

MANIFESTO



Andrew Parry
Independent

Islington South and Finsbury

For the people in Islington



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Our education system is flawed. The answer isn't simply hiring more teachers; we must transform how schools function to best equip our children for the future.

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Waiting lists are excessively long. Collaborating with senior leaders in the NHS is essential to address issues such as staff training, recruitment, and meeting patient needs.

Cost of Living

Rising living costs affect everyone. More than ever our community is struggling to make ends meet. Affordable housing, and energy along with lowering prices is a priority.

Environment

Climate change impacts us all. Promoting sustainable practices, green spaces, and clean air initiatives can enhance community well-being.

Introduction

I am a retired headteacher with over 25 years of experience in education. I grew up on a council estate in Manchester before moving to the south coast. I have lived in Islington since 2004. I am passionate about equality and ensuring our children have the best opportunities possible. I have three children of my own - all of which attend a state school in Islington. I want them to have the best future possible.

Over my lifetime, I have seen the world and our country change immensely.. We go through life accepting that these changes are beyond our control. That's not the case. Our country is built on a democracy that allows every one of us to have a say and a vote.

I am standing as an independent candidate in this election because I want my voice and those of millions of others to be heard, to make a difference, not just for our future but the future of our children and grandchildren.

Voting for me will give you a voice. Standing up for what is right and just. Protecting the future. Making Britain great again by focusing on four key issues that affect us all:

- Making our education system the best in the world;
- Ending the inequalities in the NHS to provide the best health care for all;
- Taking action on the cost of living crisis that has hit many of us in Islington by ensuring fair pay and affordable housing;
- Promoting a safer and more sustainable future with more renewable energy and safer streets.

Education

Education is not just about getting qualifications, it is about preparing our children for the rest of their lives. It is where our children learn about the world, how to develop relationships with others and how we create the workforce for the future. This is where we must have the best education system possible. Our school leaders have been let down by years of underfunding that has led to crumbling buildings, reduced funding for those with special education needs, cuts in the enrichment activities that help shape our children and a lack of skills building for the future.

While recruiting more teachers will help schools, the underlying issues have to be addressed first. More teachers than ever are leaving the profession. Almost one-third of all trained teachers leave the profession within the first five years. Subjects such as mathematics, science and computing have been most hit. The question is why are we losing so many teachers? The biggest factor is workload driven by the increased demands of pastoral care and student behaviour.

Our community has also been hit by falling student numbers, leading to less income in schools. As a result, schools are closing, the latest being Blessèd Sacrament RC Primary School which will close on 31 July. This is adding to the pressure already on schools.

Education should be seen as an investment in the future and something that should last throughout our lives. The days of a job for life have long gone. New skills are needed as technologies change. We all should have access to training for these new skills throughout our lives so that we can have the most adaptable workforce and keep Britain at the forefront of change.

To address these issues we need to:

- Recruit more specialists in pastoral support to reduce the burden put on teachers and allow teachers to do what they should be doing – teach;
- Focus on getting teachers back into the profession, especially in the shortage of subjects;
- Develop opportunities for lifelong learning so that everybody can have the opportunity to achieve whatever they aspire to.

Health

We have a fantastic National Health Service - the best in the world – with fantastic staff. With an ageing population and the backlog from Covid, we need to look at things differently to be able to provide the best care for everyone. Waiting lists are excessively long and staff overworked and underpaid. There has been a reliance on agency staff due to the lack of skilled workers adding to the costs of running to the NHS.

In addition, our community has also seen a large rise in poor mental health adding to the demands of the NHS. The stress and anxiety of everyday life and the uncertainty for the future have compounded the issues.

With the ageing population, we need to look at ways to allow people to remain in their own homes with the support they need taking away the burdens from hospitals, and freeing up beds.

While there are ways to make savings across the NHS, there has been a long history of lack of investment. This cannot be solved overnight. There needs to be a clear, long-term plan that allows the NHS to provide the best service with a qualified workforce.

Collaborating with senior leaders in the NHS is essential in developing a new NHS for the future.

To address these issues, we need to:

- Work with NHS leaders on developing long-term financial solutions that involve savings and long-term investment;
- Develop more training opportunities to reduce the reliance on agency workers;
- Create a NHS of the future by looking at ways technology can help streamline the service.

Cost of Living

Over the past few years, we have all suffered with the increase in the cost of living. Our community has been hit hard by the financial squeeze. The number of people using food banks has significantly increased.

The average private rent rose by 15% last year and is 20% higher than the London average. The average price of a home is now over £650,000 making it even more difficult for young people to get on the property ladder. This is leading to more families moving out of the area. We also have people 'stuck' in shared ownership schemes which promised a step on the property ladder but have ended up saddling them with high rents and service charges with no way out.

Low and middle earners have been hit the hardest by the cost of living rises. While the cuts in national insurance have helped those in work, it has not helped our pensioners.

We need to have a fairer system that allows everyone to have a basic standard of living and be rewarded for the work they do. We also need to ensure that all members of our community have equal opportunities to work.

To address these issues, we need to:

- More affordable housing is needed in our community allowing people to get their foot on the property ladder and allowing families to stay in the local area;
- Limit rent and service charge increases to stop the inequalities that this has caused;
- Develop a fairer pay for all so that those who live and work in Islington can afford to stay in the community.

Environment

Climate change is affecting all of us. This is not something for the future but is happening now. We need to make drastic changes to stop the damage to our planet.

There are many things we can do as individuals and there are also things that can be done as a country. The more we speak up about these issues the better chance we have to make the change. We are at a turning point and in this election, we can make a real difference.

Energy, in particular, is a major creator of greenhouse gasses. Over a third of our energy is from overseas. Only about half of our total energy is from renewable sources. This has got to change. We can become self-sustaining in renewable energy if the government invests in this. This needs to be a priority and will set us on a path to becoming carbon-neutral.

The other big issue is our roads. In Islington, there has been a policy of making safe streets. While this is a great idea, the full impact on businesses and individuals has not been looked at. Some local authorities are already reversing their safer streets programme due to the impact it has had.

Blocking off roads is moving traffic onto main roads causing more traffic jams, adding to the pollution. What's more, these are the roads that we and our children walk along - increasing their exposure to harmful gases.

There are too many short car journeys that can be avoided. We also have far too many high-polluting vehicles on our roads. There is a lack of incentive to change to electric vehicles. We need to be encouraging more walking and cycling instead of using cars.

To address these issues, we need to:

- Reducing our reliance on fossil fuels by developing renewable energy systems and becoming energy independent;
- Fully investigate the impact of the safer streets schemes and the impact on the community including how no-drive zones can impact our environment;
- Implement incentives for changing to electric vehicles including the installation of more charging points and the introduction of no-drive areas for petrol and diesel vehicles;
- Promote walking and cycling instead of driving for short distances by improving walkways and cycle paths.



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