The project was launched last month with a new short story by North Tyneside-based writer, Celia Bryce. Set in North Shields, *Time and the Shoe Man* is an otherworldly tale which follows a mysterious character on his journey through the streets of North Shields and into the past to return a lost shoe to its rightful place.

The tale began life in autumn 2020 when Bryce – using local social media, zooming and interviews – began collecting reflections, memories and stories from local people about North Shields.

This is an interesting project and it's great to see North Shields play a starring role. With the regeneration of North Shields now underway it's an exciting time for our area.

You can access the podcast here:

<https://soundcloud.com/historicengland/time-and-the-shoe-man-by-celia-bryce-high-street-tales-episode-1/s-qqEK8YscPuv>

Fairtrade Fortnight



This year, Fairtrade Fortnight feels very different. For us that may means not meeting at Cullercoats Methodist Church as we usually do. More importantly, for farmers and workers at the bottom of our food supply chains, livelihoods have been widely damaged by the pandemic.

While Fairtrade swiftly stepped in to support producers during this critical time, including through the release of the Fairtrade Producer Relief Fund and increased flexibility to the use of the Fairtrade premium, there is much more to be done.

Farmers in climate vulnerable countries need empowerment, fair value, fair prices, and fairer trading practices to resource the investment needed for mitigation, adaptation, diversification and resilience in the face of the climate crisis. I choose to support Fairtrade UK not just through Fairtrade Fortnight but year round.

Discussion with local Soroptimists



It was good to be invited along to a recent online meeting of the Tynemouth, Whitley Bay and District Soroptimists.

I spoke to the group about my time about the issue of gender equality and then some of the work I did in the Home Office around the reduction of violence against women and girls.

Soroptimist International is a global volunteer movement working together to transform the lives of women and girls with nearly 80,000 Members in 124 countries. Ahead of International Women’s Day on 8th March, why not thinking about joining the local branch?

Buy Local North Tyneside



I continue to support Buy Local North Tyneside. The project began as a simple online list of businesses open during lockdown, and has since developed into website www.localnorthtyneside.co.uk, detailing which businesses are open and what goods and services they provide.

So far hundreds of organisations have been added to the website, where shoppers can search by business name, type or location, to find the provider of a product or service they need – encouraging people to ‘buy local’.

All that businesses need to do to appear on Buy Local North Tyneside is go to www.buylocalnorthtyneside.co.uk/register-business/ and enter their details.

know that lockdown has had a real impact on our small local businesses and this is a great way for local people to get all the information they need in one place.

Laptops for Kids



I am supporting the Laptop for Kids campaign to donate laptops to disadvantaged children learning from home during lockdown.

Here in the North East there are at least 55k families without access to the right technology for online learning. If you have any old equipment and would like to support the campaign visit:

<https://donatedigital.co.uk/>

Thanks to the Northern Power House Partnership, The Evening Chronicle, Northumbria Water, Rebuyer and Code for setting this up.

Help for domestic abuse

Useful Domestic Abuse helplines:

National Domestic Abuse Helpline* 0808 2000 247	Forced Marriage Unit* 020 7008 0151		* (24/7)
Local Wearside Women In Need helpline* 0800 066 5555	Karma Nirvana (support for honour based violence and forced marriage) 0800 5999 247		
Women's Aid on line chat www.chat.womensaid.org.uk	Victims First Northumbria 0800 011 3116		
The Men's Advice Line, for male domestic abuse survivors 0808 801 0327	Samaritans* 116 123		
The Mix, free information and support for under 25s in the UK 0808 808 4994	Respect helpline 0808 8024040 or www.respect.uk.net		
National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline 0800 999 5428			

If you are experiencing domestic abuse, you can report an incident by ringing 101 or visiting www.northumbria.pnn.police.uk. Also in a non-emergency situation you can text the police on 07786 200814.

In an emergency, always call 999. If you dial 999 and are unable to speak, the emergency operator will ask you to dial 55 and to follow their instruction to quickly put you in touch with police.

Help is also available From Victims First Northumbria, who can be found at <https://victimsfirstnorthumbria.org.uk/> or on 0800 011 3116

