

## 50,000 freeholds owned in offshore tax havens – McDonnell responds

**John McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor,** responding to an investigation by Global Witness showing almost 50,000 freeholds across the UK are owned in offshore tax havens, said:

"It's disgraceful that so much control is being exercised over UK property by offshore companies based in tax havens.

"These ownership structures facilitate money-laundering and tax avoidance, and leave leaseholders in the UK at the mercy of powerful offshore freeholders.

"Labour is the only Party with a comprehensive plan for tax transparency, and we'll establish an Offshore Company Property Levy to ensure property-owning offshore companies make a contribution to the UK economy."

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## 45,000 more pupils in super-sized classes in a single year

The total number of pupils in super-sized classes, those with 31 or more pupils, has increased by nearly 45,000 in a single year, a Labour analysis of official figures shows.

The statistics, published today by the Department for Education, reveal that the percentage of pupils in classes of 31 or more pupils has increased in both secondary and primary schools.

A Labour analysis of these figures found that:

- There are 6,234 more primary pupils in classes of 31-35 and 2,301 more in classes of 36+, a total of **8,535**
- There are 32,914 more secondary pupils in classes of 31-35 and 3,160 more in classes of 36+, a total of **36,074**
- **The total annual increase in school pupils in 'super-size' classes is 44,609**

This is the fourth year that pupil numbers in super-size classes have risen, an increase of 118,000 since 2015.

**Commenting, Angela Rayner MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Education, said:**

"Today's figures expose the consequences of the Tory cuts to our schools, with more and more pupils crammed in to super-sized classes that can only make it harder for them to learn.

"With class sizes soaring, teachers flooding out of the profession and heads reduced to begging parents for donations to buy basic supplies, it is clear that our children are still paying the price for this government's refusal to invest in education.

"The next Labour government will increase per pupil funding in real terms and cap class sizes at 30 in every primary school in England."

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## [Set the record straight over Boris Johnson's misleading Brexit claims, Starmer tells Barclay](#)

**Labour demands minister 'sets the record straight' over Boris Johnson's misleading Brexit claims**

Keir Starmer has written to the Brexit Secretary Steve Barclay

calling on him to “set the record straight” in Parliament later today over Boris Johnson’s misleading Brexit claims. The letter comes ahead of Brexit questions in the House of Commons this morning.

## **Notes to editors**

A copy of Keir Starmer’s letter is below:

Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP

Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union

9 Downing Street

London, SW1A 2AG

27 June 2019

Dear Steve

The next Prime Minister will inherit the biggest political crisis this country has faced in recent history. The Government’s Brexit deal has been rejected three times, the negotiations are at an impasse and there are now only four months to go until the October deadline.

If we are to break the deadlock the next Prime Minister will need to have a credible plan and be honest with the British public about the difficult choices ahead.

However, over recent days, Boris Johnson, who you are supporting in the Tory leadership contest, has made a number of misleading claims about the Withdrawal Agreement and about what can be achieved in the negotiations before October:

- **That the UK can rely on GATT 24 to deliver tariff free trade in the event of no deal.** “There will be no tariffs, there will be no quotas because what we want to do is to get a standstill in our current arrangements under GATT 24, or whatever it happens to be, until such a time as we have negotiated the

[free trade agreement]

.”<sup>i</sup>

- **That the UK can cherry pick the Withdrawal Agreement.** “You disaggregate the elements of the otherwise defunct Withdrawal Agreement... You reserve the payment of the £39 billion... That is in the context of the Free Trade Agreement, that we’ll negotiate in the implementation period, after we’ve come out on Oct 31st”.<sup>ii</sup>
- **That there are existing technological solutions to the Northern Ireland border.** “There are abundant, abundant technical fixes that can be introduced to make sure that you don’t have to have checks at the border.”<sup>iii</sup>
- **That Parliament would support a no deal.** “I do [believe I can get no deal through Parliament] ... I think Parliament now understands.”<sup>iv</sup>
- **That we can have a standstill transition without a withdrawal agreement.** “I think that the way to come out is with a standstill between the UK and the EU so that we keep going with the existing arrangements until such time as we’ve completed our free trade agreement and we use that period to solve the questions of the Northern Irish border. I think we can do that.”<sup>v</sup>

You will know as well as I do that these claims are not based in reality.

As Secretary of State and a supporter of Boris Johnson’s campaign, you have an opportunity – and I believe a duty – to set the record straight and present an honest assessment of the difficult choices facing the next Prime Minister. I’m writing to ask that you do this at this morning’s Brexit questions in the House of Commons.

If these claims are not corrected, then I believe the next administration will repeat the mistakes of its predecessor, with false promises, empty rhetoric and unrealistic red lines.

I look forward to your reply in the Commons later today.

Yours sincerely,

**Keir Starmer QC MP**

**Shadow Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union**

[i]

BBC News, [Gatt 24: Would obscure trade rule help with no-deal Brexit?](#) 24 June 2019

[ii]

PoliticsHome, [Cabinet ministers tear into Boris Johnson's plan for no-deal Brexit](#), 23 June 2019

[iii]

BBC News, [In full: Boris Johnson interview with BBC's Laura Kuenssberg](#), 24 June 2019

[iv]

BBC News, [In full: Boris Johnson interview with BBC's Laura Kuenssberg](#), 24 June 2019

[v]

## **NAO Data report – Jo Platt responds**

**Jo Platt MP, Labour's Shadow Minister for the Cabinet Office**, responding to the NAO's report showing that data is not seen as a priority by government, said:

"The Conservatives are a party unfit for the digital age.

"A cocktail of poor leadership, ignorance and austerity has left the Government unable to capitalise on the power of data. This has undermined policies and worsened already desperate situations such as Windrush.

"Labour in government will tackle head on the challenges of delivering modern, digital government, and we will harness the power of data so it works for the many."

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## **Tory race is choice between man who broke NHS and man who will sell it to Trump**

**Andrew Gwynne MP, Labour's National Campaign Co-ordinator**, commenting on the run-off between Jeremy Hunt and Boris Johnson, said:

"What a choice: the man who broke the NHS or the man who wants to sell it to Donald Trump.

"A handful of unrepresentative Conservative members should not be choosing our next Prime Minister. People should decide through a General Election."