

Labour reports Boris Johnson to statistics watchdog over misleading comments

Keir Starmer MP, Labour's Shadow Brexit Secretary, has today written to Sir David Norgrove, Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, following comments made by Boris Johnson that Vote Leave's claim the UK sends £350m a week to the EU was 'grossly underestimated'.

- A copy of Keir Starmer's letter is below.

Dear Sir David,

Foreign Secretary's comments about the UK's financial contribution to the EU

I am writing to seek clarification on comments made by the Foreign Secretary yesterday [15 January] about the UK's financial contribution to the European Union (EU).

In an interview with The Guardian the Foreign Secretary said: "There was an error on the side of the [Vote Leave] bus. We grossly underestimated the sum over which we would be able to take back control."

The newspaper reports that "Johnson argued that the UK's EU contribution was already up to £362m per week for 2017-18 and would rise annually to £410m, £431m, and then to £438m by 2020-21 – 'theoretically the last year of the transition period.'"

The £350m a week claim made by the Vote Leave campaign has been widely condemned as inaccurate and misleading. For example, in September of last year the Statistics Authority wrote to the Foreign Secretary saying, "it is a clear misuse of official statistics." And yet, Mr Johnson has chosen to repeat this statement and expand on the claim even further. I do not believe this to be acceptable.

I would therefore be grateful if you could make a statement on the accuracy of the Foreign Secretary's most recent comments.

Yours sincerely

Keir Starmer
Shadow Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union

Today's inflation figures are further bad news for working households – Peter Dowd

Peter Dowd MP, Labour's Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, responding to today's inflation figures by the ONS, said:

"Today's inflation figures are further bad news for working households. Inflation remains around a five year high, while real earnings are still lower than in 2010, following seven years of Tory economic failure.

"The next Labour government will introduce a £10 per hour Real Living Wage to tackle the wages squeeze, and build a high wage, high skill economy for the many, not the few."

The government should step in and take over Carillion's rail contracts – Andy McDonald

Andy McDonald MP, Shadow Transport Secretary, commenting on the implications of Carillion's collapse, said:

"Following the disastrous East Coast franchise decision, giving a contract to Carillion is yet another example of the negligent and carefree approach towards awarding contracts from Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling.

"The government should step in and take over Carillion's rail contracts to ensure rail renewal and enhancement work is brought in-house within Network Rail along with maintenance work."

British public expects Government to ensure Armed Forces get funding they deserve – Griffith

Nia Griffith MP, Labour's Shadow Defence Secretary, responding to the Urgent Question on the National Security Capability Review in the House of Commons, said:

"It is completely unacceptable that the Defence Secretary cannot answer the most basic questions about the Government's defence review, which many fear is just a thinly veiled attempt to force more cuts on Britain's Armed Forces.

"Under this Government, we have seen a dramatic fall in the size of the Army and there is a gaping black hole of £20bn in the defence equipment plan.

"The simple fact is that you cannot do security on the cheap and the British public expects the Government to ensure that defence and the Armed Forces get the funding that they deserve."

Jon Trickett response to Carillion going into liquidation

Jon Trickett MP, Labour's Shadow Minister for the Cabinet Office, responding to Carillion going into liquidation, said:

"The Government must act quickly to bring these public sector contracts back in-house to protect public services and ensure employees, supply chain companies, taxpayers and pension fund members are protected.

"Given £2 billion worth of Government contracts were awarded in the time three profit warnings were given by Carillion, a serious investigation needs to be launched into the Government's handling of this matter.

"It is vital that shareholders and creditors are not allowed to walk away with the rewards from profitable contracts while the taxpayer bails out loss-making parts of the business."