

## **This is a significant and welcome U-turn from the Prime Minister – Keir Starmer**

**Keir**

**Starmer MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union**, commenting on

the Government's announcement that they will publish a White Paper, said:

"This

is a significant and welcome U-turn from the Prime Minister.

"Labour

has repeatedly called for the Government to publish a plan for Brexit before Article 50 is triggered and we made clear Labour would table amendments on this

to the Article 50 Bill.

"This

U-turn comes just 24 hours after David Davis seemed to rule out a White Paper,

and failed to answer repeated questions from MPs on all sides of the House.

"The

Prime Minister now needs to confirm that this White Paper will be published in

time to inform the Article 50 process, and that it will clear up the inconsistencies, gaps and risks outlined in her speech."

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## **All workers deserve dignity safety and equality in the workplace and respectful dress codes must be part of that – Sarah Champion**

**Sarah Champion MP, Labour's**

**Secretary of State for Women and Equalities**, responding to a joint report from the parliamentary committees for

Petitions and for Women and Equalities, said:

"All

workers deserve dignity, safety and equality in the workplace and respectful dress codes must be part of that.

“The Government’s insistence that the status quo is adequate on this issue is clearly not true. This report is clear that many women feel compelled to wear discriminatory outfits at work or face disciplinary action.

“Labour urges the Government to undertake its own review into lack of compliance amongst employers in this area and to bring forward suggestions on how greater equality in the workplace can be realised.”

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## **Hard-working people don’t want an NHS where they are charged for treatments – Jonathan Ashworth**

**Jonathan Ashworth MP, Labour’s Shadow Secretary of State for Health**, commenting on reports that GPs are drawing up plans to charge patients for evening and weekend appointments, said:

“The fairest, most efficient and most equitable way of delivering healthcare is to ensure it is publicly funded and free at the point of use.

“Reports that GPs are now considering introducing charging would allow wealthier patients to jump the queue. It is an intolerable consequence of Government under-funding of General Practice and the Tories’ wasteful re-organisation of the NHS.

“This is yet another stark revelation about the reality of Tory mismanagement of the NHS. The Prime Minister simply cannot keep blaming everyone other than her own Government for the scale of this crisis. Hard-working people don’t want an NHS where they are charged for treatments. Theresa May needs to get a grip and fast.”

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## Other public services should not be expected to cover for this Tory Government's cuts to the border agency – Diane Abbott

**Diane**

**Abbott MP, Labour's Shadow Home Secretary**, speaking after revelations that confidential NHS patient data is being gathered by the Home Office to trace suspected illegal immigrants, said:

"This is unacceptable. We have already seen this government using schools to gather immigration data on children. Now we find they are using the NHS in the same way.

"Other public services should not be expected to cover for this Tory Government's cuts to the border agency. People could be deterred from seeking medical care because they are worried their confidential information might be passed on. This could do irreparable damage to the people concerned and it may have public health implications. It should stop now."

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## This is not a Charter for Budget Responsibility, it's a 'Charter for Alternative Facts' – John McDonnell

**John**

**McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor**, speaking after the vote tonight on the revised Charter for Budget Responsibility, said:

"This is not a Charter for Budget Responsibility, it's a 'Charter for Alternative Facts', as the Chancellor has tonight abolished the OBR's ability to determine when a negative shock occurs. This represents a lack of confidence by the Chancellor in his ability to reach his own targets, as well as a rowing back

of  
the welcome principles the OBR was created for – impartiality and credibility  
of fiscal policy.

“Instead  
of less scrutiny by the OBR, Labour would like to see more, such as our call  
for the Chancellor to give power to the OBR to assess short-medium term  
policy  
decisions on health spending. Given the last six years of Tory underfunding  
in  
our NHS alongside the Government’s denials of the resulting crisis, we need  
to  
restore not diminish the public’s faith in the Government’s spending plans.

“Under  
this new charter the OBR will assume the role of bystander rather than  
arbiter  
of whether or not the economy is facing a negative shock. This is a huge  
power  
grab by the Chancellor, as it means he can decide when and what such a  
“shock”  
will be, and therefore he can suspend his rules when he likes, and make up  
his  
targets as he goes along.

“This  
Charter also continues with the practice of lumping infrastructure spending  
in  
with day-to-day spending, meaning that there  
will be insufficient scope for investment in our economy, which could hinder  
growth and therefore our ability to reduce the national debt.

“Despite all the rhetoric of “pressing the reset button”, the  
Autumn Statement has shown that there would be a continuation of austerity  
cuts  
to public services. There is still no more money for the NHS and social care  
crisis, or for ESA and Universal Credit recipients facing cuts.

“Labour’s  
Fiscal Credibility Rule would provide the adequate level of investment our  
economy needs, underpinned by independent oversight coming from both the MPC  
and a beefed up OBR, which would report to parliament and not the Treasury.”