

Ministers should cancel their latest multi-billion pound tax break for bankers and start protecting the most vulnerable children instead – Emma Lewell-Buck

Emma

Lewell-Buck MP, Labour's

Shadow Education Minister for Children and Families, commenting on the recent findings made by the NSPCC that 90 referrals are made per-week to local agencies over fears of sexual abuse, said:

"This is the latest evidence that demand for child protection services is going up, just as funding is being cut. The Government's own figures show that spending on children's services has already fallen by a tenth under the Tories, and we are heading for a £2bn shortfall by 2020. Ministers should cancel their latest multi-billion pound tax break for bankers and start protecting the most vulnerable children instead."

Ends

Teachers' pay being cut due to lack of annual pay rises says NEU survey – Angela Rayner

Angela Rayner MP, Shadow

Secretary of State for Education, commenting on NEU survey showing Teachers' pay being cut due to lack of annual pay rises and performance related pay progression, said:

"This survey is the latest evidence that the Tories have left schools and teachers in an impossible position. After imposing a pay cap that left teachers £5,000 worse off in

real

terms, they are now acting as if they have ended the public sector pay cap, but won't give schools a penny to fund pay rises.

"If the pay cap effectively continues by the back door, it will only make it harder for schools to recruit and retain the staff they need to give every child the best possible start in life.

"The next Labour

Government will scrap the public sector pay cap, with ring-fence funding to give teachers the pay rise they deserve, as we create a National Education Service and build a country for the many, and not just the few."

Ends

PIP assessment process is not fit for purpose – Debbie Abrahams

Debbie Abrahams MP,

Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, commenting on the Government's

response to Paul Gray's second independent review of the personal independence

payment assessment, said:

"It is clear the Personal

Independent Payment (PIP) assessment process is not fit for purpose. Instead of

supporting people, the process leaves individuals and their families lives in tatters. The recommendations from Paul Gray's second review regarding improving trust and transparency, timely reporting and quality assurance have not been accepted in full.

"There remains an evident

distrust of the assessment process by sick and disabled people. This is no surprise with a record 68% of PIP decisions taken to tribunal being overturned

by judges. The assessment process is getting worse, not better.

"Labour will scrap the

Personal Independence Payment and Work Capability Assessments and replace them

with a personalised, holistic assessment process which provides each individual

with a tailored plan, building on their strengths and addressing barriers,

whether finance, skills, health, care, transport, or housing related. ”

Ends

There is a real danger that our prisons will move beyond crisis to a full-blown emergency – Burgon

Richard Burgon MP, Labour’s Shadow Justice Secretary, responding to the speech by Secretary of State David Lidington on prison reform, said:

“This speech was shockingly complacent, failing to outline a serious plan to tackle the prisons crisis caused by Tory cuts to staff numbers and budgets.

“One in four prisons has seen a fall in officer numbers over the last year, including those housing the most dangerous prisoners and those prisons that the government itself labels as being of concern. Yet the Secretary of State failed to guarantee that those prisons would see any increase in officer numbers. Nor did he set out a vision for tackling widespread prison overcrowding.

“When understaffing and overcrowding mean prisoners spend 23 hours a day locked-up in their cell, this makes a mockery of the government’s claims that it is turning prisons into places of reform.

“With further drastic budget cuts planned by the Ministry of Justice over the coming years, there is a real danger that our prisons will move beyond crisis to a full-blown emergency.”

Ministers have already been told that building safety rules need to be rewritten – Healey

John Healey MP, Labour’s Shadow Housing Secretary, responding to Dame Judith Hackitt’s interim report into the Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety, said:

“This interim report is welcome but Ministers have already been told that

building safety rules need to be rewritten.

“It is now four and a half years since two Coroners’ reports into previous high rise fires recommended an overhaul of building regulations. Ministers ignored the recommendations then and their promise to issue new regulations was never honoured.

“Rather than waiting for the final report of this inquiry, Ministers should start acting on existing recommendations immediately and incorporate recommendations from Dame Judith Hackitt when her inquiry is completed.

“Ministers have been off the pace at every stage in response to the Grenfell Tower fire. They must now quickly give people confidence that our system of fire regulation has the clarity, accountability and proper standards needed so that no-one feels unsafe in their home.”