

[Calls for inquiry into failure to pay trainee GPs their salaries – Jonathan Ashworth MP](#)

Jonathan

Ashworth MP, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, has written to Jeremy Hunt requesting an "urgent update" concerning the failure of Capita to pay hundreds of trainee GPs their salaries.

Jonathan Ashworth said:

"I'm sure you would agree that trainee GPs seeking charitable support to feed their families, and being unable to cover their mortgages is an entirely unacceptable situation which requires urgent rectification."

"I'm sure that as a Secretary of State who places patient safety at the heart of your vision for our National Health Service you will be taking these warnings very seriously indeed."

The letter from Labour's Shadow Health Secretary calls on the Government to:

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Pay the affected trainees directly until the situation is resolved so that they are not forced to seek help from charities.

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Undertake a thorough investigation into how these sustained failings were allowed to take place under the watch of the Department of Health, and why this service was outsourced in the first place.

Ends

Notes to editors:

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Full text of the letter:

Dear
Jeremy,

I am

writing to ask for an urgent update concerning the failure of the private firm Capita to pay hundreds of trainee GPs their salaries.

On 30 October, Dr Richard Vautrey, Chair of the General Practitioners Committee, wrote a letter to NHS England Chief Executive Simon Stevens outlining a number of significant issues with Primary Care Services England (PCSE). The service is commissioned by NHS England and has been provided by Capita since it was awarded the contract in June 2015.

Failings include missing records, administrative errors preventing GPs from working and missing payments. Some GP practices have not received their training grants and have been forced to either cover the shortfall from wider budgets, which are already under unprecedented strain, or leave trainees without payment.

One trainee GP has told *The Guardian* newspaper that she was not paid for two consecutive months by Capita, forcing her to post on a private message board asking: "Anyone know of how I access hardship funds (quickly) to feed children/pay nursery/mortgage (quickly)?"

I'm sure you would agree that trainee GPs seeking charitable support to feed their families, and being unable to cover their mortgages is an entirely unacceptable situation which requires urgent rectification.

Many GPs have also reported problems with management of the performers list, with significant delays in updating lists leaving them unable to work- sometimes for months at a time.

Additionally, the BMA has warned that significant delays and faulty processes in both registration and patient removals is "affecting patient care" and "causing problems for patients with incorrect vaccination and screening calls/recalls."

I'm sure that as a Secretary of State who places patient safety at the heart of your vision for our National Health Service you will be taking these warnings very seriously indeed.

Clearly PCSE services remain far below the high standards rightly expected by the public. Instead of delivering high quality care, Capita's failings are placing

GP services and staff under needless additional pressure with significant ramifications for patient safety.

Therefore,
in the first instance whilst this deeply unfortunate situation continues,
will
you instruct your Department to pay these trainees directly so that they are not forced to seek help from charities?

Moreover,
will you agree to undertake a thorough investigation into how these sustained failings were allowed to take place under the watch of your Department? The public will rightly want to understand why this service was outsourced in the first place and how it became yet another example of botched privatisation.

Finally,
the BMA estimates that hundreds of trainees have been affected, although NHS England has been unable to confirm an exact number. Will you therefore investigate exactly how many GP trainees have been affected by these sustained
and extremely serious failings?

New
systems for cervical screening and GP payments and pensions that are also contracted out to Capita are due to go live next July. However, the BMA has declared it has "no confidence" in Capita's ability to deliver these services.

These
failings must never be allowed to be repeated. I look forward to receiving your
assurances that the matter is being dealt with swiftly and with the severity it
requires.

Yours
sincerely,

**Jonathan
Ashworth MP**
Shadow Secretary
of State for Health

[Older people still face grave](#)

uncertainty because of the Tories’ social care policy vacuum – Julie Cooper

Julie

Cooper MP, Labour’s Shadow Health Minister, commenting on the new joint report on social care costs by Independent Age and the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries, said:

“Older people still face grave uncertainty over the cost of care because of the social care policy vacuum created by a Tory Government bereft of ideas.

“Having U-turned on their disastrous dementia tax policy the Tories failed to tell us what the level of the cap on costs would be and they are now using a long-awaited Green Paper to kick a decision on long-term social care funding into the long grass.

“Labour will ease the crisis in social care by building a National Care Service based on the principle of shared risk so no-one faces catastrophic care costs as they do now.”

Local government cuts risk health service crisis – Andrew Gwynne MP

Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Andrew Gwynne MP,

responding to revelations that around one third of councils in England have been forced to cut services delivering contraceptive care as a result of cuts to public funding, said:

“Seven years of government funding cuts to services are driving councils to the financial brink.

“Continuing this neglect risks creating a crisis not only in local government but also in our

health service.

"At a time when the country needs fresh ideas and leadership, it is instead suffering from the weakest and most divided government in memory."

Ends

[Government admission of failure over Class 2 NICs – Peter Dowd MP](#)

Peter Dowd MP,

Labour's Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, commenting on the Government's announcement to delay the abolition of Class 2 NICs, said:

"The government has clearly tried to sneak this admission of their own failure out just before recess. This should have been announced in the House by a Treasury Minister.

"This announcement only further highlights the chaos that there is at the centre of the Government right now, as clearly these proposals had not been thoroughly thought through before they were announced.

"But above all the Government needs to make sure that those currently paying Class 2 NICs, including many low-earning self-employed people, are not hit hard as a result of their abolition and replacement."

Ends

[Labour MPs call on the Government to lower voting age to 16](#)

Labour MPs call on Government to lower voting age to 16

Tomorrow, Friday 3 November, Labour MPs will be supporting Jim

McMahon MP's Private Member's Bill to reduce the voting age to 16. This reform would enfranchise 1.5 million people, enabling them to participate in politics and have a say in the decisions that affect their lives and futures.

Votes at 16 has cross-party support, from the SNP, Plaid Cymru, the Liberal Democrats, the Green Party, and some senior Conservative politicians.

The Bill would also introduce a requirement on Returning Officers to ensure steps are taken to register new voters and ensure schools teach pupils about democracy and citizenship.

Jim McMahon, MP for Oldham West and Royton, said:

"The fact there is cross-party support to lower the voting age shows that the political appetite for change is there. It has been discussed in the past, but now the time has come to make it a reality.

"This is the right thing to do to strengthen our democracy, and I will be working tirelessly with other MPs and young people to make sure we take this historic step forward."

Cat Smith MP, Labour's Shadow Minister for Voter Engagement and Youth Affairs said:

"It is ridiculous that 16 year olds living in Scotland can vote in local elections, but are denied the right to vote in UK General Elections. With the Welsh Labour Government also looking to extend the franchise to young people, the UK Government must act now.

"It is vital that politicians listen to the voices of young people. That is why Labour is supporting Jim McMahon's campaign to extend the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds."

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