

## Government is shutting the door on the most vulnerable – Diane Abbott MP

Speaking in response to a ministerial statement, Labour's Shadow Home Secretary Diane Abbott said:

"My colleague Lords Alf Dubs is right, this is shutting the door on the most vulnerable. The Government must end these efforts to prevent refugees arriving here. This is not who we are."

"The Minister is wriggling out of the government's obligation to accept child refugees."

"But the internationally agreed principles and the Dubs Amendment were never conceived as a "one-off". They should continue to commit to meeting their international treaty obligations and our own laws."

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## Two injured in chemical plant explosion in Anhui

Two people were slightly injured in a boiler explosion at a chemical plant in Tongling City of east China's Anhui Province on Wednesday night, local authorities said.

The two suffered minor cut from glass fragments and were sent to hospital for treatment.

The accident happened at around 10:50 p.m. in a suburb area, according to Tongling's fire department. The fire had been brought under control.

Video footage on microblog Sina Weibo showed huge fire, and heavy smoke billowed into the sky.

Preliminary investigation showed the explosion was caused by fuel oil burning, and no dangerous chemical products were involved, said Zou He, director of the public security bureau of Tongling.

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# Green Party: Government decision to take only 350 child refugees is an 'absolute disgrace'



8 February 2017

The Green Party has responded to the Government's announcement it will take only 350 lone child refugees instead of a proposed 3000 [1].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

"This announcement, which the Tories have tried to sneak out just before recess, is an absolute disgrace. This is nowhere near the 3000 originally proposed by Lord Dubs and it equates to less than one per local authority in the UK. Any claim by the Prime Minister to be a compassionate Conservative is utterly undermined by the dereliction of duty to some of the most vulnerable people in the world. The Government should have been doing far more to support local authorities. I have visited Calais and seen firsthand the horrifying daily risks the children there faced and how desperate for safety they were. This is a national scandal, which disgraces us all. The Government should hang its head in shame."

## Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/08/dubs-scheme-lone-child-refugees-uk-closed-down>

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# Jonathan Ashworth MP, Shadow Secretary of Health, has today written to the Prime Minister to ask for...

Jonathan Ashworth MP, Shadow Secretary of Health, has today written to the Prime Minister to ask for clarity regarding

## **funding arrangements for social care at Surrey County Council.**

The full text of the letter is below.

The Prime Minister

10 Downing Street

London SW1A 2AA

Prime Minister,

I am writing to you in light of today's revelations about text messages sent by the leader of Surrey County Council which suggest that the Government has agreed to funding arrangements for social care that allow the cancellation of a proposed referendum on a council tax increase in this Council.

Given your failure to provide clarity on the issue when asked in the Chamber today, and bearing in mind the great importance of this issue given the crisis faced by social care in our country, I am hereby requesting for the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to make an urgent statement to the House tomorrow.

This news has caused considerable embarrassment to the Government, in particular the Secretary of State for Health and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. To rule out any suggestions of wrongdoing, the Government now needs to confirm that no special deal has been offered or granted to Surrey County Council.

I believe that the British public deserve full transparency on the issue. In the public interest, I therefore ask you to publish immediately and without delay;

1. The memorandum of understanding referenced in the text messages sent by the leader of Surrey County Council;
2. All text message correspondence between Surrey County Council and Government officials in the Cabinet Office, the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Department of Health, and the Treasury regarding social care funding and/or the proposed referendum;
3. All written or electronic correspondence between Surrey County Council and Government officials in the Cabinet Office, the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Department of Health, and the Treasury regarding social care funding and/or the proposed referendum;
4. Details and minutes of all meetings held between Surrey County Council and Government officials in the Cabinet Office, the Department

for Communities and Local Government, the Department of Health, and the Treasury regarding social care funding and/or the proposed referendum.

Additionally, as the Prime Minister knows the Ministerial Code requires holders of public office to “act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner” and that “information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so”. I am therefore asking you to confirm that any misconduct by Ministers related to this matter will be investigated and treated as a breach of the Ministerial Code.

Given the questions these news raise about proper conduct and transparency of Government policy-making, I am sending a copy of this letter to the Director General of the Propriety and Ethics Team. I will also be publishing this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Ashworth MP

cc. Sue Gray, Director General, Propriety and Ethics Team  
and Head of Private Offices Group

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## **Press release: New Northumberland fish passes open up stream**

Two new fish passes on a Northumberland stream are giving salmon and sea trout easier access to 22km of watercourse.

The work by the Environment Agency and Northumberland Rivers Trust at South Low, in north Northumberland near Berwick, is making it easier for fish to migrate and spawn.

Two large weirs were preventing fish movement upstream, but both weirs have been changed to make it easier for sea trout and salmon to make their way to their spawning grounds.

It follows work to make it easier for fish to pass through Environment Agency tidal gates at the coast, where the sea meets the stream.

Since then, work has been taking place to make it easier for fish to move further upstream.





Upstream weir before it was altered to make it easier for fish migration



The new upstream fish pass after alterations were made to the weir to make it into a rock pass

## **Easier for fish**

Robbie Stevenson, Fisheries Technical Officer with the Environment Agency, said:

We've worked closely with partners to carry out a lot of positive work in this area, to look at issues which might be having an impact on fish populations.

The alterations to the weirs will open up 22km of watercourse for fish and make it far easier for them to travel upstream.

We've worked really hard together with our partners over the years to make dramatic improvements to water quality.

But there is always more we can do and this project at South Low is the sort of work which is taking place right across the North East and the country to protect and enhance our rivers and streams.

The £100,000 project has been part funded by the Environment Agency, supplemented by private landowner contributions and the work carried out by volunteers.

## **Important fish passes**

Peter Kerr, Director of Northumberland Rivers Trust, who was also designer and project manager for this project, added:

We are delighted to have been able to add these two important fish passes by working in partnership.

The contractors, WL Straughan and Son, did an excellent job in some challenging weather conditions, including the floods following Storm Angus.

After we completed the lower of the passes we saw some big sea trout trying to get past the upper weir, so we are confident that the lower one works well and that there are many migratory fish trying to return to the South Low.

The recent completion of the upper pass will now let these fish access many miles of spawning gravels.