

It is crucial that the Government urgently improve departmental monitoring and evaluation measures – Jon Trickett

Jon

Trickett MP, Labour's Shadow Minister for the Cabinet Office, responding to a Regulatory Policy Committee report criticising the quality of departments' impact assessments of policy decisions, said:

"Years

of Tory cuts are clearly taking their toll on civil servants who face increased workloads, tight resources and worsening conditions.

"It

is utterly unacceptable that departments are diverting resources away from providing rigorous impact assessment of their decisions – what some might call 'idiot-proofing' the civil service from Tory policy.

"Ministers

could be leading us up the garden path and the departments themselves would be none the wiser.

"It

is crucial that the Government urgently improve departmental monitoring and evaluation measures."

Today's figures show the Government's debt still rising, seven years after the Tories started their austerity agenda – Peter Dowd

Peter

Dowd MP, Labour's Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, commenting on today's ONS public sector finance figures, said:

"Today's

figures show the Government's debt still rising, seven years after the Tories started their austerity agenda, and two years after they said they would balance the books.

"It's

clear that their slash and burn approach to public spending has not only given

us a crisis in NHS and social care but also failed as an approach to reducing Government debt.

"Labour's

Fiscal Credibility Rule gives us a firm commitment to addressing the public finances while investing in our economy for the future as part of our programme

to rebuild and transform Britain."

Government must come forward with immediate funding and sustainable vision for social care – Pearce

Teresa Pearce, Labour's Shadow

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, responding to the Local Government Finance Settlement, said:

"Time and time again, this Government

has ignored warnings of the social care crisis, from health, social care and local government experts and from MPs across the political spectrum."

"This Local Government Finance

Settlement is no different to what's come before. It is all smoke and mirrors –

pushing numbers around but not offering any new money. Shifting the burden on to council tax payers creates a postcode lottery in social care services.

Wealthy areas will prosper whilst poorer communities will struggle. This was made clear by the revelation of the sweetheart deal offered to Surrey County Council behind closed doors, whilst the rest of the country suffers."

"The brutal cuts handed down by this

Tory government will leave local councils facing a £5.8 billion funding gap in just two years' time. Libraries, youth centres and Sure Start centres have closed. Child protection services are creaking. Frail elderly people and vulnerable disabled people are being left lonely and isolated."

"This is a crisis made in Westminster but, as per usual, the Tories are pushing the blame on to councils, communities, carers and families. The Government must come forward with immediate funding, as well as a long-term, sustainable and strategic vision for social care."

Ends

It is disappointing news that Rebecca Steinfeld and Charles Keidan have lost their Court of Appeal battle to enter into a Civil Partnership – Champion

Sarah

Champion, Labour's Shadow

Secretary of State for Women and Equalities, commenting on the Court of Appeal judgement on Civil Partnerships, said:

"It is disappointing news that Rebecca Steinfeld and Charles Keidan have lost their Court of Appeal battle to enter into a Civil Partnership.

"Labour are proud to have introduced Civil Partnerships in 2004 as a key step in achieving true marriage equality for LGBT people.

"But, now that same sex marriage has been legalised, it is an anomaly that Civil Partnerships are not available to all couples regardless of their gender and sexuality.

"Civil Partnerships should be extended to heterosexual couples who wish to have a legal union in accordance with their individual beliefs and values.

"Labour will continue to push the government to look again at this important issue."

Sarah Champion commenting on the Government's failure to act on cross-party recommendations to reduce the gender pay gap

Sarah

Champion MP,

Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Women and Equalities, commenting on the Government's failure to act on cross-party recommendations to reduce the gender pay gap, said:

"The cross party Women and Equalities Committee's recommendations aim to improve working conditions for women of all ages and sectors right across the country.

"But, sadly, it seems that their recommendations are again falling on deaf ears.

"The Government has systematically ignored the evidence the Committee, charities, experts and individuals have worked so hard to produce.

"This Government continues to ignore the voices and lived experiences of thousands of women in chronically low paid, under-valued sectors of the economy such as care, hospitality and retail. Industries where zero hour contracts and bad practice have been allowed to run rife.

"The structural causes of the gender pay gap must be addressed, otherwise women will simply continue to be left behind.

"The lack of meaningful response to the Women and Equalities Committee shows that when it comes to tackling the serious, underlying causes of gender inequality in our country, this Tory Government isn't willing to take the bold action needed."