

# Arlene McCarthy MEP

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## To contact Arlene:



0161 906 0801



arlene.mccarthy@easynet.co.uk



www.arlenemccarthy.labour.co.uk

## Arlene slams misleading health card websites

Arlene is warning consumers to beware of misleading websites that are charging £10.00 for a free government service.

Arlene said: "These websites have set up addresses almost identical to the government site for ordering a European Health Insurance Card but are charging £10.00 for this free service."

"I am also concerned that they come up as a sponsored link at the top of the search page for anyone looking for information about the EHIC on Google, Yahoo and MSN."

"It is outrageous that people are being charged by these sites for a service that is provided for free by the NHS. I wrote to the health minister to raise my concerns and as a result action is now being taken."

"Consumers should know that the European Health Insurance Card is free and valid for five years."

**The real website is:  
[www.ehic.org.uk](http://www.ehic.org.uk)**

## General Motors keep ownership of Vauxhall



(Photo: Arlene gets to grips with Vauxhalls new electric car)

Arlene welcomed GM motors' decision to keep its European car manufacturing division, including the Vauxhall Ellesmere Port plant.

Arlene has intervened in ministerial talks, written to the European Commission and raised the issue on the floor of the European Parliament to insist that the Ellesmere Port employees must be protected in any agreement.

Arlene said: "Thousands of local jobs around Ellesmere Port depend on the Vauxhall site and as the local Euro MP I have worked hard to defend these jobs. The Vauxhall plants are lean and efficient operations and their workers cannot be sacrificed in the interests of other EU countries. I have repeatedly made clear in the European Parliament that attempts by the German Government to arrange a sale to Magna must not be allowed to put efficient UK workers' jobs at risk."

"The decision by General Motors shows that we were right to be sceptical of the Magna deal. GM must now quickly publish their plans for the future of the Vauxhall plants and I welcome the UK Government's commitment to support viable long-term production at Ellesmere Port. Our hard work and persistence has paid off but we will remain vigilant to defend the workforce."

## EU must Reign in Banker's Bonuses

As newly elected Vice Chair of the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee Arlene is backing an EU wide strategy to tackle banker's bonuses.

Arlene said: "The public have been rightly outraged by reports that banks- namely RBS- bailed out by the taxpayer, are on course to pay out up £5 million in bonuses this year."

"When families risk losing their homes and have seen their incomes slashed as a result of the excessive and reckless risk taking by banks we have to bring in regulations both at EU and global level to ensure we get confidence and trust back in the financial system and protect savers and consumers."



## Arlene backs 'Carbon Monoxide - Be Alarmed!' Campaign



Arlene is backing the Carbon Monoxide - Be Alarmed! Campaign and urging residents to protect themselves against the deadly threat of Carbon Monoxide poisoning this winter. Arlene said: "It takes only seconds and a one off payment of £15 to fit an audible carbon monoxide alarm, a small price to pay to save lives."

[www.becarbonmonoxideaware.com](http://www.becarbonmonoxideaware.com)

**To subscribe to Arlene's e-bulletin email: [arlene.mccarthy@easynet.co.uk](mailto:arlene.mccarthy@easynet.co.uk)**

## Victory for Michael Shields justice campaign



After a four year campaign to Free Michael Shields, Justice Minister, Jack Straw granted a royal pardon to Michael Shields in September. Arlene who has been a key member of Michael's campaign team along with Cllr Joe Anderson and Louise Ellman MP said:

"Finally after over four years of fighting for justice and numerous setbacks, Michael is free. It is fantastic news and I now hope that Michael can start to rebuild his life. As Michael's Euro MP I have always said that I would never give up until we secured justice for Michael. I campaigned for the Bulgarian authorities to recognise and rectify this blatant miscarriage of justice but our pleas have fallen on deaf ears."

"The Bulgarian's failure to accept their democratic responsibilities to right a terrible wrong has meant that we have been left with no option but to put pressure on our own Government and on Jack Straw personally to do the right thing and free Michael."

Arlene added: "After looking at the evidence I have always believed that Michael is morally and technically innocent. Someone else has confessed to the crime; the Bulgarians admitted that the conviction was doubtful; there is numerous evidence that Michael was not at the scene of the crime; the identification evidence has been discredited and Michael has passed a polygraph test."

"I will continue to put pressure on the Bulgarians to review the evidence and to co-operate with us in achieving this. I regret the length of time it has taken to resolve this issue. It is not how judicial and police co-operation should operate between European partner states and sadly an innocent man has lost four years of his life because of this failure."

### Tory Parade of Right-Wing Allies

During Tory Party conference in Manchester Arlene condemned the Conservative Party's decision to invite two leading hard right Euro MPs to the City.

Arlene said: "I was amazed that they chose to invite the leader of their new Euro-group Michal Kaminski, from the Polish Law and Justice Party, and Latvian right winger Roberts Ziler, of the Fatherland and Freedom Party, to Manchester.

"They may be Cameron's new best friends but their parties are associated with homophobes, anti-Semites and Islamophobes. We are a diverse and multi-cultural region. Promoting tolerance, respect for others and diversity is vital to the economic future of Greater Manchester and the North West region."

"The Tory Party has again shown that it is out of touch with the communities they seek to represent and their friends in Europe show they are the same old Tories. In the end it was LGBT Labour's alternative night, "Tory Shame" at Poptastic, which proved to be the hot ticket in our out and proud Labour city.

### 'Kick Out Knives Save Lives'

Arlene has added her voice of support to The Gary Dunne Campaign: Kick Out Knives And Save Lives. Arlene worked closely with Gary Dunne's family following his tragic murder in March 2006



Arlene said: "It is a real tribute to the family that they have chosen to turn their grief and heartbreak into a positive campaign. I am very proud of the work they are doing in Gary's memory and proud to have got to know them as friends over the last 3 years."

"Knife crime on Merseyside is currently higher than the national average. In addition to introducing a range of tougher penalties for knife crime, the Government is running a £7million programme of action, targeted at knife crime hotspots including Merseyside. The Gary Dunne campaign adds a vital local dimension to the overall strategy to end knife crime."

"I will continue to back the Dunne family and give them support to make this campaign a success."

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