

## An MP's typical day, research by Professor Emma Crewe<sup>1</sup>

### A Tuesday in the life of a backbench MP in Westminster

This MP's constituency is too far from London for him to visit during the week. He is an opposition backbench MP interested in children's health and well-being.

9.30-10.00	Spoke at a debate in Westminster Hall about Children Missing from Care Homes
10.00-10:30	Interviewed by a journalist about why children go missing from care homes
10:30-11:00	Discussing with staff in his constituency office about various urgent constituency issues on the phone
11.00-12.00	Spoke at a meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Children about children accessing social care services
12:00-13:00	Met with other backbench MPs to discuss abuse on social media
13:00-13:15	Grabbed a sandwich
13:15-14:15	Meeting with a group of representatives from children's charities to discuss improving the educational prospects of children in care and strategies for responding to upcoming legislation
14.30-15.30	Attending as a member of the International development Select Committee an oral evidence session on sexual abuse and exploitation in the aid sector
15.40-16.30	Participated in the Urgent Debate: Learning Disabilities Mortality Review in the Main Chamber of the House of Commons asking the Minister a question
16:30-17:00	Meeting with his whip to explain why he plans to vote against the party in an important vote next week
17:00-17:15	Went to his office in Portcullis House and discussed commitments for the week with his Westminster office staff
17.30-18:30	Opened a charity function in one of the House of Commons function rooms for raising funds for a children's charity with a brief speech about their work
18.30-19:30	Went to the House of Commons to collect some research findings they had compiled for him and wrote his speech for an important debate the next day
19:30-21:00	Dinner with colleagues in the party; discussion of campaigning tactics for the local elections in their region (and how the leadership is doing)
After dinner	Caught up with emails

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.soas.ac.uk/staff/staff44316.php>

1-00am Home to his rented flat

### **A Friday in the life of an MP in the constituency**

This government MP's English constituency is 4 hours travel from Westminster. Her constituency is a mix of rural and urban. She stays there from Thursday afternoon until Monday morning, returning to London to attend Parliament from Monday pm until Thursday am.

- 9.00-10.00 Meeting in a local hospital to discuss possible closure of one department
- 10.00-12:00 Surgery in MP's office:  
six meetings with individual constituents facing severe and multiple problems and challenges when accessing local services;  
one meeting with a group of environmental campaigners;  
one meeting with a group of parents complaining about a local school.
- 12:00-12.30 Meeting with MP's staff to make decisions about follow-up on individual constituents' cases and phone calls to council for the most urgent case
- 12.30-13:45 Walk to meet local party officials to review tactics for campaigning for local elections and eat a sandwich along the way
- 13:45-15:30 Canvass for local government elections (also reconnecting with constituents by knocking on doors), meeting up with neighbouring MPs from the same party, and giving a speech to party workers
- 15:30-16:30 Interview with local journalist about the possible hospital closure
- 16:30-17:00 Meeting with staff in MP's office to discuss latest developments in a campaign to raise funds for a local charity
- 17:00-18:30 Walk to and then visit a housing association to discuss complaints received from tenants
- 18:30-19:30 Opening a new social enterprise, creating jobs for adults with learning difficulties; give speech and meeting those involved
- 19:30-20:45 Back to office to go through emails, postbag and twitter and respond to requests from constituents, journalists, other MPs and party workers
- 21:00 Home to catch up with family who live in the constituency

### A Monday in the life of a Junior Minister

This MP's constituency is in London and she is a junior Minister in the Health and Social Care department

8:30-10:00	<u>Constituency</u> Opening of a new school with both the Leader of the Council and the Mayor of the Borough. Short speech (off-the-cuff) during ceremony then tea and biscuits afterwards to discuss school-related issues with the Head and staff of the new school. Must leave at 10 a.m. sharp.
10:00-10:30	Travel to Ministerial Office, Health Department, Richmond House, Whitehall.
10:30-11:00	<u>Minister's Office</u> Go through the diary for the coming week with all her Private Office. Quick run-through everything in diary for week, confirming why it is there, what they want to achieve from it, who will accompany the minister (from press office as well as private office) and any local or specific issues to be aware of. Decide on communications strategies with Private Secretary and Special Advisers (SPADs).
11:00-11:30	<u>Minister's Office</u> In preparation for BBC WATO interview - quick discussion with officials and SPADs on briefing with lines to take in relation to a crisis in hospitals (overshooting deficit targets) and wider government policy relevant to minister's responsibilities and the wider government narrative.
11:30-12:00	<u>Minister of State's Office</u> Weekly forward look at speeches, events, and issues over the next month and relevant political/communication strategies with SPADs, both ministerial Private Secretaries and relevant Press Officers.
12:00-1:00	<u>Secretary of State's Office</u> Review of the forthcoming week including Weekly Communications Grid, allocation of Commons Health Questions for regular four-weekly slot on Tuesdays at 11.30 and tour de table so each minister and SPAD can update team on major issues of concern. (First half of meeting with officials, second half is 'political' i.e., no civil servants). Secretary of State knows that minister has leave for studio at Millbank at 12:45.
12:45-13:00	<u>Whitehall/Millbank</u> Walk to BBC studio, 4 Millbank, briefing on the way by Press Secretary and SPAD.
13:00-13:20	<u>4 Millbank</u> Interview on the World at One with the BBC.
13:20-14:15	<u>Commons Meeting Room</u> Sandwich lunch with backbench MPs and peers in her party to discuss health issues including discussing their view on upcoming health legislation – she needs their help and support. Tea in Members Tearoom if time permits.
14:15-15:00	<u>Commons Ministerial Office</u> Meeting with Chair and some cross-party Members of the Health Select Committee to seek their views on the upcoming legislation.

15:00-15:45	<i>Minister's Departmental Office</i> Box Time – chance for Minister to do some of her box work – policy submissions for decision, correspondence with public or MPs/Lords, answer queries for office from the day so far or any other issues that arise. (This is normally the first diary item squeezed if time for other things is needed).
15:45-16:00	<i>Minister's Departmental Office</i> Quick review of speech for event tonight. (Speechwriter, policy official, SPAD private office).
16:00-16:30	<i>Minister's Departmental Office</i> Meeting on questions allocated for Health Questions – officials will have prepared initial response to each question and briefing on follow-up questions by either the MP asking initial question or others. (Press office, SPADs, private office)
16:30-18:00	<i>Minister's Departmental Office</i> Back-to-back meetings with interest groups and professional groups affected by the forthcoming legislation. Meetings are to discuss issues of concern, allay fears and garner support – or at least gauge level of opposition.
18:00-18:30	<i>Minister's Departmental Office</i> Policy development meeting on mental health in the North East with officials and SPAD.
18:30-19:30	<i>Minister's Departmental Office</i> Deferred policy development meeting about prioritising and budget planning for next year with officials, SPAD and another junior ministerial colleague on their areas of ministerial responsibilities – especially considering earlier discussion on hospital crisis and overshooting deficit targets) (May have to move to Commons office if the votes come early – although unlikely on a Monday evening).
19:30-20:00	<i>Commons</i> Catch up and cup of tea with MP colleague – vote if votes come early.
20:00-20:15	Travel to Association of Community Pharmacists annual dinner at the British Medical Association.
20:15-10:30	<i>BMA, Tavistock Square</i> Attend dinner, give speech at around 9:30 – in between courses – Association President will reply to your speech straight afterwards. (She is about to retire, and you have agreed to present retirement present and flowers – at end of her speech.)
11:00-12:30	<i>Minister's Home</i> Do 'Red Boxes' – especially anything time sensitive. Each submission will have covering or 'box' note from the relevant private secretary explaining what the minister needs to do. Normal routine – at least 30-40 submissions marked for information or decision, correspondence, Commons Questions briefing to review following earlier meeting, drafts of forthcoming speeches, copies of other ministerial diaries, invites to make decisions on, request for future meetings – from other ministers, officials,

other MPs, or Lords, interest-, pressure- and professional groups and so on.  
As an MP she will also have constituency matters, urgent and routine, to deal with.