

## [This Government's policies have slammed the door on the aspirations of people across Britain – Angela Rayner](#)

**Angela Rayner MP, Labour's Shadow Education Secretary**, commenting on UCAS figures for UK higher education applications, said:

"These figures show the worrying impact of a Conservative Government happy to burden young people with over £50,000 of debt just for getting an education.

"From tuition fees rising with no end in sight, to maintenance grants being scrapped, and extortionate interest rates on student debt, this Government's policies have slammed the door on the aspirations of people across Britain, and now we are beginning to see the impact that will have on university applications.

"The decline in nursing applications is utterly shocking, and shows the results of the Government's regressive and short-sighted decision to scrap nurses' bursaries at a time when our NHS will desperately need more staff.

"If the Tories want to see more young people go on to university they would bring back maintenance grants, tackle high interest rates on student debt, and end their plans to see tuition fees rise each and every year."

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## [Jeremy Corbyn to meet Michel Barnier, European Union chief negotiator on Brexit](#)

Jeremy Corbyn MP, Leader of the Labour Party, will have an extended meeting with the EU's chief Brexit negotiator, Michel Barnier, in Brussels on Thursday, in a move which signals Labour's growing importance to the Brexit process in the wake of the UK General Election.

The Labour leader will be joined by Shadow Brexit Secretary, Kier Starmer and Shadow Home Secretary, Diane Abbott, for the meeting in which they are expected to discuss Labour's priorities for a jobs-first Brexit deal and cover Labour's approach to Phase 1 negotiations.

Phase 1 includes citizen's rights, exit obligations, and Ireland's border arrangements. Labour will raise the issue of EU nationals and repeat the party's support for a unilateral guarantee of the rights of EU nationals

currently living in Britain. Labour will extend the hand of partnership and friendship to European Union leaders and outline how a Labour-negotiated Brexit would seek to build on our integrated trading positions and commitment to protect and maximise trade opportunities between the UK and the rest of Europe.

**Jeremy Corbyn MP, Leader of the Labour party, said:**

“Labour is a government in waiting and we are ready to take up the responsibility for Brexit negotiations.

“Labour respects the referendum result and the decision to leave the European Union. But a Labour Brexit would look very different to the race-to-the-bottom tax haven backed by this Conservative Government.

“In contrast to the Conservatives’ megaphone diplomacy, we will conduct relations with our European neighbours respectfully and in the spirit of friendship. Our strong links with our European sister parties gives Labour an advantage in reaching an outcome that works for both sides.

“Labour would negotiate a jobs-first Brexit deal which puts the economy, jobs and living standards front and centre. Labour would unilaterally guarantee the rights of EU citizens living in the UK because it’s the right thing to do.

“Labour wants to work with other countries to build a different Europe, one which promotes human rights and environmental protections, celebrates the positive and complementary contributions of European nations, and where trade is fair and sustainable.”

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## [The Labour Party welcomes the Government’s decision to conduct a review into abuse and intimidation in elections – Cat Smith](#)

**Cat**

**Smith MP, Labour’s Shadow Minister for Voter Engagement and Youth Affairs,** commenting on the Government’s announcement that they will be conducting a review into abuse and intimidation in elections, said:

“The Labour Party welcomes the Government’s decision to conduct a review into abuse and intimidation in elections. This kind of behaviour has no place in our democracy and the Labour Party condemn any action that seeks to

undermine our tradition of free and fair elections.

“Political parties and politicians have a responsibility to set an example, by treating others with dignity and respect, including those with whom we strongly disagree.

“We look forward to working with the Government to tackle this cross-party issue, which takes place for all political parties across the political spectrum.”

**Ends**

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## [There is great untapped potential here for exports and growth – Gardiner](#)

**Barry Gardiner MP, Shadow Secretary of State for International Trade**, responding to today’s announcement of a partnership between UKEF and high street banks, **said**:

“Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of our economy, but have been neglected for too long. Lack of adequate export finance continues to be a big barrier to trade for British SMEs, which make up to 60 percent of private sector jobs, but currently only one in five exports. There is great untapped potential here for exports and growth.

“Labour has repeatedly called for more to be done to support and ensure that UK Export Finance (UKEF) is broadened away from arms and big ticket items exclusively, and in our General Election manifesto we committed to championing SME export interests.

“Today’s announcement from the government is a welcome agreement with us. However, export finance underwritten by British taxpayers should be subject to the most stringent scrutiny, risk assessment and ethical controls. Banks should not be allowed to pass ordinary lending risks to the taxpayer, nor should they be able to undertake undue risk under this scheme.

“This initiative should be used to support the growth in strategic sectors for the

future of the UK economy. It should work in tandem with our industrial strategy so that taxpayer subsidised export credit does not put British industries and British jobs at risk.”

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## The public has a right to know if any governments, foreign or domestic organisations or individuals are funding extremism in this country – Diane Abbott

**Diane Abbott MP, Labour’s Shadow Home Secretary**, responding to the Government’s decision to not publish the extremism funding report in full, said:

“The public has a right to know if any governments, foreign or domestic organisations or individuals are funding extremism in this country, and what the UK government intends to do to prevent that.

“Of course, security intelligence should not be compromised but this is easily achieved by redaction and other means. The Government would never have commissioned this report if it considered this problem insurmountable.

“Instead, there is a strong suspicion this report is being suppressed to protect this Government’s trade and diplomatic priorities, including in relation to Saudi Arabia. The only way to allay those suspicions is to publish the report in full.”