

Keir Starmer response to Philip Hammond's comments that the UK will seek a Brexit transitional deal

Keir

Starmer MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, responding to

Philip Hammond's comments that the UK will seek a Brexit transitional deal for up to three years, said:

“Labour

has been calling on the Government to commit to appropriate transitional arrangements for a long time. If jobs and the economy are to come first, there

can be no threat of a cliff-edge for businesses after we leave the European Union.

“The

Chancellor now appears to accept this. However, in light of the clear divisions

this week within the Cabinet, I hope the Chancellor was not merely speaking in a personal capacity.

“I

also hope that this is the final burial of the flawed proposition that ‘no deal’ is a viable option.”

Over a million children could go hungry this summer, government figures reveal

Millions of children

across England are at risk of going hungry over the summer holidays, official figures suggest.

The worst affected

will be the over 1.1 million children who are eligible for and claiming a

free

school meal, who will miss out over the holidays.

Millions more could be at risk, as government figures show that 30 per cent of children (nearly 4 million) across England are living in poverty, whose families may not be able to afford food.

New analysis from the Trussell Trust shows that there is an increase in the number of food packages being given to families with children over the summer, showing the extent of holiday hunger across the country.

Moreover, an answer to a Written Question tabled by Angela Rayner MP shows that the Department for Education "has made no assessment of the number of children who are at risk of experiencing hunger during school summer holidays in 2017."

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

"It is a national disgrace that millions of children across the country are at risk of going hungry this summer.

"The Government has admitted it has no plans to assist children who are facing hunger during the school holidays.

"The Conservatives are failing in their duty of care to children in poverty, whose numbers are increasing to Dickensian levels under Tory austerity.

"With the IFS forecasting that child poverty will rise to 5 million by 2022, Labour is demanding that the Government brings forward a new strategy to tackle child poverty.

Labour calls on the Government to address the injustice and damage caused by their unlawful Employment Tribunal Fees policy

Richard Burdon MP, Labour's Shadow Justice Secretary has written to David Lidington MP, Secretary of State for Justice, following Unison's Supreme Court victory, where the

Employment Tribunal Fees introduced by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition were declared unlawful, to call on the Government to make sure that all those who were treated unfairly are now able to access the justice they deserve.

In the letter, Burgon condemns the Government's shameful decision to unlawfully restrict access to justice for its own citizens, and calls for answers on how much public money was wasted defending their unjust policy, as well as a Government commissioned independent review of the effects on access to justice of the fees in other Courts and Tribunals.

Full text of the letter

Dear Secretary of State,

I'm writing to you following the Supreme Court's Judgment yesterday that the Employment Tribunal Fees introduced by the Conservative / Liberal Democrat Coalition in 2013 are unlawful and impede access to justice.

This means the Ministry of Justice has been operating unlawfully for four years. Given this, it is now vital that you take urgent steps to address the injustice, unfairness and damage caused by your unlawful policy.

Your junior Minister Dominic Raab MP had no other option than to concede that the Government will have to "take immediate steps to stop charging fees in employment tribunals and put in place those who have paid".

Please could you inform me:

- How much money from the public purse your Government has spent defending its unlawful and unjust policy?
- When the Government will be issuing a full and unequivocal apology to working people and their families for deliberately and unlawfully blocking their access to justice?
- When the Government will be issuing a full and unequivocal apology to people and families who had to undertake disclosure of their personal financial circumstances in an intrusive and even humiliating level of detail as part of the Government's failed 'Fee Remission' Scheme for Employment Tribunals?

- By what date the Government will have fully reimbursed all those who were unlawfully required to pay Employment Tribunal Issue Fees and Employment Tribunal Hearing Fees?
- Whether your Government will be setting up a scheme, system or arrangements to ensure that all those who were unlawfully treated by their employers but didn't issue an Employment Tribunal case because of the applicable Issue Fee, or didn't proceed to the Employment Tribunal Hearing because of the applicable Hearing Fee, are restored to the position in which they would have been had it not been for your Government's unlawful policy?
- Given the Supreme Court's Judgment states that "In order for the fees to be lawful, they have to be set at a level that everyone can afford, taking into account the availability of full or partial remission", will your Government now commission an independent review of the effects on access to justice of the fees in other Courts and Tribunals? Given your Government's record of denial in relation to your unlawful Employment Tribunal Fees, it is clear that your Government cannot be trusted to carry out this review itself.

Congratulations are due to Unison for righting this wrong at the Supreme Court. It is just a shame that the Government did not listen to the trade unions, the legal community, the Labour Party or myself. If the Government had done so, it would not have found itself in the shameful position it now does – found to have unlawfully restricted access to justice for its own citizens.

Given the level of public interest in this matter, I have made this letter public. I believe it would also be in the public interest for your reply to be made public.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Burgen MP

Shadow Secretary of State
for Justice & Shadow Lord Chancellor

The prison crisis is a stark example of failure by the Conservative government – Richard Burgon

Richard Burgon MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Justice, responding to the latest Ministry of Justice statistics, said:

“The crisis in our prisons is a stark example of failure by the Conservative government. Violence and assaults on staff are now at record levels. This has resulted in a failure to rehabilitate prisoners, meaning the system is failing to keep the public safe.

“We have also seen record numbers of prisoners being released by mistake. With staff over worked and underpaid it is hardly surprising that our prisons are in such a desperate state.

“The public and those who work in our prisons deserve better.”

More than half a million pupils are now crammed into supersize classrooms

Labour

today publishes analysis of overcrowding in English primary schools with more than half a million pupils being taught in super-size classes. It reveals:

- 542,679 children are now in super-size classes in primary school, as class-sizes continue to rise
- 39,000 primary pupils are in classes of over 36 pupils and 16,571 are now in class sizes of at least 40
- The mounting pressure on school places is now starting to hit secondary schools, with figures showing an increase in the number of pupils in very large classes in the last year
- The South East and North West are the two worst hit areas with latest figures showing over 90,000 primary school pupils in classes over 30

- The number of infant school children (between the age of 5 and 7 years) in classes over 30 has almost trebled since 2010

Commenting on the figures, Shadow Schools Minister, Mike Kane, said:

“These figures expose seven years of Tory failure in our schools. The number of pupils being taught in super-sized classes is skyrocketing while schools face the first real terms cuts to their budgets in a generation.

“This situation is unsustainable. If the Tories wanted to give every child the education they deserve they would ensure that children were not crammed into super-sized classes.

“A Labour Government would ensure that schools are built where they are needed, and cap class sizes at 30 for all primary school pupils.”