

# **A view from Westminster – Deidre Brock MP**

**by Deidre Brock MP**

The news cycle has been dominated by allegations of multiple parties held at Downing Street and Whitehall departments last year during lockdown, and the public mood has been one of anger, but certainly not surprise. This is simply the latest in a long line of duplicitous episodes from this government over the course of the pandemic, stretching back to the infamous Barnard Castle eye test.

Yet it's more important than ever we have elected leaders we can trust, as devastating pieces of legislation voted through recently by the UK Government serve to demonstrate.

The Nationality and Borders Bill means people can be stripped of their citizenship without notice, even if born and raised in the UK. It can be applied retrospectively, with no clear route to appeal. With this Bill, the UK Government continues to peddle the myth that asylum seekers can simply follow the proper channels instead of relying on human traffickers and a dinghy. In truth, there are very few "proper channels". After announcing they would accept a paltry number of Afghan refugees when Kabul fell in August, it's now December and the UK Government's settlement scheme shamefully still isn't open for applications.

The Policing Bill, briefly side-lined following the Sarah Everard vigil, is passing through parliament and will have lasting effects on the way people can gather or protest in England and Wales, a basic democratic right. The Elections Bill, returning early next year, will lead to voter suppression and cuts to Electoral Commission powers.

Of course, stories of Downing Street parties will rile – this government can't be trusted to treat its citizens with even basic respect, and we'll see this reflected in the legislation it passes.



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