

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."

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.”

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.”

Schools are struggling to plug the massive budget deficits created by Tory Government – Angela Rayner

Angela

Rayner MP, Labour’s Shadow Education Secretary, ahead of the party’s Opposition Day Debate on schools funding, said:

“Schools are struggling to plug the massive budget deficits created by a Tory Government incapable of running a schools system.

“On Monday we heard from headteachers who are increasingly faced with difficult choices of whether they can afford to have classrooms cleaned, sport pitches mowed or to keep hold of vital support staff who are essential to school communities.

“With three quarters

of school budgets taken up by staffing costs, the fear across the sector is that classroom teachers could be cut next.

“At the election the Tories offered warm words to parents about better schools and promised to protect school funding. It is clear that their legacy will now be one of cutting school budgets, super-sized class sizes, and no progress made in the international league tables.

“Our children deserve better.”

After six wasted years of Tory failure on the economy it seems that under Philip Hammond it is only going to get worse – John McDonnell

John

McDonnell MP, Labour’s Shadow Chancellor, responding to the ONS public sector finance figures today, which show the national debt having risen to £1.7 trillion at the end of December 2016, said:

“After six wasted years of Tory failure on the economy it seems that under Philip Hammond it is only going to get worse.

"It appears 2016 was yet another bad year for the national debt with the Tories adding an increase of £91.5 billion, or an average of £251 million each day over the last year: the equivalent of £1,400 per head in the last 12 months.

"Under Hammond’s new fiscal rules, presented in the House today, there is insufficient scope for investment in our economy, which will hinder growth and therefore our ability to reduce the national debt.

"Only Labour has a real investment plan underpinned by our Fiscal Credibility Rule to tackle the national debt and to deal with the public finances, so we can transform and rebuild Britain in order that no one and no community is left behind.”