

Labour calls for urgent action to deal with shortcomings in mental health provision following the judgment of Sir James Munby

Barbara Keeley

MP, Labour's Shadow Minister for Mental Health, has today written to Jeremy Hunt, following the judgment of Sir James Munby in the case of the young person referred to as X, calling on the Health Secretary to take personal action today to ensure the allocation of a supportive and safe placement for the young person X.

In the letter, Keeley urges Hunt to take heed of the 'scathing words in this judgment' and take immediate action to deal with the shortcomings in our Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. To achieve this, Keeley calls on the Government to announce extra funding for those services and commit to ring-fencing funding both for CAMHS and mental health services more generally.

Ends

Notes to editors

Full text of the letter

Dear
Jeremy,

I am writing to you following the judgment of Sir James Munby in the Family Division of the High Court on 3rd August in the case of the young person referred to as X. The scathing words in this judgment stand as a warning of the need for urgent action to improve the care available for children and young people in a mental health crisis.

The judge
said:

"What this case demonstrates .. is the disgraceful and utterly shaming lack of proper

provision in this country of the clinical, residential and other support services so desperately needed by the increasing numbers of children and young people afflicted with the same kind of difficulties as X is burdened with...

"If this is the best we can do for X, and others in similar crisis, what right do we, what right do the system, our society and indeed the State itself, have to call ourselves civilised? The honest answer to this question should make us all feel ashamed...

"If, when in eleven days' time she is released from ZX, we, the system, society, the State, are unable to provide X with the supportive and safe placement she so desperately needs, and if, in consequence, she is enabled to make another attempt on her life, then I can only say, with bleak emphasis: we will have blood on our hands."

On Monday of this week you defended your Government's performance on mental health services by saying "Look at our record". The judgment in the case of X allows us to make that examination and it finds current services seriously wanting.

There have been many reports warning of the current weaknesses of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. In a report in May 2016, the Children's Commissioner reported that: "of particular concern were some of the 3,000 children and young people we heard about who were referred to CAMHS with a life-threatening condition (such as suicide, self-harm, psychosis and anorexia nervosa), of whom: – 14% were not allocated any provision; – 51% went on a waiting list; – some waited over 112 days to receive services."

In October 2016, you said that CAMHS: "is possibly the biggest single area of weakness in NHS provision at the moment" and that there were "too many tragedies".

Sir James Munby has expressed his fears about the worst potential outcome in this case. We must also be aware of other similar and pressing cases.

I urge you to take personal action today to ensure the allocation of a supportive and safe placement for the young person X. I further urge you to make plans to deal with the shortcomings so clearly identified in our CAMHS services and to announce both extra funding for those services and plans to ring-fence funding both for CAMHS and for mental health services more generally.

As Sir

James Munby has said, if the current state of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services is the best we can do, what right does the State have to call itself civilised?

Given the

level of public interest in this case, I will be making this letter public.

Yours
sincerely,

Barbara
Keeley MP

Shadow
Cabinet Minister for Mental Health

[The Government is sending out mixed messages on who will be allowed to fish in UK waters post-Brexit – Lynch](#)

Holly Lynch MP, Labour's Shadow Minister for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, responding to Michael Gove's comments on post-Brexit fishing access to UK waters, said:

"The Government is sending out mixed messages on who will be allowed to fish in UK waters post-Brexit.

"Michael Gove, after previously taking a tough line on exclusive rights for U.K. vessels, is already watering down those commitments.

"The Government must clarify its position urgently to prevent further damage to EU diplomatic relations that could potentially harm a deal for the British fishing industry."

[Barbara Keeley comment on Sir James](#)

Munby's judgment

Barbara

Keeley MP, Labour's Shadow Mental Health Minister, commenting on Sir James Munby's judgment, said:

"The
Tory Government have been warned time and again that Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services are at crisis point. It is simply unacceptable that services have got to a level where it is now a matter of life and death, as in this case.

"Government
ministers must act now to safeguard this young person."

The start of the PrEP trial is welcome and long overdue – Hodgson

Sharon

Hodgson MP, Labour's Shadow Minister for Public Health, reacting to the announcement that NHS England's PrEP Implementation Trial will begin on 1 September, said:

"The
start of the PrEP trial is welcome and long overdue after months of delays and
heel-dragging by the Government.

"The
evidence shows just how transformative this drug can be as part of our
approach
to HIV prevention and ending the transmission of this life-changing
infection.
This trial will take us one step closer to fully understanding the benefits
of
PrEP.

"Now
it is important that this trial is rolled out as quickly as possible across
the
country to protect individuals who are exposed to HIV and help take us one
step
closer to ending the spread of HIV in society."

It is staggering that it would take a typical worker 160 years to earn the average annual package of a FTSE 100 chief executive – Bill Esterson MP

Bill Esterson MP, Labour's Shadow Business Minister, commenting on the High Pay Centre report, said:

"It's appalling that we live in a society where Britain's top bosses are awarding themselves huge salaries whilst ordinary working people are facing a decline in real term wages and the worst squeeze in living standards in seventy years.

"It is staggering that it would take a typical worker 160 years to earn the average annual package of a FTSE 100 chief executive.

"That's why Labour proposed to roll out a maximum pay ratio of 20:1 in the public sector and in companies bidding for public contracts.

"The report also reveals that male chief executives earn on average an outrageous 77 percent more than their female counterparts. Labour would legislate to require all large employers to conduct equal pay audits.

"We need to ensure fairness in pay and an economy which works for the many, not just the few."