

Cast your mind back to the afternoon of Christmas Day. Probably, like me and the many others, you were full up from your afternoon feast, surrounded by boxes and discarded wrapping paper, possibly watching television or beating your nephew at a new family game (as I was, much to his annoyance) and not at all conscious of what was going on outside the warmth of the home you were. That is how it should be. Imagine then you were one of the people directly affected by the announcement made at 5pm on Christmas Day by the delivery service City Link that the company had gone into administration. All of sudden the day itself turns from joy with the family into uncertainty about the future.

This is what happened to at least 50 people directly employed by City Link at their Aylesford depot based down on the Larkfield industrial estate. Others, such as sub-contractors, businesses and non-commercial customers, were also affected. The timing of the announcement was nothing short of appalling. The subsequent time table of announcements, including redundancy notices being handed out on New Year's Eve, is disgraceful.

In a constituency of 66,000 with fewer than 1500 of eligible working age unemployed, fifty people may not sound a lot. But that is 50 people who went to bed on Christmas Day no doubt angry and scared about their future. Sure businesses fail. It is a competitive market out there but I see no reason whatsoever why the announcement had to be made that day.

Myself and the Ashford MP Damian Green, who also has a depot in his constituency, have called for an urgent meeting with ministers and have already had preliminary discussions. We will be supporting our constituents affected by this announcement and urge those impacted by the announcement to get in touch with us so we can go with their stories to the department and provide the necessary personal support and assistance as best we can.