

Alison McGovern, Labour MP for Birkenhead

Minister of State (Minister for Employment)

Background

Alison was born in Clatterbridge, Merseyside in 1980. She was educated at Wirral Grammar School for Girls before graduating with a degree in Philosophy at University College London. Alison is married and has a daughter. Alison has worked in the House of Commons as a researcher before joining Network Rail. Following that, Alison worked for the Art Fund and then Creativity, Culture and Education. Alison was elected as a Councillor for Brunswick Park in the London Borough of Southwark in 2006.



Constituency

Alison was first elected in 2010 by winning the seat for Wirral South, as a Labour MP in the 2010 General Election. This is the constituency she grew up in. After boundary changes, the Wirral South constituency was subsumed into Birkenhead constituency; Alison won the race to represent this constituency at the election in June 2023 and as of the 2024 election, she has a 32% majority.

Birkenhead sits within Wirral Council, which is currently under no overall party political control, however, Labour leads a minority administration. Wirral Council is a Metropolitan District Council, meaning it provides all local services from larger areas such as transport and housing, to environmental health and waste collection. Birkenhead also sits within Liverpool City Region, where Steve Rotheram has been Metro Mayor since 2017.

[Wirral Council](#) declared a climate emergency and published its climate strategy in 2019. It also has a whole area pledge, committing to acting to “promote wider action to help reach ‘net zero emissions for Wirral as a whole no later than 2041”.

Political Activity

Alison has held several important roles in Parliament since her election in 2010. She has worked as a Shadow Minister in various departments including Digital Culture, Media and Sport; Treasury; Education; International Development and Work and Pensions. After the July 2024 election, Alison was appointed Minister of State at the Department for Work and Pensions as [Minister for Employment](#).

In judging her climate credentials, Alison has mentioned “[climate change](#)” 20 times in parliament since being elected, most recently in January 2022. In May 2023, Alison attended a students debate on climate change at [South Wirral High School](#), boosting her climate credentials. Furthermore, Alison showed her support for climate action by signing this [Climate Coalition Letter](#) calling for a net zero target in 2019.

[Aside from Climate change](#), Alison has asked the majority of her parliamentary questions to the department for Work and Pensions - 267 out of 590 times. This is followed by the Department of Health and Social Care (65) and the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport (58). She has also initiated 2 adjournment debates, on [mental health support in the Wirral](#) and [Government policy on Syria](#), as well as a Westminster Hall debate, on the [humanitarian situation in Syria](#). From researching Alison’s [written and oral questions](#) asked in parliament, it would appear that she particularly cares about the impact policy can have on children.

Areas of Common Ground

It is important to highlight that as Minister for Employment; Alison has a powerful role as she has the delegated responsibility to address issues such as poverty, childcare, access to work and skills as part of her [brief](#). On 10th of October 2024, the Labour government, of which Alison is a key part, unveiled the “[Employment Rights Bill](#)” which introduces employment reforms such as the ‘ending of exploitative zero hours contracts and fire and rehire practices to establishing day one rights for paternity, parental and bereavement leave for millions of workers’.

However, while she has a powerful role, and can be part of positive reforms as shown by the above bill, it is worth cautioning that her position in government means that she’s severely limited in going against current government policy. Therefore be prepared for her to be publicly noncommittal, especially in areas that go against current government policy.

Our research suggests that there are several key areas of common ground you could focus on with Alison. These are built on Alison’s vision for a [good life in Birkenhead](#) and they include:

1. A home to live in
2. A job to do
3. Some fun at the weekend

Thus, you could focus your conversation with Alison on the provision of **good and decent jobs** using government support for areas such as a green retrofitting program to tackle poor insulation as an example. This might include thinking how

money that was announced in the budget under the [Warm Homes Plan](#) might be effectively spent. The [Climate Change Committee](#) states that, “Energy efficiency is particularly important for the UK as its housing stock is one of the oldest and worst insulated in all of Europe, with only 15% of homes being built after 1990”. You can note here that, through re-trained and re-skilled workers, as part of a just transition, we can ensure that there’s a [workforce to retrofit](#) our homes who are well paid and cared for. Furthermore, you can mention that given’s Alison’s ambition to achieve an “[80% employment rate](#)” here in the UK, the government should also show leadership by committing to fund the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETPs) as part of the International Partners Group (IPG) of donor countries committing to funding based “[on more grants and concessional loan financing](#)”.

Another common ground area could be focusing on the reduction of **child poverty**. Alison, from our research, cares deeply about the impact of policy on children. You could mention that according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019’s main summary, “[Wirral](#) is specifically mentioned (page 16) as one of the authorities which has become relatively more deprived in 2019 compared to 2015”. You could mention that this means we are not doing “the basics” right and it is fundamental that the strategy that comes out of the [Child Poverty Taskforce](#) is robust and built on hearing the views and experiences of the [high number](#) of children living in poverty. Here, you can highlight Alison's role in the conversation she took part with regards to the prior government’s policy on Syria, in which she highlighted the plight of Syrian children. You can appreciate her for that and encourage her to also advocate for children in low and middle income countries who are being pushed deep into poverty by climate change. She could advocate for the UK government to help to change this by calling for ‘debt relief from [all creditors and more grant-based finance](#) from other G7 countries so as to provide the funds for climate and development needs in low- and middle-income countries’. Climate finance is a key focus area for COP-29 and thus an area that she could help to champion on behalf of children across the world.

We’d also love to hear from you!

Please do [get in touch](#) with us too at info@hftf.org.uk or by calling 0114 312 2619 if you’d like to discuss asks for other areas of common ground, as well as accessing our free, tailored support for engagements with your MP.

Please keep in touch with us and let us know how your engagement progresses. We use this information to help us work as effectively as possible and to report to our funders so we can continue to provide this service to others.

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