

## Real wages falling yet again is deeply concerning – Margaret Greenwood

**Margaret**

**Greenwood MP, Labour's Shadow Employment Minister**, commenting on today's Labour Market Statistics from ONS, said:

"With a record number of working people living in poverty, the news that real wages have fallen yet again is deeply concerning.

"While the overall increase in employment is welcome, it's also clear from today's figures that too many people are struggling to find employment because of their age, ethnicity, disability, or where they live.

"The Tories' cuts to in-work support are making matters even worse for working families. That's why it's so crucial the Government urgently listens to Labour's call to pause the roll out and fix Universal Credit."

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## Conservatives have finally listened to Labour and scrapped premium phone helpline for claimants – Debbie Abrahams

**Debbie**

**Abrahams MP, Labour's Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary**, commenting on today's Universal Credit statistics, said:

"The increase in the number of people on Universal Credit is worrying given the Government's chaotic handling of its roll out.

"The Conservatives have finally listened to Labour and scrapped the premium phone helpline for claimants, now they need to listen to the calls of charities and councils and back Labour's motion today to immediately pause and fix the roll

out of Universal Credit, before more people are pushed into rent arrears, poverty and homelessness.”

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## Government is out of step with rest of the world when it comes to tackling tax avoidance – Peter Dowd

**Peter**

**Dowd MP,**

**Labour’s Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury,** commenting on the Public Accounts Committee report on tackling online VAT fraud and error:

“The

Public Accounts Committee report reiterates once again that this Conservative Government is completely out of step with the rest of the world when it comes to tackling tax avoidance. Despite having an array of unused new powers, HMRC continues to be outfoxed by large multinational corporations who do not charge

VAT and it is British businesses who are paying for it.

“Instead

of continuing his deluded pursuit of further cuts and more austerity, the Chancellor should take seriously on board the recommendations in this report and tackle VAT fraud which is costing taxpayers billions of pounds a year.

“The

next Labour government will introduce our Tax Transparency and Enforcement Programme which will clamp down on tax avoidance and VAT fraud, so we can build

an economy which works for the many, not the few.”

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## Labour announce backing for public inquiry into mesh implants scandal

Labour

will today (Wednesday 18 October) announce the party’s backing for a public inquiry into the use of surgical mesh implants.

Labour

will also call for use of the products to be stopped in England immediately while the inquiry is undertaken.

The call comes as MPs prepare to discuss the impact of mesh implants in a debate called by Emma Hardy, MP for Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle, taking place in Westminster Hall at 9.30am on Wednesday.

**Sharon**

**Hodgson MP, Labour's Shadow Public Health Minister**, speaking ahead of today's debate, said:

"Mesh implants have left women in permanent pain, unable to walk, and unable to work. This is an ongoing public health scandal and the Government need to do much more to support those affected.

"Ministers have said NICE will publish updated guidance for these products but not until January 2018. Mesh implants should be taken off the market now until we know more about the threat they pose to women's safety.

"The Government have failed to answer big questions about the extent of this public health scandal, including how many women have been affected and why a product with such terrible risks was allowed into the market in the first place.

"Labour is calling for a full inquiry to uncover the extent of the harm done by mesh implants so we can be sure that this never happens again."

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## [Labour calls on Conservative MPs to support motion to pause Universal Credit roll out](#)

Ahead of a vote in the House of Commons today (Wednesday 18 October), Labour's Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary has called on Conservative MPs to support a motion to pause the roll out of the embattled Universal Credit programme.

Labour's call to support today's motion follows reports that up to 25 Conservative MPs may be willing to rebel against the Government over their flagship social security programme, as evidence continues to mount that it is pushing people further into debt, rent arrears and even evictions. This will

be  
a major test of a key Government reform.

The Department for Work and Pensions' own data shows that one in four claimants are having to wait over six weeks to receive any funds, with half of those in rent arrears reporting that they went into debt after claiming Universal Credit.

**Debbie Abrahams MP, Labour's Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary,** calling on Conservative MPs to support the motion, said:

"The Government has so far not listened to MPs' concerns about the mounting issues with their flagship social security programme. We must stand together to make our voices heard.

"I urge Conservative MPs to vote with their conscience and support our motion to pause the roll out of Universal Credit.

"The social security system is meant to protect people from debt and arrears, not exacerbate their situation.

"We must pause and fix Universal Credit now, before millions are made worse off."