

Richard Burgon MP writes to David Lidington MP to seek assurances over fire safety in prisons

Labour's

Shadow Justice Secretary, Richard Burgon MP, has today written to David Lidington MP, the Justice Secretary, to ask what measures the Government is taking to address the fact that every prison in England and Wales that has undergone a fire inspection has failed its inspection.

Richard

Burgon MP, Labour's Shadow Justice Secretary, said:

"It is

appalling that not a single prison in England or Wales meets the required fire

safety standards. The terrible fire at Grenfell Tower underlines the need to take fire safety seriously.

"The current

situation not only puts prisoners at risk, it is putting staff and visitors at

risk too. That is why I have written to David Lidington, the Secretary of State

for Justice, to ask exactly what he is doing to address this danger.

"It is vital

that urgent steps are taken to ensure prisons meet the required fire safety standards, and that instead of keeping reports secret, the results of future inspections are immediately made public."

Ends

Notes to editors:

Full text of the letter from Richard Burgon MP to David Lidington MP:

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing to ask what measures you are taking in response to the information released by the Crown Premises Fire Inspection Group that confirms every prison in England and Wales that has undergone a fire inspection has failed its fire inspection.

It is clear that staff, inmates and visitors are being put at significant risk by the current fire safety conditions within prisons. Therefore, I would like you to clarify the following:

1. What immediate and concrete steps are being taken to improve fire safety conditions?
2. How can the fire inspections regime be made more transparent so that failings can be identified and acted on earlier?

Given the danger posed to members of the public, I have made this letter public. I believe it would also be appropriate for your reply to be made public.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Burgon MP

Shadow Secretary of State for Justice and Shadow Lord Chancellor

It is a scandal that some patients are waiting years to be discharged – Keeley

Barbara Keeley MP, Labour's Shadow

Mental Health Minister, commenting on the BBC's research into delayed discharges from mental health units, said:

"It is a scandal that some patients are waiting years to be discharged, despite being medically fit for discharge.

"Under the Tories, mental health services have come under increasing pressure due to underfunding and staffing shortages, and also the lack of integrated working.

"It is unacceptable that patients are stuck in mental health units for such long periods waiting to be discharged despite being fit to leave. The delay puts their recovery at risk and means that other people who urgently need to access mental health services are not able to get the treatment they need. It should never be the case that such extended delays are caused by wrangling between different health bodies over funding.

"Labour would invest more in mental health to ease the pressures and we would ring-fence mental health spending so that funding for mental health is not used to fill holes elsewhere in NHS budgets."

Today's figures highlight the worrying impact the benefit cap is having on families – Greenwood

Margaret Greenwood

MP, Labour's Shadow Work and Pensions Minister, commenting on the DWP's Benefit

Cap statistics, said;

"Today's figures highlight the worrying impact the benefit cap is having on families across the country, with 68,000 affected by the new lower cap level, a sharp increase

"Child poverty is also increasing. Last month the High Court ruled that the cap was "unlawful" for lone parents with young children, with the judge commenting that the cap was causing "real misery to no good purpose.

"Clearly, this Government's decision to cut families' incomes does not amount to supporting them into work, especially given their total failure to provide adequate affordable childcare. It is time that we urgently reviewed the Benefit

Cap's impact and effectiveness.

"Rather than penalising children for its failed austerity plans, the Government

should instead undertake the task of supporting people into work, tackling the

high cost of housing, improving pay and investing in childcare."

If you cut budgets and push out teachers then life in school will become even harder for the most disadvantaged – Angela Rayner

Angela

Rayner MP, Labour's Shadow Education Secretary, commenting on the EPI report on

trends in educational attainment and disadvantage, said:

"The findings of this report are deeply concerning but unfortunately come as no surprise.

"If you cut school budgets and push out teachers, as the Tories have done, then life in school will become even harder for the most disadvantaged kids. It is no wonder that we are still generations away from closing the attainment gap.

"The Tories' key election pledge was to bring back grammar schools and segregate our children, a move that would make the situation even worse. A Labour Government would deliver an education system for the many, not the few."

If holiday makers are to avoid further havoc, the Government must engage with Schengen member states – Andy McDonald

Andy

McDonald MP, Labour's Shadow Transport Secretary, commenting on the delays for passengers at European airports, said:

"It is right that measures have been put in place to ensure safety at a time of increased terror threats but any measures taken to strengthen security have to be accompanied by proper border force staffing levels to avoid the chaos we're seeing at the moment.

"The aviation industry warned that problems were around the corner months ago but the Government hasn't listened, insisting that we'd already seen the worst of the delays.

"If holiday makers are to avoid further havoc, the Government must engage with Schengen member states to ensure they take immediate steps to resource their borders controls properly as ensuring safe and smooth travel from and to the UK is in our mutual interests."