

Sir Robert Francis' message is clear: the funding crisis in the NHS is putting patient care at risk – Ashworth

Jonathan Ashworth MP, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, responding to Sir Robert Francis' comments on the Andrew Marr Show this morning, said:

"Sir Robert Francis' message is clear: the funding crisis in the NHS is putting patient care at risk. The NHS should be the safest and best in the world, but Sir Robert's warning is that this cannot be achieved given the scale of the financial crisis now engulfing hospital departments up and down the country.

"The Tories' behaviour to date has been to blame patients and doctors for the pressures facing the NHS. But the truth is that the cause of this crisis lies squarely at the feet of The Prime Minister. Theresa May must immediately agree to bring forward a comprehensive funding package for health and social care in the March Budget so no patients are put a risk of harm or unsafe care."

The Government has completely failed to deliver on NHS workforce planning- Madders

Justin Madders MP, Labour's Shadow Health Minister, responding to reports that a lack of Government planning means that Locum Doctors are being paid up to £363 an hour, said:

"The Government has completely failed to deliver on NHS workforce planning and now they are losing control of NHS finances as well.

"It's not right that this amount of money is leaking out the system to agencies and temporary staff at a time when funding is so tight that operations are being cancelled and services cut back.

"The cap on agency payments has been breached a shocking 2.7 million times in just nine months. The Government needs a solution to help the NHS get the permanent staff it needs to keep patients safe.

"Jeremy Hunt should be making sure money meant for the NHS is going to patient care, not private agencies."

Ends

I welcome today's announcement that the stress and worry that this inquiry has caused to service personnel and veterans will soon be brought to an end- Griffith

Nia Griffith MP, Labour's Shadow Defence Secretary,
commenting on the decision to close down The Iraq Historic Allegations Team, said:

"I welcome today's announcement that the stress and worry that this inquiry has caused to service personnel and veterans will soon be brought to an end.

"I completely condemn the spurious and untrue allegations that have been levelled against service members and veterans. Labour has long said that anyone facing investigation should be properly supported by the Government.

"It is now important that the inquiry's work is completed promptly and properly in order to eliminate any risk of these vexatious claims arising again in future."

Ends

Government must show caution and concern about the way the Saudi campaign is being conducted – Thornberry

Emily Thornberry, Shadow Foreign Secretary, responding to today's revelations regarding arms exports to Saudi Arabia, said:

"We have discovered today that, even after the bombing of the funeral hall in Sana'a and the concerns of Liam Fox's department about the risk that British weapons were being used in breach of International Humanitarian Law, Boris Johnson gave his personal reassurance that the Saudi-led coalition was improving its targeting processes and ensuring that any incidents where non-military targets had been bombed were being properly investigated.

"According to the independent Yemen Data Project, in the 55 days between Boris Johnson writing his letter and the end of 2016, Saudi forces bombed 60 residential sites in Yemen, including houses, markets and refugee camps. At this time of heightening humanitarian crisis, they bombed 46 sites of economic infrastructure, including farms, water tanks and food trucks, and 48 sites of physical infrastructure, including roads, bridges and ports. They also managed to bomb three schools and a university. Not a single one of these 160 incidents has yet been investigated by the Saudi authorities. If this is what Boris Johnson calls the Saudis 'improving processes and...taking action to address failures', then I would sorely hate to see the opposite.

"It should not be left to the courts to rule whether the export licences for these arms sales should have been granted. It should be for this Government to show some long-overdue caution and concern about the way the Saudi campaign is being conducted, the devastating humanitarian crisis that campaign is helping to cause, and the blatant failure to ensure any proper, independent investigation of these alleged crimes against international law."

Ends

Shadow Cabinet appointments

Ian Lavery and Andrew Gwynne are appointed joint National Elections and Campaign Coordinators for the Labour Party.

Jon Trickett is appointed Shadow Minister for the Cabinet Office and will remain Shadow Lord President of the Council.

Ends