

# Green MP Hannah Spencer makes her first Commons speech

Four weeks ago today I was in college, A plumber learning how to plaster.

And today I'm in parliament, as an MP.

And being here is the honour of my life. But I don't want this to be unusual or exceptional. I truly believe that anyone doing a job like mine should get a seat on these benches.

And where I'm from, we're taught to look after each other. To look out for each other. To stick up for each other and to stick together. To see each other as human.

And I am so proud of that humanity, and that people in Gorton and Denton, and Burnage, and Levenshulme and Longsight and Abbey Hey feel that way too. It's in our blood and in our bones.

We see each other as human

Where I'm from, we give a nod to the statue of Emmeline Pankhurst, we remember the farm worker and seamstress Hannah Mitchell, the Trade Unionist Mary Quaile and the mill worker Annie Kenney. And of course Elsie Plant, who's from just down the road from me, and who I named one of my beautiful greyhounds after.

I think of these brilliant women a lot and especially today as we debate International Women's Day.

And I think of many others too, from pits, slums and factories. The women who changed the system so that I could be here. The women of colour, whose names we will never know because history didn't bother to recognise or remember them. But we do today, because without their struggle and their fight and their determination to stick together, none of this could be possible.

And it's bittersweet, to recognise these brilliant people but to be reminded that we still need to try and be them.

The constituency that elected me is the 15th most deprived constituency in the country.

It has suffered decades of neglect and broken promises.

And we see this every day, right in front of us – the litter, the flytipping, the state of housing, the struggle for a job that you can build a life on, the filthy polluted air and the reduced life chances. The sheer unfairness of it all.

And my constituency has been hit hard by the ongoing cost of living crisis.

And now none of this is fair, none of this is right, and none if it happens by accident.

So I very much share my predecessor's strong commitment to tackling health inequalities and putting local people and all our communities at the heart of decision making. That's how we begin to turn things around, to give people agency, and a genuine chance of a better today and a better tomorrow.

And to the girls who I saw photos of [sorry], who went to school on International Women's Day dressed as 'Hannah the plumber' in their overalls, spanners, and trademark hair. To the 10 year old boy at Hideout who rockclimbed an incredibly high wall with me and who saw me suddenly become very terrified of how far up I was, and who said to me 'don't ever give up, and if it's scary looking down then just look at what's in front of you'.

To the women in my life who've had my back, who've fought for equality alongside me.

And to the men that I work with (especially the lads on my plastering course who dealt with my new found spotlight in the middle of our training very well), but those men who will suffer the effects of this unequal society through their mental health.

To the veterans I know who were willing to risk everything and come home and find that society was turning its back on them.

To the white working classes, who are always lumped into one group and never appreciated.

To everyone who will have nowhere to sleep tonight, or will barely exist in a cold, damp and insecure home.

To my Trans siblings who get blamed for everything.

To the Muslims everywhere who are constantly and often violently scapegoated.

To the disabled people who can't access the world because of structural inequality that is completely fixable.

To the people of colour, who have to work harder at everything.

I don't always get it, I won't say I always understand it. But what I do know is what it feels like to be looked down on. To be let down and left behind. To be less worthy because of something about me.

And our struggles may be different, but our humanity is the same. We always stick together- we always fight for each other. And that is what I want us to take forward from International Women's Day – and to do that every single day.

The cleaners, the bus drivers, the nursery workers, the foster carers, the home carers, the unpaid carers, the teaching assistants, the bin collectors,

the warehouse workers, the delivery drivers, the school dinner staff, the lollipop wardens, the supermarket workers, the posties, the library staff, the kitchen porters, the farm workers, the mechanics, the groundworkers, the scaffolders, the electricians, the plasterers, and the plumbers.

We deserve to be here. Every single one of us. And I will make space for you to come and join me, to get to have your say.

And from the bustle of Longsight market, to the many Irish pubs in Levy, Sue's Chippy and Tony at California wines in Gorton, the amazing young people at Hideout, the best hash brown butty at Cafe Plus in Denton, and the women-led social enterprise at Dahlia Café on Burnage Lane. You are the best of our brilliant communities.

I want to put Gorton and Denton on the map by championing the positives about our community – the spirit, the warmth, the grit, and the way that we help each other out, every single day.

Whether that's our neighbours where we live or our siblings in places like Afghanistan, Gaza, Sudan, Iran. Wherever we are, we deserve to live freely as the human beings that we all are.

We do things differently in Manchester and it makes me proud every single day. And now I want to make Abbey Hey, Levenshulme, Burnage, Longsight, Gorton and Denton proud of me – thank you so much for putting your faith in this plumber and newly qualified plasterer.

Together, we can make hope normal again. And we will look after each other, whoever we are.

Because where I'm from, that is just what we do.

Thank you.

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