

[The consequences of deep Tory cuts to HMRC risk undermining efforts to tackle tax avoidance – Dowd](#)

Peter Dowd MP, Labour's Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, responding to reports that HMRC is struggling to deal with the growing number of cases of tax avoidance, said:

"The consequences of deep Tory cuts to HMRC are being felt, and risk undermining its efforts to tackle tax avoidance and evasion.

"Labour has consistently said that only a fully resourced and funded HMRC will be able to effectively tackle the scourge of tax evasion and its huge cost to the taxpayer. These latest revelations only further confirm some of our worst fears."

[The plan published today simply fails to match the scale of the environmental problems we face – Hayman](#)

Sue Hayman MP, Labour's Shadow Environment Secretary, commenting following the PM's speech, said:

"The Government has missed a crucial opportunity to make significant progress on the environment with this insubstantial, weak and long overdue 25 year plan.

"The plan published today simply fails to match the scale of the environmental problems we face. The lack of ambition and concrete measures is a cause for alarm in light of Britain leaving the European Union when the UK will no longer be subject to environmental protections and targets.

"As usual with this Tory government, this provides for very little concrete action. The Prime Minister's speech and the plan itself contain very little new material, mostly repeating and repackaging existing policies and previous announcements."

[Today's stats reveal a relentlessly bleak picture for patients – Ashworth](#)

Jonathan Ashworth MP, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, responding to the latest NHS performance data,

said:

"Today's stats reveal a relentlessly bleak picture for patients at the start of the NHS's 70th Birthday. Eight years of severe austerity has left our health service woefully underfunded, understaffed and unprepared for the rise in demand as the cold period hits.

"Since the Tories took control of our NHS, there has been a staggering 400% increase in trolley waits and a 234% rise in patients waiting longer than four hours in A&E.

"December's A&E performance is the worst on record, with just 85.1% of patients being seen within four hours. This is a substantial performance decline and raises serious questions as to whether the Government can meet its pledge of meeting the 95% A&E target by their promised deadline of March 2018.

"Over the past few weeks we've heard the appalling human stories arising from the worst winter crisis on record. Enough is enough.

"Today NHS Providers has rightly warned that the funding settlement for the NHS is simply inadequate to provide the standards of patient care expected. The Government must listen. Only Labour will put in place a long term plan for the NHS giving it the funding needed for the future."

[Theresa May has abandoned all promises made to victims of the hacking scandal – Watson](#)

Tom Watson MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, commenting on the Prime Minister's statement that her Government will seek to overturn last night's Lords vote that backed Leveson 2, said:

"Last night's vote was a milestone for the victims of hacking and press

intrusion and a step towards fulfilling the promises for change made by all parties in 2012.

“Following that vote, Theresa May had a choice: whether to side with the victims of phone hacking or to side with her friends in the press and those that want to block change. Her words this morning make clear that she has abandoned all the promises made to victims after the hacking scandal was exposed.

“Labour has never wavered from our support for the victims of press abuse. In every General Election manifesto since the scandal we have reiterated our support for the victims and our commitment to bring into force the Leveson system for independent regulation of the press and complete Part 2 of the Inquiry.

“These amendments do precisely that and we will be fighting to keep them in the bill when it comes to the Commons.”

[Tom Watson response to the House of Lords backing Leveson 2](#)

Tom Watson MP, Labour’s Shadow Secretary for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, responding to the House of Lords backing Leveson 2, said:

“In 2012, all parties made a promise to the victims of phone hacking. At many times since then the Tories have tried to renege on that promise.

“Tonight’s votes are an important step towards justice.

“Unlike the Tories, Labour has always stood by the victims of hacking and press intrusion with promises in each of our past manifestos to enact all the recommendations of Leveson.

“These votes send a signal to the Tories: that they must keep their promises.”