

Debbie Abrahams responds to Government's 'Fuller Working Lives' strategy

Debbie Abrahams MP, Labour's Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary, commenting on the Government's 'Fuller Working Lives' strategy, said:

"It's right that the Government is taking steps to boost employment for older people.

"However, more than half a million workers aged over 50 rely on in-work support – and that support is at risk of being rolled back through Universal Credit.

"That's why Labour is calling on the Tories to reverse cuts to Universal Credit, which could see some older workers worse off by £2,600 a year."

After years of dither and delay, it is welcome that progress is finally being made on runway expansion – Andy McDonald

Andy McDonald MP, Labour's Shadow Transport Secretary, commenting on the Government's statement on Heathrow, said:

"Labour has consistently been pushing for a decision on runway expansion in the South East of England so after years of dither and delay, it is welcome that progress is finally being made.

"However, there are still outstanding issues including how Heathrow expansion can be squared with meeting the UK's climate change objectives and demonstrating that local noise and environmental impacts can be minimised.

“This can be achieved, but only in the context of a coherent aviation strategy that works for the country not just London. It starts with confirming our membership of the European Aviation Safety Agency, as well as action on cleaner fuels and improving road and rail access to our international gateway airports.”

NHS recruits being driven away before they've even started – Jonathan Ashworth

Jonathan Ashworth MP, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, responding to official UCAS figures published today which show that applications for undergraduate nursing degrees starting in September 2017 are down 23 percent compared with the previous year, said:

“The Government have been warned repeatedly that cutting bursaries and funding for student nurses would cut off the future supply of NHS staff. Now we have the proof that those warnings were right – 23 percent fewer people have applied to study nursing this year.

“Misguided reductions in training places under the Tory Government, combined with a never-ending pay squeeze, have left the NHS dangerously short of staff. Patients are seeing wards closed, operations cancelled and treatments delayed. Now the new recruits which the health service so desperately needs are being driven away before they've even started.

“The staff are the lifeblood of our NHS. They give their all to keep the system going in the face of underfunding and mismanagement by the Tories. The Government ought to get a grip, show our nursing students that their time and commitment is really valued, and give them the support they need when they're setting out on their careers.”

It's welcome news that simplifying fares will be trialled but it is clear that this is just tinkering around the edges – Andy McDonald

Andy

McDonald MP, Labour's Shadow Transport Secretary, commenting on reports that reforms to the rail fare system will be trialled this May, said:

"It's welcome news that simplifying fares will be trialled but it is clear that this is just tinkering around the edges.

"Privatised rail has created a fragmented system with a jumble of operators offering a complicated array of fares for passengers to navigate.

"Passengers don't want to shop around for tickets, they want to get from A to B for the cheapest price. This is why Labour will bring our railways back into public ownership, creating an integrated national network with simple and affordable fares for all."

John McDonnell MP responds to Resolution Foundation Report

John

McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, commenting in the Resolution Foundation report out today, which shows that Britain is on course for the biggest increase in inequality since Thatcher, said:

"This report is damning of the unfair economic policies of this Chancellor, as the gap between working families and a wealthy few gets wider, with the poor getting poorer and the rich getting richer. It demonstrates to us all once again that the economy under a Tory government will be rigged for those at the top, with poor and middle income households

facing their worst Parliament for income growth since the 1960s.

“Labour

called on the Government at the Autumn Statement to end the unfair cuts to in work benefits, whilst they were going ahead with tax giveaways to a wealthy minority, but Philip Hammond chose to carry on with the work of his predecessor.

“It is becoming clearer by the day that

working families will be forced to pay for a Tory Brexit that favours the rich

and not the rest of us, as our country faces its biggest rise in inequality since Margaret Thatcher.

“The

next Labour government would rewrite the rules of our economy in favour of working families, with a real living wage expected to be £10 an hour by 2020, and proper investment to ensure no one and no community is left behind.”