

# April podcast – Deidre Brock MP for Edinburgh Northern and Leith

**I met with Deidre Brock who has now been an MP for the area since 2015 in Leith – where else? And it was sunny.**

Our conversation, the first in person for a couple of years, touched on a wide range of matters including her most recent debate about [food security](#) which was a Backbench Business Committee debate she secured, and which necessarily involved discussion about Ukraine. Brock is Shadow SNP Spokesperson for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and had a lot to deal with after Brexit in discussing the various trade deals. She is also a member of the Scottish Affairs Committee and at present they are beginning an investigation into hydrogen and carbon capture storage, having just completed a review of defence in Scotland.

Ms Brock opened the debate by saying that it was much needed before the crisis in Ukraine and it “is even more urgent now”. She said: “Ukraine is also the single biggest supplier of food to the World Food Programme (WFP), which might be forced to cut distribution in places such as Yemen, Chad and Niger, while taking on the feeding of millions of hungry people in and around Ukraine. According to WFP officials, all of that points to 2022 being a year of catastrophic hunger. Without urgent funding, the programme’s director predicts a hell on earth in some of the most impoverished regions in the world, potentially resulting in famine and destabilisation in parts

of Africa and the Middle East, as well as mass migration.”



Deidre Brock MP PHOTO ©2022 The Edinburgh Reporter

Deidre takes her parliamentary job of representing this area of Edinburgh very seriously, and said she is happy to be able to see people again at surgeries by appointment. Constituents may contact her office to arrange. Some of the matters raised by constituents at the present time concern getting visas for people fleeing Ukraine.

She said: “We’re having quite a few inquiries now from folk who are part of the Ukrainian Families Scheme. We have also heard from people who are trying to get family members and friends into the UK, and trying to deal with some of the difficulties of the Home Office system and the visa application scheme that the Home Office has put in place. This

is unfortunate because I think the UK is the only country in Europe that is putting these sorts of conditions on people fleeing the Ukrainian war.

“That is not to say that there haven’t been some people, happily, who have arrived here and are being settled and I am delighted about that. But it does seem – it feels frustrating – that you have to expect people to go through paperwork when they’ve been forced to flee their homes.

“And initially folk were being expected to provide passports. Now, that’s been smoothed out and there’s been some changes to that happily. To be fair to the Home Office, there are some very good people in there, officials who I’ve had dealings with directly, who are trying their best.

“But part of it, of course the hostile environment policies of this current UK Government, I think, that must have its part to play in these difficulties that are being put up in front of those trying to reach a safe haven, in the UK. That is frustrating.”