

Nia Griffith responds to reports that a new defence review will be launched

Nia Griffith MP, Labour's Shadow Defence Secretary, responding to reports that a new defence review will be launched, said:

"The decision to hold a separate defence review cannot simply be an excuse to kick the difficult decisions facing the defence budget into the long grass.

"Just this week we have had serious warnings from the Head of the Army about the threats that this country faces and there has been growing concern that the Government's deep cuts to our nation's defences have left us ill-equipped to respond to those threats.

"The true test of any defence review will be whether it delivers real investment in our nation's defences and the resources that our Armed Forces so badly need. You cannot do security on the cheap and it is high time that the Government recognised this."

Unprecedented workforce crisis in NHS with over 100,000 vacancies – Justin Madders

Justin

Madders MP, Labour's Shadow Health Minister, responding to the latest NHS vacancy data, said:

"Theresa May has overseen an unprecedented workforce crisis in our NHS, with over 100,000 vacancies across the system. These latest figures reveal in the starkest fashion how serious shortages have become, with new trainees put off from joining and existing nurses increasingly retiring early.

"Even in her own backyard, the situation is desperate. Thames Valley managed to hire just five nurses for 1,957 advertised posts – just one in 400. On the day her own Foreign Secretary has called for emergency funding, Theresa May must get an urgent grip of this escalating chaos in our NHS."

Ends

Barbara Keeley responds to the rise in Mental Health Act detentions

Barbara

Keeley MP, Labour's Shadow Cabinet Minister for Mental Health, commenting on the rise in Mental Health Act detentions, said:

"There is no doubt that severe Tory cuts to the community services that intervene before people's mental health reaches crisis point, alongside cuts to other local treatments have contributed massively to the rise in detentions.

"The Tories have undone improvements seen under the last Labour Government in reducing detentions, achieved by building teams to intervene early in cases of psychosis and by providing crisis and home resolution treatment.

"It's time the Tories faced up to the damage they have done to mental health services and immediately invest in and ring-fence mental health budgets, as Labour has pledged."

Ends

National debt continues to grow under the Tories – Dowd

Peter Dowd MP, Labour's Shadow

Chief Secretary to the Treasury, responding to today's public sector finance figures from the ONS, said:

"Three years after the Tories promised they would close the deficit, the Government is still on track to borrow around £50 billion this year. And the national debt continues to increase, up by £62.3 billion on December 2016.

"The failures of austerity are

laid bare not just in the crisis in the NHS and across our public services, but in the failure to achieve its stated aim of eliminating government borrowing.

"Only yesterday we saw the IMF's forecast for global growth next year revised up yet the growth forecast for the UK revised down, which on top of our fiscal position says all you need to know about the failure of this Government's economic policy.

"The next Labour Government will have a fully-costed plan to eliminate the deficit over five years and reduce government debt as a share of GDP over a Parliament, while investing for the long-term to build an economy for the many, not the few."

CMA right to say purchase of Sky would hand too much power to the Murdoch's – Watson

Tom Watson MP, Labour's Shadow Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Secretary, responding to the decision by the Competition and Markets Authority to provisionally block Rupert Murdoch's sky takeover bid, said:

"The CMA is right to say the proposed purchase of Sky by Fox would hand too much power and influence to the Murdoch family. Labour believes a greater number of companies should own our media to encourage a diversity of views.

"This announcement is a victory for the thousands of people who joined the campaign and forced the Government and the regulator to stand up to the Murdochs for once instead of simply waving this bid through. I hope the CMA's provisional ruling today finally puts paid to this bid."