

**Dr Sarah Wollaston MP**  
**Conservative Member of Parliament**  
**For the Totnes Constituency**

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This is my first month as an MP representing the Totnes Constituency at Westminster.

In fact, many of you have questioned why this is called the Totnes Constituency when it covers parts of Torbay, most of the South Hams and stretches as far north as Dartmeet on the moor...as well as Totnes. I intend to write to the Boundary Commission to ask them to review the name. I would welcome your suggestions for an alternative name. Please email me at [sarah.wollaston.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:sarah.wollaston.mp@parliament.uk) or write to me at the House of Commons. I will post the most popular suggestions in the Herald Express and on my website.

The Palace of Westminster is a beautiful but confusing labyrinth of corridors and committee rooms. My first experience was of feeling completely lost and forever needing to ask the way. It is friendly yet intimidating, fascinating but frustrating and surprisingly unprepared for the flood of new Members. New MPs have no offices and no secretarial support, not even a telephone; just a locker and a 'hot desk' which needs to be left clear for the next wandering MP to use for a few hours.

As a new Member, you receive hundreds of emails and letters every day. These range from simple opinion cards to highly complex cases requiring many hours of research and correspondence. All cases need detailed tracking and without an office this seems like a mountain to climb. Old hands look on sympathetically and tell you that it will feel much better this time next year and that within ten you will have the measure of it.

Like all my colleagues, I want to do a professional job and to 'hit the ground running'. My first task, however, is to learn to walk and recruit a team to help me to provide an effective service for my constituents. It is hard to convey how many obstacles are thrown in your path. Please bear with me if you have written but not yet received a reply from me. I hope soon to have an office but am told it may take a few weeks.

It has been a fascinating time to enter politics with the excitement of a new Coalition Government and the huge challenges it faces. I was very struck during the Election campaign by how many people told me they wanted to see political parties working together for the benefit of the Nation. For myself, having come to Parliament through an open primary, I feel a responsibility to represent all points of view, so the Coalition makes this commitment much easier. I want to see this new politics working; it is what the Country voted for and now politicians have to deliver. This will mean abandoning narrow Party agendas and working in cooperation.

So what do I hope to deliver? Above all, a voice for South Devon at Westminster, championing essential local issues such as the Kingskerswell bypass and standing up for our hard pressed farmers in their struggle against bovine TB. But being an MP should also be about holding Government to account and helping to scrutinise legislation. As one of only a tiny number of MPs with front line experience in the Health Service, I want to make sure that we finally get on top of one of the greatest problems of our times, namely binge drinking. Visit any town centre or casualty department on a Friday night and you will be only too aware of the problem. The waste of lives and money cannot be understated and so I will continue to champion this issue at national level on your behalf.

Overall, I start this new career full of optimism but well aware of its limitations. I will do my best and ask only for your patience whilst I grow into my role. I will always be willing to listen and learn and will welcome your suggestions.

ENDS