



MP Ellie Reeves

Labour Member of Parliament for Lewisham West & Penge

The scenes over recent weeks in Afghanistan have been deeply upsetting as the country has faced the tragic rollback of progress that so many have worked so hard for - not least of all the gains in education and rights for women.

I know from my inbox the strength of feeling on this and in the last few weeks, me and my team have been working tirelessly on this issue. This has included helping constituents and their families get back home, support and advice for constituents with loved ones trapped in Afghanistan and making sure that those who were evacuated are not left homeless and destitute.

Whilst this has been a huge job and at times deeply upsetting dealing with such traumatic cases, I am pleased to say that we have managed to help many safely return and begin to settle. But it never had to be like this and for all the families we have helped, there are many still trapped.

Despite having 18 months to prepare for the withdrawal, the Government failed to plan for this moment. This, along with the complacency they showed towards the deteriorating situation in the country, resulted in the chaos we have seen.

Indeed, despite the Foreign Office's clear warnings weeks before Kabul fell, the former Foreign Secretary was asleep at the wheel. He could have stepped up the evacuation efforts, issued earlier warnings and increased resources to the department's crisis response. Instead, while military leave was cancelled, he and the Prime Minister went on holiday.

Our troops, diplomats and civil servants did a heroic job to get as many people as possible to safety. But the collapse in Afghanistan and failure of Conservative Ministers to plan ahead has left huge numbers stranded in fear for their lives. We have an obligation to help these people.

Despite all of this, the local response has been heartening. Our local community has really come together, donating essential supplies like clothes, nappies, baby milk and food and I have been able to provide these items to a number of families I am helping in our area.

Alongside this, Living Well Bromley and the Lewisham Donation Hub have gone above and beyond to support the local relief effort and provide support to families resettling here. The wonderful Melvin Hall are also now taking donations for Afghan families. I cannot thank them and our community enough but whilst locally our community has done brilliantly, we are lacking direction from the Government.

They need to urgently outline a plan to enable those who are stranded in Afghanistan to leave via a viable

ellie.reeves.mp@parliament.uk

020 7219 2668

