

# These figures are reminder of chaos and negligence of Philip Hammond and Theresa May over these past seven years of Tory economic failure – John McDonnell

**John**

**McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor**, commenting on the latest Public Sector Finance figures published this morning by the ONS, which shows that £121.6 billion was added to the national debt since May 2016, said:

"These

figures are a reminder of the chaos and negligence of both Philip Hammond and Theresa May over these past seven years of Tory economic failure; the deficit is still not been cleared as they promised it would be in 2015, and the national debt continues to rise.

"Regardless

of their broken promises on the public finances they will continue to pursue a failed policy of austerity while handing out massive tax giveaways to big business and a wealthy few, yet enforcing spending cuts on our public services.

"However,

there is no longer support in parliament for a continuation of their failed austerity policies, and if they cannot recognise this and change direction, then they should step aside and let Labour take charge.

"As

only a Labour Government will set out a serious plan for the public finances with strategic investment underpinned by our Fiscal Credibility Rule, to help build the high wage, high skill economy of the future for the many not the few."

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## Letting agents fees to be banned after pressure from Liberal Democrats

Letting agents fees look set to be banned in this year Queen's Speech following pressure from the Liberal Democrats.

The fees cost on average £223 per tenancy but under the new plans they will be banned and tenants will be given the opportunity to recover illegal fees imposed upon them.

Lib Dem peer Olly Greender, who has led a campaign against the fees, said: "I am absolutely delighted that the ban on letting fees set out in my Private Members' Bill is now being proposed as law.

"We know from the tragedy of Grenfell Tower that tenants' rights have been ignored for far too long.

"It's time we made them a much greater priority, including by introducing a public register of rogue landlords."

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## Press release: May 2017 Transaction Data

The Transaction Data shows HM Land Registry completed 1,620,802 applications from its customers in May. This included 1,595,183 applications by account holders, of which:

1. Transaction Data is published on the 15th working day of each month. The June Transaction Data will be published at 11am on Friday 21 July 2017 at [HM Land Registry Monthly Property Transaction Data](#).
2. The monthly Transaction Data shows how many applications for first registrations, leases, transfers of part, dealings, official copies and searches lodged by HM Land Registry account customers were completed. For an explanation of the terms used, see [abbreviations used in the Transaction Data](#).
3. Transactions for value include freehold and leasehold sales.
4. Most searches carried out by a solicitor or conveyancer are to protect the purchase and/or mortgage. For example, a search will give the buyer priority for an application to HM Land Registry to register the purchase of the property.
5. As a government department established in 1862, executive agency and trading fund responsible to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, HM Land Registry keeps and maintains the Land Register for England and Wales. The Land Register has been open to public inspection

since 1990.

6. With the largest transactional database of its kind detailing more than 24 million titles, HM Land Registry underpins the economy by safeguarding ownership of many billions of pounds worth of property.
7. For further information about HM Land Registry visit [www.gov.uk/land-registry](http://www.gov.uk/land-registry).
8. Follow us on:

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## **Speech: British Ambassador's speech at The Queen's Birthday Party 2017 in Thailand**

Thank you for joining us to congratulate Her Majesty the Queen on her 91st Birthday. And to celebrate the relationship between the UK and Thailand which is now entering its 5th Century.

Thank you all for coming tonight and particular thanks also to our generous Thai and British company sponsors.

We will now hear our two Anthems performed by the children of St Regents School Bangkok.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Our theme this evening is "Partnerships for a New Generation". "New Generation" being not just about youth but about a new wave of innovation, research, education, trade and investment, which will form the basis of a dynamic modern partnership between the UK and Thailand.

A partnership that already sees the UK as one of the leading European investors in Thailand with a stock of c. £9 billion. And Thai investment in the UK on the increase. That sees many famous British brands already here – and represented tonight. And many more looking to use Thailand as their springboard into the ASEAN – attracted by the ambition of Thailand 4.0.

A partnership that sees the UK committing a further £9 million under the Newton Fund – to support the continued excellence of the UK /Thailand research base and innovation ecosystem.

And a partnership that this year celebrates the 65th Anniversary of British

Council in Thailand. And which will further our strong collaboration on education and culture

Tonight, we are very pleased to have a range of showcases which describe our commitment to creating "Partnerships for a New Generation" and especially the four international schools here tonight – Harrow, Shrewsbury, St Regents and St Andrews – whose students and showcases truly epitomise our theme.

Please enjoy this evening – and our fantastic jazz band, from Harrow School.

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## Scottish Government's FoI failure exposed

21 Jun 2017



The Scottish Government's response rate for Freedom of Information requests is well below the national average, it has been revealed.

Research by the Scottish Conservatives has found that, of all FoI requests dealt with by ministers in the last year, barely a third resulted in a "full disclosure".

That's considerably lower than the overall rate for all Scottish public sector bodies, which stands at 57 per cent.

The figures come amid growing pressure on the Scottish Government over its record of transparency. Earlier this month journalists wrote an open letter raising fears about the FoI performance of the Scottish Government.

And tomorrow, the Scottish Conservatives will raise the issue as part of their party business at Holyrood.

They will cite figures exposing ministers' worsening performance on responding to FoI submissions.

Between 2016 and 2017, the Scottish Government received 2310 requests, but only responded in full to 879 of them – 38 per cent.

In contrast, all public bodies – including councils and health boards – received 81,641 requests, issuing full responses for 46,486, a total of 56.9 per cent.

Response times at the Scottish Government were also worse than average, with 21.6 per cent coming late, compared to 9.6 per cent nationally.

**Scottish Conservative MSP Jamie Greene said:**

“These figures prove that the SNP government is paying lip service to the idea of transparency.

“In its place, we see a culture of secrecy where the first instinct is to sweep legitimate requests for information under the carpet.

“These figures will add to the growing question marks over the politicisation of the Scottish Government under the SNP.

“The fact is that Nicola Sturgeon’s control freak government has lost the trust of many Scots.

“We need ministers to show some humility for once, accept there needs to be a root and branch change in their working practices, and deliver the kind of open government that people want and deserve.”

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For the full tables of statistics, visit:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Scotland-FOI-2016-17.xlsx>

Earlier this month, journalists expressed their FoI concerns in an open letter:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-40120002>