

# [Green Party warns Government cuts to policing are putting lives at risk](#)



2 March 2017

The Green Party is warning of the danger of underinvestment in public services following the revelation policing in England and Wales is in a “perilous state” due to Government cuts [1].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“The devastating impact of Government underinvestment is clear. Severe budget cuts mean some police officers can’t properly respond to emergencies, track down offenders or protect domestic violence victims. This is now clearly putting lives at risk.

“Underinvestment in the NHS, social care and prisons has already created even greater need, and put even greater strain on public services. Rather than being dealt with appropriately and sensibly, problems are being passed from one agency to another, including the police service, and greater cost being incurred in the long run.

“Despite the hard work of those on the frontline, the people who deserve help, support and protection are being left without it. These cuts are short-sighted and no solution. The Government must recognise this urgently before the budget next week, and change course, otherwise even more lives will be put at risk.”

## **Notes:**

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/mar/02/inspectorate-police-engaging-dangerous-practices-austerity-cuts-diane-abbott>

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## [John McDonnell MP pre-Budget speech](#)

**John**

**McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor**, speaking at the South Bank Centre ahead

of next week's Budget, said:

**\*\*\*CHECK  
AGAINST DELIVERY\*\*\***

Next

week, the Chancellor will stand up in Parliament to deliver his first – and last – spring Budget.

He

will no doubt want to paint a rosy picture of progress since the Autumn Statement, just a few months ago.

But

if progress has been so significant, and all is going so well – why is the government continuing to pursue spending cuts?

From

the NHS to social care, from prisons to education, our public services are in crisis.

Brexit

will present challenges to this whole country.

Labour

is prepared to meet them.

Yet

instead of rising to the challenge I fear the approach from this government on the economy is to continue the failures of the past.

Look

behind the headline figures and the real story is apparent.

The

essential facts on our economy remain as follows.

Low

investment over many decades has led to a low productivity, low wage economy.

Insecure

and poorly-paid work dominates new job creation.

That,

in turn, means that the tax base needed to secure our public services is less stable.

Deliberate

decisions by this government to privilege tax giveaways to the super-rich and giant corporations have further undermined the tax base.

The

model is not sustainable.

The failure at a national level is palpable.

The Conservatives will soon have added three quarters of a trillion pounds to the national debt since they arrived in office.

At the same time, they will have imposed the first spending cuts on schools for forty years.

An NHS in a state of profound crisis.

Those who work in and manage our public services have done their best under the austerity onslaught.

Local authorities in particular have had to cope with the most extraordinarily sharp funding cuts.

They will not sustain a further round of spending cuts.

So when the Treasury casually announces that it is looking for a further 6% of funding cuts to some government departments, as they did this week, it is an act of gross irresponsibility.

And the comments today from the head of the Care Quality Commission that the NHS "stands on a burning platform" have driven home the scale of the crisis.

Cuts to social care, amounting to £4.5bn since 2010, have brought the system to the brink of collapse.

Over 1m vulnerable elderly people, including many who are very frail, now lack access to the care they need.

This is one of the richest countries in the world, and yet Tory austerity has brought our public services to the brink.

Social care has a £1.9bn deficit in funding for this year.

This  
needs to be filled immediately to stabilise the system.

Based  
on estimates by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy,  
the  
NHS and social care face a funding gap of between £8.5 and £15bn by 2020.

Published  
figures indicate that tax receipts are currently higher than anticipated.

Given  
that we're facing an immediate crisis in the NHS and social care, I'm calling  
on the Chancellor to use that money to address this NHS and social care  
emergency.

Any  
measure less than this is likely to be inadequate.

It  
is not just those who rely on our public services who have suffered under  
this  
government.

The  
slump in living standards overseen by this Tory government is the worst this  
country has experienced since the Industrial Revolution.

The  
Chancellor may try and boast about rising GDP.

But  
that hasn't turned into real improvements in people's lives.

The  
reality of our economy is that average real hourly pay remains over 10% below  
its level before the crash.

And  
that cuts to public services have now placed them, as the independent  
Institute  
for Government has said, close to outright collapse.

The  
record on living standards is the worst of any leading economy.

Only  
Greece has seen a bigger fall in real pay.

Britain  
has the distinction of being the only large developed economy in which wages

fell even as economic growth returned after the crash.

And now rising inflation as the government mishandles Brexit is devaluing people's wages further.

Yet the government has reneged on its promised National Living Wage level, and is continuing to pursue cuts in in-work benefits.

Analysis out this morning by the Institute of Fiscal Studies shows that low-income working families with children will suffer most.

The average household will be £5,000 worse off by the end of this Parliament than they might have expected.

If the economy is growing, the benefits must be shared fairly.

The Chancellor must reverse the £70bn giveaway to the super-rich and giant corporations between now and 2021.

And the cruel £3.7bn cut to Personal Independence Payment for disabled people must be halted.

Labour will bring in a £10 an hour Real Living Wage to make sure work always pays fairly.

Our public services, from education to local councils to prison services and social care are in deepening crisis and the burden is falling disproportionately on women.

It is women who are bearing the brunt of low pay, cuts to in-work benefits, and the public sector pay cap.

Put together, this government has created a toxic mix.

Independent estimates by the Women's Budget Group suggest that 86% of cuts in public spending since 2010 have fallen on women.

The  
Chancellor must take action in the Budget next week to fund our public  
services  
and end this discrimination.

In  
the place of austerity, Labour want a Budget that  
works for women, that invests in jobs for women, funds the services that  
women  
depend on and advances women's equality and economic independence.

It  
is the National Health Service and our social care services that tell us the  
most about this government's failures.

It  
is essential that the government uses this Budget to give the NHS and social  
care the funding they urgently need.

The  
present Conservative government has been condemned for its fast-and-loose  
approach to NHS spending.

The  
Chief Executive of NHS England has dismissed government claims that current  
funding is adequate – let alone more than was asked for.

The  
Public Accounts Committee has rebuked this government for raiding the NHS  
capital budget to meet NHS spending.

The  
Health Select Committee has dismissed the government's claims on increased  
funding.

The  
reality is that this government has consistently failed to provide the  
funding  
that the NHS needs, and that it will continue to need into the future.

Yet  
the rhetoric from the Prime Minister downwards has suggested anything but.

There  
is an air of unreality about her claims that more and more patients are being  
seen by more and more doctors.

The  
experience on the ground of patients, doctors, and nurses is of a treasured  
institution already drifting into the greatest crisis in its history.

The  
reality is that the Tories are imposing a real-terms cut per head in

healthcare  
spending.

Current  
plans from the government do not come anywhere close to addressing the scale  
of  
the crisis.

It  
is essential that they now bring forward plans to close the funding gap if we  
do not want to lose our NHS.

Labour  
will never break from the fundamental principle that our National Health  
Service should be free at the point of use.

And  
we will reverse Tory privatisation, by renationalising the NHS.

It  
will require bolder steps to secure NHS funding where demand pressures are  
rising, confidence in government is low, but retaining the NHS' historic  
mission of healthcare, free at the point of delivery is a national priority.

Public  
trust and confidence must be restored.

Not  
only in the government of the day.

But  
in governments for the rest of this century and beyond.

Recent  
discussions around the long-term future of the NHS have helped clarify some  
important issues.

I  
want to lay out some of the framework on how Labour will be looking to  
develop  
its thinking in the future.

The  
financing of the NHS has become excessively politicised to the point where  
even  
supposedly official figures are subject to dispute.

There  
needs to be an independent adjudication of both needs, and actual provision,  
to  
restore public trust and confidence.

The Office for Budget Responsibility has already taken steps to assess the levels of funding needed for the NHS in the longer term.

I have written to Robert Chote to ask about the ability of the OBR to continue to provide these assessments, as part of its overall brief to monitor the government's fiscal position.

To change the OBR's responsibilities and bring in permanent oversight on healthcare funding would require primary legislation from government.

Fair and objective assessments of long-term need are required, along with close monitoring of actual spend being made.

That's a bigger task than Ministers can provide.

We need a political neutral body, modelled on the Office for Budget Responsibility, that can remove the question of long-term funding from the political squabbling.

Only in this way can public confidence in the figures be restored – and essential spending correctly made.

Second, we have to place funding for the NHS on a longer-term basis.

As Lord Macpherson and others have suggested, placing the NHS on a stable five-year financing basis means that certainty of funding can be assured.

But we need to do more than tie funding down for the length of a Parliament and look to ten-year budgets.

The pressures that we know of today will continue to build up over decades.

We need NHS budgets that can assure funding on those timescales.

Third, we must show those expected to pay for the NHS that their tax money is well-spent.

The simple truth is that after the financial crash and years of failed austerity, governments are not trusted.

Creative accounting and stealth taxes have helped chew away public trust in the system.

The fact that the wealthy can seemingly dodge their taxes at will has further undermined public confidence in the tax system.

And politicians, thinking only about the electoral cycle, have too many incentives to game the system.

People need to know that the contribution they make will be spent properly.

Hypothecation, allocating taxes raised to specific purposes, can make absolutely clear where tax money is being spent.

It can help restore the trust and confidence in taxation and government spending that has otherwise started to break down.

But hypothecation for the NHS has to be more than a commitment from a politician or a political party to spend a given amount, however firm that promise.

It needs a clear commitment, over the long term, that specific taxes will be used for specific purposes, and that this spending will be properly monitored.

The government's rhetoric on the economy has changed profoundly over the last year.

They're catching up with some of positions we've staked out.

The Chancellor claims he now accepts the need for government to invest, rather than to slash investment.

He just won't deliver properly on it.

And  
the Prime Minister has offered fine words about the “good that government can do”.

And  
yet her government actively pursues NHS spending cuts that have contributed to  
30,000 excess deaths in a year.

These  
are not my figures, but those of the Royal Society of Medicine.

The  
disconnect between what Ministers say, and what they do, has reached dramatic proportions.

The  
reason for the disconnect is clear.

The  
Tory Party know that after years of austerity and sliding living standards, the  
sentiment against political elites out there in the country is palpable.

That  
mood was a critical factor in driving the vote to Leave the European Union last  
year.

This  
government have sensed the mood and adapted to circumstances.

They’ve  
borrowed the rhetoric of protest and now pose as champions of the workers.

Only  
five months ago, the Prime Minister and her Chancellor were giving the  
impression that austerity was coming to an end.

But  
much of the austerity is yet to come.

In  
the end, the Tory leadership are the elite.

So  
they can make all the grand promises they wish.

But  
they can’t deliver the transformation our economy now needs.

They  
don’t have the political will to do it.

Labour  
has already begun to lay out its alternative.

We  
want a break with the past – not a continuation of its mistakes.

So  
the fundamental task of any reforming government in the future will be to  
rebuild and reconstruct our economy.

Our  
Fiscal Credibility Rule and commitment to invest means the next Labour  
government will break with the failures of the past.

We  
will bring down the deficit whilst committing real government resources to  
increase investment.

By  
the end of the next Labour government, the national debt, relative to trend  
GDP, will be lower than what we will inherit.

We'll  
reverse years of underinvestment across the whole country.

Not  
just in the few existing centres for growth and prosperity.

But  
delivering the funding needed so that our smaller towns and communities can  
share in the prosperity.

The  
great divide between London and the rest has to be overcome.

We'll  
introduce legislation to correct the bias in investment funding for the  
regions.

We'll  
commit the funding needed for specific infrastructure investments, like the  
£10bn Crossrail for the North or new tidal lagoons.

Labour  
is committed to delivering one million new houses, and building a new  
generation of council housing.

And  
we need a government prepared to give back control to our localities.

So

alongside the National Investment Bank, the next Labour government will create a network of regional development banks that will supply the funding needed on the ground for local businesses to flourish.

We can allow workers and those wishing to set up and run their own businesses the opportunity to take control back away from the boardrooms where short-term decision-making has dominated.

The railways will be renationalised by Labour.

But we'll also introduce a "Right to Own" for workers, giving them first refusal on taking control of companies undergoing a change of ownership.

And we'll use the regional development banks to support a new generation of co-operative businesses, at least doubling the size of our co-operative sector.

Small and new businesses will be properly supported with reforms to business rates, financing from the regional development banks, and support for business hubs in every major town and city, allowing new businesses to work together and collaborate.

We'll support investment by manufacturing firms by removing plant and machinery from business rates.

And we'll reform corporate governance laws to block raiders trashing profitable companies and bankrupting pension funds.

We want our large corporations to work for the public good – not against it.

So we'll also introduce a fair pay ratio to stop top bosses paying themselves excessively.

But to reverse the slide in living standards, we'll need to do more.

Labour's Real Living Wage will be a £10/hour minimum, meaning work will always pay

properly.

The  
public sector pay cap will be lifted.

We'll  
repeal the Trade Union Act.

And  
we've fought to defend the rights of EU migrants here, who contribute so much to our public services and our economy.

The  
Lords have passed Labour's amendment and we urge the government to  
immediately  
bring forward a guarantee to protect the rights of all EU nationals resident  
here.

We'll  
be working with our European colleagues to protect the rights of EU citizens  
here and UK citizens in the EU.

And  
of course we'll halt the austerity cuts to in-work benefits and payments to  
people with disabilities.

We  
need a clear plan for government to intervene on a major scale, supporting  
essential industries, fostering new sectors and above all creating decent,  
secure jobs across the whole country.

We'll  
use the power of government procurement, backed up by the National Investment  
Bank, to deliver a massive expansion of industries like renewables where the  
global potential is enormous and our natural resources so significant.

The  
next Labour government will break the cartel of the Big 6 energy suppliers,  
creating the conditions for local, decentralised, low-carbon energy by  
supporting local authorities and co-operatives.

We'll  
target 3% of GDP spent on scientific research, from all sources, to deliver  
on  
the huge potential of our scientific research base.

From  
a laggard in research spending, we'll move to being a leader.

We  
can't run first rate public services on a second or third rate economy.

But

we can't pay for first rate public services unless the tax system works fairly and effectively.

There'll be no place to hide for tax avoiders under Labour.

Our Tax Transparency and Enforcement Programme will clamp down on the worst avoiders.

And building on the successful Nordic model, we'll introduce legislation to make public the tax returns of those earning over £1m.

Transparency and fairness is at the heart of building a decent, open society.

This will help restore public trust in the tax system – and help clamp down on any avoidance.

This programme of structural reform should all be taken as fundamental.

This is, in outline so far, the economic programme of the next Labour government.

It represents nothing less than the transformation of this country.

We don't have to settle for the steady management of decline under the Tories.

And we don't have to accept the failings of an elite that have lead us into a decade of falling living standards, insecurity, and failing public services.

There is an enormous potential here, in every part of the country.

We can build a radically fairer, more democratic, and more prosperous society.

We can, together, turn this whole country round.

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## [Belt and Road Initiative makes steady progress: spokesman](#)

The Belt and Road Initiative is advancing steadily, bringing investment and jobs to participating countries, a spokesman for the annual session of China's top political advisory body said Thursday.

More than 100 countries and international organizations have joined the initiative and over 40 of them have cooperation agreements with China, said Wang Guoqing, spokesman for the fifth session of the 12th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC).

Chinese businesses have helped build 56 economic and trade cooperation zones in 20 countries along the Belt and Road, with total investment exceeding 18 billion U.S. dollars, helping generate over 1 billion U.S. dollars in tax revenue and more than 160,000 jobs, Wang told a press conference on Thursday.

He said the CPPCC National Committee will do more work in 2017 to promote cultural and people-to-people exchanges with countries along the Belt and Road.

The Belt and Road Initiative was proposed by China in 2013 and aims to become a trade and infrastructure network connecting Asia with Europe and Africa along ancient trade routes.

In the spirit of regional connectivity, China is working in aviation, power, rail, road and telecommunications projects with participating countries.

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## [China to launch space station core module in 2018](#)

China will launch a space station core module in 2018 as the first step in completing the country's first space outpost, according to a senior engineer with China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp. (CASC) on Thursday.

The core module of the space station, named "Tianhe-1" according to previous reports, will be launched on board a new-generation Long March-5 heavyweight carrier rocket, said Bao Weimin, director with CASC and a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC).

It will be followed by a series of launches for other components of the space station, including two space labs, which will dock with the core module while

in space, in the next four years or so, he said, adding that the space station will be completed around 2022.

Assembly of the core module has already been completed and tests are currently under way, said Bao, who is in Beijing for the annual session of China's top political advisory body.

Earlier reports said the new Chinese space station will initially be much smaller than the current International Space Station (ISS), which weighs 420 tonnes, but could be expanded for future scientific research and international cooperation.

With the ISS set to retire in 2024, the Chinese space station will offer a promising alternative, and China will be the only country with a permanent space station.

Bao said the Chinese outpost will function in orbit for "dozens of years," and that it had been specially designed to be able to handle space debris.

"For the big pieces (of space debris), we could conduct evasive maneuvers, and for those measuring less than 10 cm in size, we just take the hit," Bao said, adding that all key parts of the space station will be serviceable and replaceable.

He went on to say that the next five years will see some exciting advances in China's space program.

In particular, the Long March-5 launch missions have been scheduled this year, including one that will take the Chang'e-5 lunar probe to the Moon in November and return with lunar samples.

Long March-5 is a large, two-stage rocket with a payload capacity of 25 tonnes to low-Earth orbit and 14 tonnes to geostationary transfer orbit, the largest of China's carrier rockets. Its carrying capacity is about 2.5 times that of the current main model Long March carrier rockets.

The rocket will also be used in China's planned Mars probes, and possibly future missions to Jupiter and other planets within the solar system, Bao said. Endi

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**Conservative Ministers are out of ideas and have no long-term plan to fix the cost of housing crisis – John**

# Healey

**John**

**Healey MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Housing**, responding to new figures released today showing that home-ownership has fallen to the lowest rate in 30 years, said:

"These new government figures show yet another fall in the home-ownership rate in England to the lowest rate in more than 30 years. There are now almost 200,000 fewer home-owning households than in 2010 when Conservative Ministers first took charge.

"Meanwhile, the number of people stuck in an insecure and increasingly expensive private rented sector has grown dramatically over the last seven years. Since 2010, the number of households renting privately as ballooned by over a million.

"After seven years of failure on housing, not only has home-ownership fallen, but affordable housebuilding has hit a 24 year low and rough sleeping has more than doubled. The truth is Conservative Ministers are out of ideas and have no long-term plan to fix the cost of housing crisis.

"Theresa May says she wants a country that works for everyone, so she should back Labour's plans to build thousands more affordable homes to rent and buy, improve rights for renters and end the scandal of rough sleeping."