

[John McDonnell response to today's GDP figures](#)

John

McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, commenting on today's GDP figures, said

"Today's GDP figures further confirm the impact that seven wasted years of Tory economic policy has had on working households.

"Economic growth for the majority of 2017 has been below what was expected. In recent weeks leading independent forecasters have slashed growth for next year, and the latest economic data shows wages are still set to fall behind prices – squeezing living standards further.

"The UK is not growing as fast as many of our trading partners in the EU or the USA, and it is becoming increasingly clear that this government has to use next month's Budget for a change of direction.

"The Chancellor cannot keep hiding from the facts, as his approach of carrying on as usual is seriously putting working people's living standards at risk.

"Labour has consistently called for increased investment underpinned by our fiscal credibility rule, so that we can prepare our economy for any downturn from the Tories' chaotic handling of Brexit."

[Government whip compiling what looks like a register of Brexit heretics is unacceptable – Angela Rayner](#)

Angela

Rayner MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Education, commenting on a letter

from Government whip Chris Heaton-Harris MP to universities asking for the names of tutors lecturing on Brexit and copies of their course syllabi,

said:

“This is yet another shambles from a Conservative Government that doesn’t have a clue.

“It’s unacceptable for a Government Whip to compile what looks like a register of Brexit heretics in the first place, but the Conservatives’ chaotic response has made things worse. First Number 10 tried to distance themselves from him – remarkably claiming a Government Whip doesn’t speak for the Government – only for Andrea Leadsom, the Leader of the House, to defend his actions.

“This sorry episode reveals a Government in disarray and a Prime Minister incapable of getting a grip.”

[Today’s report on modern day slavery is an indictment of the Tories’ unwillingness to properly resource our police forces – Diane Abbott](#)

Diane

Abbott MP, Labour’s Shadow Home Secretary, commenting on the HMIC report on modern day slavery and human trafficking, said:

“This report is a damning indictment of this Tory government’s unwillingness to properly resource our police and border forces.

“Modern day slavery is complex and requires in-depth and sophisticated investigation. But with the pressure of devastating cuts to police numbers and budgets it comes as no surprise that investigations are prematurely closed and victims are not identified.

“The Tories have simply set our police forces up to fail, whilst the victims of human trafficking and modern day slavery are left to suffer.”

The Chancellor is refusing to answer very basic questions because he is too weak to stand up to reckless Brexiteers in the Cabinet – John McDonnell

John

McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, speaking after Treasury Questions today, said:

"Today

I called on the Chancellor to agree to vote with Labour in the House of Commons

in opposing a 'No Deal' Brexit if one was to occur. He refused to answer the question.

"I

further asked him to at least agree to set out the principles of any transition

period after we leave the EU by the end of the year, as business leaders are calling for this right now in order to safeguard jobs and investment. He

again

refused to answer.

"It is

clear he is refusing to answer these very basic questions because he is too weak to stand up to the reckless Brexiteers in the Cabinet. But he needs to stop worrying about his own job and instead focus on the millions of people whose jobs are reliant on a deal and a transitional agreement with the EU.

"If

this weak government cannot do this due to infighting in the Conservative Party

then they need to step aside and let Labour take charge of safeguarding jobs in

our country."

Government must order a judge-led

[inquiry into treatment of small businesses by RBS – Bill Esterson](#)

Bill Esterson MP,

Labour's Shadow Business and International Trade Minister, responding to the publishing of the Financial Conduct Authority Interim Report into the treatment of small businesses at the Royal Bank of Scotland, said:

"The release of the Financial Conduct Authority's Interim Report is welcome news, but it is now essential the Government orders a judge-led inquiry into the treatment of small businesses by the Royal Bank of Scotland.

"The news of a police investigation last week is also an important step in ensuring the truth is discovered as part of a full and transparent process. Trust between small businesses and our financial institutions needs to be restored because their relationship is key to the success of the UK economy.

"The next Labour Government will stand up for small businesses by providing them with access to finance through Regional Investment Banks so we can build an economy that works for the many, not the few."