



Damian Hinds
MP for East Hampshire

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Damian Hinds Leads Parliamentary Debate on Opportunities for Disadvantaged Children

On Thursday 20 January Damian Hinds led a House of Commons debate on 'Improving Life Chances for Disadvantaged Children'. The Backbench Business Committee granted Damian time for this debate; it was only the seventh day on which a 'Backbench' motion has been debated in the main Commons chamber, following recent parliamentary reforms.

Damian made the case to the Business Committee that Parliament should debate important issues around deprivation and social mobility, which cross departmental boundaries. The debate had cross party support, with the second speech being made by Frank Field MP, whose study in this area underpinned the debate. Damian Hinds made the opening speech and summed up at the end after the shadow spokesman and the minister (Sarah Teather) had responded to the debate.

Damian set the scene for the debate by noting that "the prospects of many of our poorest children will be largely settled by the time they have reached the age of six". He closed his speech calling for a sense of urgency in dealing with these issues, "because the last generation must be the last to suffer the chasm in life chances that comes with the lottery of birth."

New to fatherhood himself, Damian said he knew at first hand that new parents generally discovered they had much to learn about parenting. He cited Home Start Butser (Petersfield area) and Home Start Weywater (Alton and Bordon areas) as good examples of practical parenting support. But he also said there were many families in many parts of the country where the challenges are very great indeed, and called for more work to be done on early intervention programmes.

Speaking after the debate, Damian Hinds said

"I am very pleased the committee granted this debate; it was certainly needed. We often see children from the most deprived backgrounds falling significantly behind their peers as early as the age of five and often, sadly very often, they never catch up again. My work on the Education Select Committee has brought home to me the need to do more to support hard-to-reach families and ensure all children can reach their full potential.

"I said in the debate that these issues go to the heart of why many MPs on both sides came into politics. That is certainly true for me."

-ENDS-

NOTES TO EDITORS

Full text of Damian Hinds' speech can be found [here](#).

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The Backbench Committee is responsible for scheduling debates on 35 days during the current Parliamentary session. Committee membership is made up of four Conservative MPs, 4 Labour MPs and 1 LibDem.

The Committee hears suggestions from members who wish to be granted a debate and make a decision based on the apparent need for the debate, the likelihood of Government time being given to something similar and the depth of cross party support it will enjoy.

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