

## The lack of progress in these negotiations is deeply concerning and does not bode well for the future – Keir Starmer

**Keir Starmer MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union**, commenting on the second round of Brexit talks, said:

"The lack of progress in these negotiations is deeply concerning and does not bode well for the future. On issues such as the rights of EU citizens in the UK and UK citizens in Europe, Labour has been calling for action since July last year. 12 months later, after having been promised a swift resolution of the issue, we learn today that there remain "fundamental divergences" on this key issue. This means more waiting and more anxiety for millions of families.

"The lack of progress on this and other issues also calls into question whether phase two of the negotiations can commence in October.

"That will trigger deep concern for businesses and communities across the U.K, who need much greater certainty and reassurance than they are getting from this Government.

"The reality is that we have a Government that is unprepared, divided and incapable of securing a good deal for Britain. We urgently need a fresh approach."

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## Diane Abbott response to the latest Home Office data on police numbers and crime in England and Wales

"This a damning indictment of the Tory record.

"The Tories have cut police officer numbers again in the latest 12 months and now there are well over 20,000 fewer than in 2010. And despite promising to protect budgets, they continue to cut funding even as a senior figures in policing line up to warn they are overstretched and struggle to cope with demand.

"Now police have recorded their highest number of crimes in a decade, including over a million violent offences, and yet today's figure also reveal a shocking fall in the rate of charges and summonses.

"The Tories simply aren't allowing the police to protect the public. Labour in government will tackle rising crime. We pledge to bring back 10,000 officers. It's what the police need and the public deserve."

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## **It is getting harder and harder for ordinary young people to access higher education – Gordon Marsden**

**Gordon Marsden MP, Labour's Shadow Universities Minister**, commenting on the University and College Union (UCU) report into student loan repayments, said:

"The Tories have tripled tuition fees, abolished maintenance grants for poorer students and frozen the repayment threshold, hitting graduates on the lowest incomes. This report confirms yet again that the impact has been deeply unfair and it is getting harder and harder for ordinary young people to access higher education.

"It is professions such as nurses and midwives that are being hit the hardest, and if the NHS can't recruit the staff it needs then we will all be worse off as a result.

"The Government needs to decide if they think it is fair that the debt burden should fall so heavily on the very people our society relies so heavily on."

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## **It is deeply concerning that the size of the Army has fallen yet again on this Government's watch – Nia Griffith**

"It is deeply concerning that the size of the Army has fallen yet again on this

Government's watch.

"Since

Michael Fallon became Defence Secretary in 2014, the number of fully trained soldiers has fallen by over 7,000. That trend is simply not sustainable and it has very real consequences for the UK's defence capabilities.

"We

know that satisfaction with pay and service life are some of the biggest reasons why servicemen and women are leaving the Armed Forces in their droves.

"If

the government was serious about tackling this crisis in recruitment and retention, they would agree to lift the public sector pay cap to give our Armed Forces the pay that they deserve."

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## Today's announcement confirms that the Tories have been taking people for a ride – Andy McDonald

**Andy McDonald MP, Labour's Shadow**

**Transport Secretary**, commenting on the Government's scrapping of plans to electrify the Great Western Mainline between Cardiff and Swansea, said:

"The Tories have been promising the electrification of the Great Western Mainline from Paddington to Swansea since 2012 and today's announcement confirms that they have been taking people for a ride.

"The cancellation of

works means passengers will be denied the faster, greener, more reliable train

journeys they were promised, and South Wales will miss out on the economic activity that improved rail services deliver.

"The decision betrays

a promise to South Wales and the Transport Secretary sneaking out the news on the final day before he goes on his summer holidays adds insult to injury.

"The Tories do not act

in the interests of the whole UK. They have put their own survival, finding £1 billion for a deal with the DUP, ahead of everything else and it's communities like those in South Wales that pay the price."