

Marie Goldman

MP for Chelmsford

A month of advocacy and action: looking back at January's work

OVER the past month, I've been working hard to support our local communities, particularly focusing on the issues impacting our health services, pharmacies, education system, and more.

From standing up for maternity services at Broomfield Hospital to fighting for the future of local pharmacies, my goal has been clear: to make real, positive change in the lives of those who need it most.

■ **Fighting for maternity services at Broomfield Hospital:**

A major concern this month has been the shocking downgrade of Broomfield Hospital's maternity services from 'Requires Improvement' to 'Inadequate.'

The Care Quality Commission's (CQC) findings were deeply troubling, but my visit to the hospital reassured me that improvements were already under way.

During my visit on January 17, I had the chance to speak directly with the maternity services team, tour the facilities, and discuss the plans they've put in place to address the issues raised by the CQC.

While progress is being made, it's clear that we need quicker CQC action to ensure standards are upheld in real-time, not months after inspections have taken place.

I've raised this matter in Parliament and will continue to push for faster, more effective inspections and reports.

■ **A stand for local pharmacies:**

Local pharmacies have been under tremendous pressure in recent months, with many struggling to stay afloat due to the rising costs of medication and inadequate NHS reimbursements.

On January 6, I visited The Pillbox Pharmacy, in Meadgate, Chelmsford, and learned from owner Dipak about the dramatic price hikes that threaten the viability of local pharmacies.

One striking example he shared was the skyrocketing cost of Aripiprazole, a vital medication for mental health patients. What used to cost £1 per unit now costs £138, while the NHS reimbursement has stayed the same at £1.37 per unit. This situation is unsustainable and



Pharmacist Dipak Pau with Marie Goldman MP



Marie Goldman MP at Prime Minister's Questions



The uncertain future of PCSOs in Essex was highlighted in Parliament by Marie Goldman MP



Maternity services at Broomfield Hospital have come under the spotlight

risks pushing vital services out of our communities. To combat this, I've launched a petition and called on the Government to take immediate action to address the financial strain facing pharmacies. By January 21, more than 1,000 people had signed the petition, and the support continues to grow. Add your name to the petition here: www.cmltd.org.uk/sop.

Additionally, on January 8, I raised the issue directly with the Prime Minister, sharing Dipak's story and stressing that no pharmacist should have to use their own money to keep their business running.

We need fairer contracts and better funding for pharmacies to ensure they can continue providing essential services.

■ **Support for charities in our community:**

January also saw me highlight the challenges faced by local charities, particularly Farleigh Hospice, which is facing a £250,000 shortfall due to increased National Insurance Contributions. On January 15, I made it clear in Parliament that the Government's lack of support for charities is

unacceptable. Farleigh Hospice – and other charities like them – does incredible work, and the Government must step up to ensure these vital services don't face cuts due to financial pressures.

■ **Action on education and SEND support:**

Another priority this month has been to raise awareness of the urgent need to improve support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

On January 23, I led a Westminster Hall debate calling for government action to improve Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs). These plans are crucial for children with SEND, but delays and inconsistencies in the system are leaving too many vulnerable children without the support they need.

It's heartbreaking to hear stories of children waiting over a year for decisions, while families and schools are left to pick up the pieces. The current system is failing far too many, and I will continue to push for reforms that ensure every child gets the support they deserve.

■ **A call for cross-party collaboration:**

I've also been working hard on pushing for a more collaborative approach across political parties to solve some of the biggest challenges facing our country. On January 17, I celebrated my party's proactive

stance on policies like the Youth Mobility Scheme Bill and the Sunshine Bill, which aim to create fairer and more inclusive policies.

I'm proud that my party has put forward ideas that are gaining support from across the political spectrum, and I am hopeful that the Government will take notice and make more time for debates on these important issues.

■ **Raising concerns about PCSO cuts and Government response:**

On January 30, I raised an important question in Parliament about the future of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in Essex.

Many in my Chelmsford constituency have shared their concerns about low-level crime and the need for more visible policing.

PCSOs play a crucial role in our communities, helping to free up police officers to focus on more serious matters while building trust and maintaining safety. However, Essex Police recently announced plans to cut all 99 PCSOs due to a £12.5 million budget shortfall.

This decision raised serious concerns about the impact it would have on community safety. I immediately called on the Home Secretary to address the potential consequences of these cuts, urging the Government to step up and provide Essex Police with the support they

need.

I'm pleased to see that the Government has now reconsidered its stance and is releasing additional funds to Essex Police.

While I am cautiously optimistic about what this will mean for policing in Essex, the devil is in the detail.

I met with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) and the Chief Constable to discuss the updated funding figures. There is still more work to be done to ensure we have the resources needed to maintain effective and visible policing in our communities.

I will continue to advocate for our police officers, PCSOs, and Community Policing Teams, and I remain committed to doing everything I can to support them in their vital work.

■ **Celebrating local success:**

It's not all been about challenges – I've also had the privilege of celebrating successes in our community. On January 31, I joined Manor Lodge care home in celebrating its 'Outstanding' CQC rating.

Its commitment to high standards of care, professionalism, and compassion is truly commendable. The report highlighted everything from safety to community engagement, and I couldn't be prouder of the team for earning this recognition.

■ **Job opportunities and community involvement:**

This month, I also took the opportunity to grow my team and connect with our community. On January 27, I posted about two exciting opportunities to join my parliamentary team as a Senior Parliamentary Assistant and a Caseworker.

If you're passionate about politics and want to make a difference, these roles are a fantastic chance to get involved.

Additionally, on January 27, I had the pleasure of joining the Chelmsford Litter Wombles for a clean-up event, collecting more than 60 sacks of rubbish, furniture and more. It was heartening to see so many people come together to make Chelmsford cleaner and greener.

■ **Looking ahead:**

As we move into February, the issues that matter most to our community remain high on my agenda.

I will continue to fight for better NHS resources, improved support for our pharmacies, and a fairer education system for our SEND children. With your support, we can make a real difference.

Marie

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