

The pressures facing children's services are unsustainable – Andrew Gwynne MP

Andrew

Gwynne MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government,

commenting on the National Children's Bureau's survey of local councillors responsible for children's services, which has revealed that rising demand and

a lack of resources are leaving children's needs unmet, said:

"The pressures facing children's services are unsustainable, with a combination of Government funding cuts and huge increases in demand leaving many authorities struggling to cope.

"The Government urgently needs to get a grip of the crisis facing children's social services, as the £2 billion funding gap facing these services by 2020 threatens to put more children at risk."

The Government must repair damage caused to legal aid reforms, not apply a plaster to a broken system – Richard Burgon

Richard Burgon MP, Labour's Shadow Justice Secretary, responding to today's statement by Justice Secretary David Lidington that the government's review into its Legal Aid reforms will conclude by July 2018, said:

"When people can't afford to defend their rights, those rights are worth nothing more than the paper they are written on. Government cuts to legal aid have priced out hundreds of thousands of people from being able to enforce their hard won rights.

“Justice delayed is justice denied, so it is disappointing that even though the Government first announced its review nine months ago, it still won’t conclude for another nine months.

“The Government must use this review to fundamentally repair the damage caused by its legal aid reforms, rather than simply applying a sticking plaster to a broken system.”

Ministers have squandered a real opportunity to curb highly addictive Fixed Odds Betting Terminals – Tom Watson MP

Tom Watson MP, Labour’s Shadow Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, responding to the Government’s review into gambling stakes and prizes and social responsibility measures, said:

“This response from the Government is deeply disappointing.

“Ministers have squandered a real opportunity to curb highly addictive Fixed Odds Betting Terminals, which can cause real harm to individuals, their families and local communities. After months of delays they’ve simply decided to have another consultation.

“And instead of taking firm measures on the proliferation of gambling advertising, on TV and online, the Government have again been found wanting.

“Britain is suffering from a hidden epidemic of gambling addiction. The measures announced today will do very little for those suffering from gambling addiction and for the millions, including hundreds of thousands of children, who are at risk of developing an addiction.

“Labour

is committed to reducing the maximum stake for FORTs to £2 a spin and will ban gambling company advertising on football shirts.”

Next month's budget must address unprecedented workforce crisis in our NHS – Jonathan Ashworth

Jonathan Ashworth MP, Labour's

Shadow Health Secretary, responding

to the Health Foundation's warning that NHS workforce planning is 'not fit for purpose', said:

“Theresa May has overseen an unprecedented workforce crisis in the NHS. This latest warning is the culmination of an incompetent strategy, which has left our health service with a shortage of 40,000 nurses, 3,500 midwives and 10,000 GPs.

“For years the Tories have taken NHS staff for granted and asked them to do more for less, resulting in a recruitment and retention crisis which threatens patient care on a daily basis.

Evidently the Government's hope of recruiting 2,000 extra foreign GPs by 2020 looks thoroughly unlikely.

“The public is under no illusions: a repeat of last winter is entirely intolerable. In next month's Budget the Government must take urgent action to secure a sustainable workforce in our NHS in years to come.”

John McDonnell responds to IFS research on public finances ahead of

the Budget

John McDonnell MP,
Labour's Shadow Chancellor, commenting on analysis published today by the IFS on the public finances ahead of the Budget, said:

"The IFS have today confirmed seven years of Tory austerity policies have failed to drive up investment and productivity, with serious potential consequences for the public finances. Tory economic failure means wages and salaries are lower today than when they came to power, and still falling, whilst their mishandling of Brexit is now also adding to the uncertainty around future borrowing plans.

"Instead of dragging millions of ordinary people through the endless misery of Tory spending cuts, the Chancellor now needs to make a decisive break with past Tory failure and end austerity. If he cannot, Labour stands ready to govern, end the appalling failure of Tory austerity and build an economy that works for the many, not the few."