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John McDonnell MP, Labour’s Shadow Chancellor, commenting on the Chair of the FCA, Andrew Bailey, raising concerns over the increasing levels of personal debt in an interview with the Guardian newspaper, said:

“The rise in personal debt is concerning, and with real wages lower than they were when the Tories came to power in 2010, government action is long overdue.

"The situation is only set to worsen if Philip Hammond ploughs on with policies such as the planned cuts to in-work benefits and real terms cuts to public sector workers’ pay, which will further add to the growing burden on working families.

"Labour will improve living standards by introducing a £10 per hour real living wage and investing to build a high wage, high skill economy of the future that works for the many not the few."

The Chancellor should accept this week’s vote in parliament to reverse the recent rise in tuition fees – Angela Rayner

Angela

Rayner MP, Labour’s Shadow Education Secretary, in response to the Tories proposed changes to tuition fees, said:

“Labour has long been calling for the government to take action on rising student debt, including rethinking their eye watering interest

rate hikes and raising the repayment threshold for graduates. They need to stop talking and get on with it.

"If the Chancellor is serious, the first thing he could do is accept this week's vote in Parliament to reverse the most recent rise in tuition fees.

"The Chancellor's reported proposals don't help many who most need support – that is why Labour will bring back maintenance grants for disadvantaged students as well as abolishing tuition fees entirely."

New statistics show Universal Credit in 'total disarray' – Debbie Abrahams MP

New data published today by the Department for Work and Pensions shows that Universal Credit is in 'total disarray' and urgently needs to be paused.

The data shows that:

- One in four new claimants are now having to wait longer than six weeks to receive payment. This has deteriorated from one in five claimants, driving many into debt and arrears.
- 42 per cent of families in arrears under Universal Credit state that it is due to the waiting times to receive payment, support being delayed or stopped, or administrative errors in the system.
- Half of families in arrears under Universal Credit have said that their rent arrears started after they made their claim.
- Half of new Universal Credit claimants need a DWP loan to cover the six week wait for their first UC payment being enforced by this Government. This suggests that the Department accepts that half of new recipients are unable to go six weeks without UC support. However, the advance loan requires rapid repayment, exacerbating the high levels of debt and arrears among Universal Credit claimants.

This new evidence appears to confirm the findings of a report by Citizen's Advice, published this week, which shows that Universal Credit is increasing debt among low income families. For 79 per cent of those asked, having priority debts such as rent or council tax is "putting them at greater risk of eviction, visits from bailiffs, being cut off from energy supplies and even prison." This figure is up 10% compared with those on legacy social security payments such as Jobseekers' Allowance. The same report also found

that 2 in 5 have no money to pay creditors as their monthly spend on essential living costs is more than their income.

Debbie Abrahams MP, Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary, said:

“The Government’s flagship Universal Credit programme is in total disarray. It is unacceptable that one in four claimants are waiting more than six weeks to receive support, alongside mounting debts and arrears among recipients.

“I have written to the Secretary of State requesting that he immediately halt the roll out of Universal Credit to contain the misery being caused by the disastrous mishandling of this programme.

“In our manifesto we set aside £10bn for reform of the social security system, including transforming Universal Credit, to ensure that, like the NHS, it is there for us all in our time of need.”

Diane Abbott response to terrorist attack in Parsons Green

Diane Abbott MP, Labour’s Shadow Home Secretary, responding to today’s terrorist attack in Parsons Green, said:

“We are all horrified by the terrorist attack in Parsons Green today. Our hearts are with those affected and their families and we are thankful that there are no fatalities.

“In what has been a difficult year, we have seen just how much we owe our emergency services including the police, NHS, Ambulance and fire service. And today we applaud the swift response of the British Transport Police and Transport for London staff who were first on the scene.

“Setting out to harm people on their daily commute is an attack on our very way of life. In times like this our great city has always pulled together with resilience and in defiance of any threat. Londoners will never be beaten by terror.”

The new Funding Formula for schools

does not go nearly far enough – Angela Rayner MP

Angela Rayner MP, Labour's Shadow Education Secretary, commenting on the Government's National Funding Formula announcement, said:

"Today's announcement on the National Funding Formula follows years of pressure from the Labour Party as well as schools, teachers and parents across the country, forcing the Government to abandon millions of pounds in outright cuts to schools.

"However, it does not go nearly far enough to meet the Tories' own election promises and is far less than Labour pledged in our manifesto. For many pupils and schools, funding will fall in real terms between now and 2020, which comes on top of a £2.7 billion in real term cuts since 2015.

"There is no new money for education at all, and this funding for schools is coming from other cuts to education budgets. Only months ago, Ministers guaranteed that the healthy pupils fund would be protected – now it is being cut by over 75 per cent, and the Education Secretary can't even tell us where else the axe will fall.

"The next Labour government will give our schools the resources they need, reversing funding cuts and increasing the schools budget in real terms, as we build a National Education service that allows every child to fulfil their potential."