

Theresa May's rigid and complacent approach to Brexit negotiations risks leading Britain over a cliff edge – Starmer

Keir Starmer MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Exiting the EU, commenting on today's reports about Theresa May's meeting with Jean-Claude Juncker last Wednesday, said:

"Whatever the purpose of these leaks, this is a deeply worrying account and further evidence that Theresa May's rigid and complacent approach to Brexit negotiations risks leading Britain over a cliff edge. It is clearer by the day that an extreme Tory Brexit poses a severe risk to the British economy and to people's jobs and living standards.

"Theresa May talks about strengthening her hand, but in reality she has misjudged her hand at every turn, weakening Britain's position. By refusing to acknowledge the complexity and magnitude of the task ahead the Prime Minister increases the risk that there will be no deal, which is the worst of all possible outcomes.

"In pursuing a rigid and complacent approach, the Prime Minister now finds herself marginalised and isolated across the continent. Since day one, she has been driven not by the national interest, but by the interests of the Tory party.

"We urgently need a new approach. Labour will seek a new collaborative partnership with our European allies. We will guarantee the rights of EU nationals, immediately setting a different and more positive tone.

And we will rebuild relations with the EU and make sure that jobs, the economy and rights come first."

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Labour's

Shadow Secretary of State for Housing John Healey has today pledged that under

a Labour government there would be a 'consumer rights revolution' for renters,

starting by introducing tougher legal minimum standards for all private rented homes.

Mr

Healey will say Labour's new minimum standards will empower renters to "call time on bad landlords" letting out dangerous or sub-standard homes and who are

being let down by Conservative Ministers who have weakened key legislation.

Labour

analysis released alongside the pledge shows for the first time the cost of England's 1.3 million sub-standard private rented properties, now home to 400,000 families with children. Tenants are spending £800 million every month (£9.6 billion a year) on homes which the government classes as 'non-decent'. Around a quarter of this— some £2.3bn a year — is paid by housing benefit.

At

present, there are effectively no minimum standard for private renters, and tenants are reliant on over-stretched council environmental health teams to weed out dangerous homes rather than being able to take matters into their own hands.

Mr

Healey will point out that in practice people have "fewer rights renting a family home than you do buying a fridge-freezer". Consumer rights legislation is limited in housing so while consumers will normally get protections requiring that goods and services are 'satisfactory quality', and 'fit for purpose' with clear redress and 'repair or replace' provisions, there are no equivalent protections for renters.

A

Labour government would consult with landlords and relevant professionals on new legal minimum standards to ensure properties are 'fit for human habitation'

on specified criteria, for example:

—

safe wiring and appliances

—
freedom from serious damp and vermin infestation

—
appropriate water and sewage facilities

—
appropriate facilities for the
preparation and cooking of food

—
general good repair.

Research

by Shelter in 2014 found that six in ten renters (61%) have experienced at least one of the following problems over the last 12 months: damp, mould, leaking roofs or windows, electrical hazards, animal infestations and gas leaks.

As
part of Labour's five point plan on standards announced today Mr Healey will also pledge new powers for councils to license landlords and tough fines for those who flout the rules.

John

Healey MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Housing, said:

"Our
homes are at the centre of our lives but at the moment renters too often don't
have basic consumer rights that we take for granted in other areas. In
practice
you have fewer rights renting a family home than you do buying a
fridge-freezer. As a result, too many are forced to put up with unacceptable,
unfit and downright dangerous housing.

"The
number of families renting from a private landlord has soared since 2010 but
decisions made by Conservative Ministers have made it easier for a minority
of
bad landlords to game the system. Most landlords provide decent homes that
tenants are happy with, but these rogue landlords are ripping off both
renters
and the taxpayer by making billions from rent and housing benefit letting out
sub-standard homes.

"After
seven years of failure the Conservatives have no plan to fix the housing
crisis. The next Labour government would call time on bad landlords. We'd
introduce proper minimum standards to put renters back in control, and give
councils the powers they need to tackle the worst offenders."

The message of 1997 is as relevant today as it was then: we need people to vote for change, to vote for Labour – Gwynne

Andrew Gwynne MP, Labour's National Campaigns and Elections Chair, on the 20th anniversary of Labour's 1997 election victory, said:

"Twenty years on from 1997, the lesson of that election is that it takes a Labour government to bring about transformative change for the many not just the few.

"In 1997, after 18 years of the Tories running down the country, Britain needed a Labour government to change working people's lives for the better. That's exactly what the Labour government did between 1997 and 2010.

"The achievements of that government were many. From the New Deal which helped millions in to work, to the National Minimum Wage which made that work pay. From peace in Northern Ireland to Sure Start which made a difference to millions of children and their families. In education, school spending per pupil was doubled, thousands of schools rebuilt and 42,000 more teachers helped deliver some of the best ever school results. And for the NHS a Labour government was transformative, with the largest hospital building programme in history and 44,000 more doctors and 89,000 more nurses driving up standards and driving down waiting times.

"Now, in 2017, we again need a Labour government to rebuild and transform a country that is suffering from Tory neglect and deepening inequality. The message of 1997 is as relevant today as it was then: we need people to vote for change, to vote for Labour and for a country for the many not the few."

Jeremy Corbyn speech to the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) conference

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Jeremy Corbyn MP, Leader of the Labour Party,

speech to the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) conference:

Thank you for inviting me here today to your annual conference in the year of your union's 120th anniversary.

I want to pay tribute to Russell Hobby, your General Secretary: a great advocate for head teachers who has overseen you joining the TUC, working with other teachers' and education unions.

I also want to pay tribute to the next Education Secretary, Angela Rayner, who is a tireless campaigner and passionate advocate for your profession and for children.

It is a great honour to address you, leaders of one of the most important professions in our society, those who look after the education, the wellbeing, and the future of our children.

That is why Labour is making our children's education one of the cornerstones of our General Election campaign.

The choice in this election could not be clearer – and it's not the re-run of the EU referendum that the Prime Minister wants it to be.

Britain needs a government for the many not the few – one that's ready to invest in our economy and public services. But the Conservatives have demonstrated that cannot be them, preferring to give the richest and largest corporations tax hand-outs worth tens of billions.

The NHS and social care have been pushed into a state of emergency. Housebuilding has fallen to its lowest peacetime rate since the 1920s. Schools across the country face real terms cuts in funding per pupil, and class sizes are rising – while those young people who

want to go to university face huge debts.

There is no greater responsibility than ensuring our children get the education that they deserve. I know this, you know this, parents up and down this country know this. But it is clear that this Conservative Government has its focus elsewhere.

The NAHT has correctly pointed out that this election is make or break time for our children's education system.

As all of you will know, the National Audit Office confirms that schools are facing a cut of three billion pounds in real terms by 2020, the first real terms cut in education budgets in a generation.

This is an absolutely staggering figure and shows the need for a complete change of direction in how the government of this country treats our schools.

And we have to ask ourselves: is this how we want to treat the education system of our children? Is this how Britain's children deserve to be treated?

Do our children deserve to be held back by a chronic shortage of teachers?

Do our children deserve to be crammed into schools like sardines?

Do our children deserve to be taught by teachers whose morale is at an all-time low?

Not by any fault of the teachers, they are the people who also bear the burden of government cuts, but the fault of governments who fail to recognise the importance of investing in the lives of children, and those who teach and support them, up and down this country.

That is why we must value teachers, because if we don't we lose them. And you know better than anyone there is a recruitment crisis and that crisis will be made even worse if we don't secure the rights of EU nationals.

Last year 5,000 teachers from EU countries qualified to teach here and there are thousands more working to teach our children. So that's why, as Keir Starmer set out this week, a Labour government will guarantee the rights of EU nationals living here.

And if we lose teachers, we lose subjects, we narrow the horizons of young people. So that's why I

passionately
believe in an Arts Pupil Premium so that every primary school child will
benefit from a £160 million cash boost to help pupils learn to play
instruments, learn drama and dance and have “regular access” to theatres,
galleries
or museums in their local areas.

And yet, while all this is
happening, while funding to our children’s education is cut, multinational
corporations have received multi-billion pound tax giveaways

How can it be right that money is
being siphoned straight out of our children’s schools and directly into the
pockets of the super-rich?

We have to be clear, once and for
all, that enough is enough.

Throughout this General Election
campaign, we will be making absolutely clear our commitment to build a
country
for the many, and not just the few.

A vital part of that will be
creating an education system that provides for every child regardless of
their
background, or their parents’ income.

Labour will introduce
a National Education Service, ensuring excellent learning opportunities for
all
from early years to adult education.

What we need now – and what you as
teaching professionals need now – are concrete answers and concrete solutions
to the problems that our education system is facing.

That is why Labour has set out a
plan to help give every young person the best start in life possible, by
introducing universal free school meals for pupils at primary schools. It’s a
policy that is fully costed, and will be paid for by introducing VAT on
private
school fees.

There are clear educational
benefits to providing universal free school meals. It boosts the attainment
and
level of education of our children. We know that these early formative years
are the most important in a child’s education and we have a duty to provide
for
our children the best we possibly can throughout that period.

It’s a policy that demonstrates

how a Labour government would care for the many, and not just the few.

We will ensure that every single child receives a healthy and nutritious meal which will not only boost children's productivity in the classroom but also helps to ensure their personal wellbeing, no matter what their background.

Children eating together is a great start in life.

So not only will the policy help children throughout their time in education, it will also help teachers who will see the benefits of improved concentration and improved attainment in the classroom.

And it will help parents who will not only save money but will have the peace of mind in knowing that their child is getting a healthy school meal during the day

Investing in the health of our nation's children, is investing in our nation's future.

If we are to truly place value on our children's education, we must also place value on the teachers, head teachers and other school staff who deliver that education.

We must put an end to the continual attacks on the teaching profession, end the downward pressure on pay and conditions, the constant undermining of morale and the erosion of standards that means we have more unqualified teachers than ever in our classrooms.

That's why, as part of the comprehensive programme Labour has set out today to strengthen rights at work and end the race to the bottom in the jobs market, we have confirmed a Labour government will lift the cap on public sector pay.

It cannot be right that those who provide our vital public services have their pay squeezed year after year. Britain's public service employees deserve a pay rise.

And we must give the teaching profession the recognition it deserves, not only in terms of pay, but also in terms of status in our society.

We need to listen to you, the teaching professionals, on how you believe schools can be improved and respect the huge wealth of talent and knowledge that lies in the teaching profession as

a whole.

I have always believed that the people who know how to do a job best are those who do it day in day out. We must start listening to parents, teachers and head teachers: you are the people who know how schools should be run and you are the people who best understand the needs of our children.

That is why Labour has taken our lead from the NAHT – and from the other teachers' unions – when we set out in no uncertain terms our opposition to the expansion of grammar schools in this country.

Not only does the mass introduction of segregation in our education system not help the overwhelming majority of this country's children, it also returns us to what are frankly Victorian notions of education based on a narrow curriculum.

The task is clear: we must build an education system that suits the needs of our children and the opportunities they will have in the jobs market of tomorrow.

And if we are to build an economy worthy of the 21st century, we need a schools system that looks forwards, and not backwards to the failed models of the past.

We must recognise that every single child in this country has talents and every single child deserves the chance to flourish and thrive to their maximum potential in whichever field suits them best.

But our children's schools do not exist in a vacuum. I am always in awe of the local head teachers I work with. Like thousands of children, I have learned so much from them.

And what I admire most is their commitment – not just to managing their schools and to educating our children – but the multi-faceted demands of the children in their community: their housing issues, immigration problems, their mental health. You are the heart of your communities.

You are part of a wider care system and you need the other parts of that system to work effectively alongside you, youth services, the NHS and social care.

Support for schools by these services is essential to promote pupil wellbeing. The duty to directly address pupils' mental health needs ultimately rests with the social and care

services.

No school should be asked to fund health and social care services from the school budget. That is why Labour has pledged to address the chronic underfunding for social care and the NHS.

As you all know schools are most effective as places of learning when they work together with high quality social care and health services to meet the needs of all students but especially those who are most vulnerable.

One in ten children and young people in this country suffer from a mental health condition and 75 percent of adult mental health problems are found to begin before the age of 18.

We must prioritise the mental wellbeing of our children. This is the least they deserve.

It is vital that we enable early intervention and provide support when problems first emerge but to do this we must build an education system that integrates social and health care.

Improving the way our society deals with mental health is a particular concern of mine because I am passionate to see opportunities for all.

That's why I have been so impressed by the work so many of you do for children with special needs and how good special needs co-ordinators can liberate children from what has sometimes been a lifetime of exclusion.

That focus on the individual child is what drives our determination to reduce class sizes. We know that half a million children have been landed in super-size classes of 31 pupils or more.

This government is failing on education on its own terms. The Prime Minister herself has said that super-sized classes are proof of a school system in crisis. So then why is it allowed to continue?

Why are our children's schools, not getting the funding that they deserve? This is a choice. And it is the wrong choice. The cut to schools funding is also a breach of their manifesto the Conservatives' pledge to protect schools funding.

Labour will ensure schools have the resources they need.

I'm afraid I can't give you a

sneak preview of the full Labour manifesto today but be assured if it's a choice between a tax giveaway to the largest corporations paying the lowest rates of tax in the developed world or funding for our schools. Labour will make very different choices from the Conservatives.

We have already started to set some of that out not just our free schools meals policy.

And our commitment to reintroduce the Educational Maintenance Allowance for college students from lower incomes.

We are also committed to restoring maintenance grants for university students so that no one is held back from realising their ambitions and so that every schoolchild knows that the options of further and higher Education are available to them.

We must not be ashamed to value education, for education's own sake.

Schools should exist to get the very best from our children, to give them the best start in life, to enable them to succeed in whichever walk of life they chose.

Whereas Theresa May's government has repeatedly cut resources and staffing we will invest in our children's futures because they deserve nothing less.

The excuses from the government come thick and fast. They've blamed teachers for not working hard enough, they've diverted funds to their vanity projects. £138.5 million wasted on schools that have closed, partially closed or never opened in the first place.

We will not bring back a system that blamed children and parents for not passing the eleven plus and getting into a grammar school.

They blame everybody else, to divert attention from their own damaging failures. They need head teachers to tell them, own up, take responsibility and say sorry.

Labour will give schools the funding that our children deserve, the funding that teachers and headteachers deserve and the investment that our country and our economy deserves.

This election can be the chance for a fresh start, with a Labour government that will invest to create shared prosperity, protect our public services and build a fairer Britain.

A Labour government will work with you, we will give schools the funding the need and we will ensure you and

your
staff get the respect and resources you need.

We have a duty to our children and
we will meet it.

Thank you.

The next Labour government will transform the workplace

Labour's 20 point plan to end the 'rigged economy' in work

Labour is backing a comprehensive programme to strengthen rights at work, make sure new jobs are good jobs, and end the race to the bottom in pay, conditions and job security.

Low pay and insecurity have mushroomed under the Conservatives. Labour will invest in the jobs and industries of the future, and take action to enforce a floor under employment standards across the board – so that all jobs are decent jobs.

The next Labour government will bring in a 20 point plan for security and equality at work:

- **Give**
all workers equal rights from day one, whether part-time or full-time, temporary or permanent – so that all workers have the same rights and protections whatever kind of job they have
- **Ban**
zero hours contracts – so that every worker gets a guaranteed number of hours each week
- **Ensure**
that any employer wishing to recruit labour from abroad does not undercut workers at home – because it causes divisions when one workforce is used against another
- **Repeal**
the Trade Union Act and roll out sectoral collective bargaining – because the most effective way to maintain good rights at work is through a

trade union

- **Guarantee**

trade unions a right to access workplaces – so that unions can speak to members and potential members

- **Introduce**

four new Bank Holidays – we'll bring our country together with new holidays to mark our four national patron saints' days, so that workers in Britain get the same proper breaks as in other countries.

- **Raise**

the minimum wage to the level of the living wage (expected to be at least £10 per hour by 2020) – so that no one in work gets poverty pay

- **End**

the public sector pay cap – because public sector wages have fallen and our public sector workers deserve a pay rise

- **Amend**

the takeover code to ensure every takeover proposal has a clear plan in place to protect workers and pensioners – because workers shouldn't suffer when a company is sold

- **Roll**

out maximum pay ratios – of 20:1 in the public sector and companies bidding for public contracts – because it cannot be right that wages at the top keep rising while everyone else's stagnates

- **Ban**

unpaid internships – because it's not fair for some to get a leg up when others can't afford to

- **Enforce**

all workers' rights to trade union representation at work – so that all workers can be supported when negotiating with their employer

- **Abolish**

employment tribunal fees – so that people have access to justice

- **Double**

paid paternity leave to four weeks and increase paternity pay – because fathers are parents too and deserve to spend more time with their new babies

- **Strengthen**

protections for women against unfair redundancy – because no one should be penalised for having children

- **Hold**
a public inquiry into blacklisting – to ensure that blacklisting truly becomes and remains a thing of the past
- **Give**
equalities reps statutory rights – so they have time to protect workers from discrimination
- **Reinstate**
protection against third party harassment – because everyone deserves to be safe at work
- **Use**
public spending power to drive up standards, including only awarding public contracts to companies which recognise trade unions
- **Introduce**
a civil enforcement system to ensure compliance with gender pay auditing– so that all workers have fair access to employment and promotion opportunities and are treated fairly at work

John McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, said:

"These policies will be the cornerstone of the next Labour government's programme to bring an end to the rigged economy that many experience in workplaces across Britain.

"The scandal of six million people earning less than the living wage, and four million children growing up in poverty are not inevitable. It only takes a change of government to bring these outrages to an end.

"The measures we are planning will make that possible, update our country for the 21st century and prepare us for the economic challenges ahead.

"They will also underpin the values we want to see in the British economy, and underline the scale of Labour's plans to transform the workplace from the shop-floor up to the boardroom.

"When voters go to the polls on 8th June they should know that if they vote Labour, they will be voting for a change in the balance of power not only in society but in their places of work.

"It will mean tearing up the Tory status quo that allows most people's wages to fall behind prices, and allow them to start to share in the wealth they help to create.

"Only a Labour government led by Jeremy Corbyn will stand up for the many in our offices and factories, while the Tories are only prepared to protect big business and a wealthy few."

Rebecca Long-Bailey, Shadow Secretary of State for Business,

Energy and Industrial Strategy, said:

“Labour’s 20 point plan on employment rights seeks not only to extend the rights of workers but enforce them too. For too long people have fallen through the gaps in the law or suffered because the law is simply inadequate, we intend to stop this. This election offers a clear choice: do you want a labour market run for the many or the few.”