

Theresa May has once again failed to rule out more National Insurance Contribution – John McDonnell

John

McDonnell, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, commenting on Theresa May's refusal to rule out a rise in National Insurance Contributions, said:

"Theresa

May has once again failed to rule out more National Insurance Contribution increases. There is already a £2 billion black hole in the Budget from when the

Tories tried to sneak through a hike in NICs only a month ago, and it is becoming clear they are looking to try to go ahead with this tax hike if they're re-elected next month.

"The

Tories still won't rule out further tax rises on those with low and middle incomes and are a threat to working people.

"Labour's

personal tax guarantee rules out rises in National Insurance Contributions, VAT

and income taxes for the 95 per cent. Labour is now the party of low taxes for

the many and not the few."

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10 May 2017

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Scotland's nurses have seen a real terms pay cut of £3,400 under the SNP, Labour can reveal.

Visiting the Royal College of Nurses today, Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale and health spokesperson Anas Sarwar will reveal the analysis showing how the average nurse is worse off as a result of the SNP pay cap on NHS staff.

UK Labour has committed to scrapping the one per cent pay cap – and Scottish Labour will challenge the SNP to meet that pledge in a Holyrood vote on Wednesday.

Previous research from Labour revealed that the number of long-term unfilled nursing posts in our NHS has increased by more than 300 per cent under the SNP, leaving Scotland's NHS staff overworked and under increasing pressure.

The choice in this election is now clear: Labour MPs who will stand up for working people or SNP MPs who will fight for another independence referendum.

Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale will say:

"Our NHS staff are the foundation of our health service, but they aren't getting the support and they resources they need from the SNP government.

"In fact, nurses in our health service have faced on average a real terms cut of £3,400 as a result of the Nationalist pay cap.

"The first step in delivering an NHS that delivers the care Scots needs is to give staff the pay they deserve. Labour would scrap the 1 per cent pay cap to give our NHS staff the pay increase they deserve.

"The choice in this election is clear – Labour MPs who will fight for better wages and a stronger NHS, or SNP MPs who will fight for another independence referendum that Scotland doesn't want."

RCN Director Theresa Fyffe will add:

"Budget savings achieved through pay restraint are being used to meet efficiency-saving targets for the NHS. The result is that NHS staff pay has fallen way behind the cost of living and many nursing staff are now struggling to survive on their pay packet.

"Nursing staff are facing mounting challenges – dealing with an unprecedented increase in demand and patients with increasingly complex needs – as well as chronic staff shortages and intensified workloads.

"The situation is unsustainable. The RCN is calling on politicians from all parties to show that they value nursing staff by ending the 1% pay cap and paying them a fair wage."

[Wales a popular choice with day visitors in 2017](#)

Figures published today show that Wales is continuing to attract more day visitors as the number of day trippers to Wales increases in addition to the

amount of money they spend during their visit.

Tuesday 09 May 2017

In the 12 months ending March 2017, there were 104.6 million tourism day visits to Wales, with an associated spend of £4,346 million, this is an increase of more than 24% compared to the previous 12 months, while the amount spent has increased by 35%.

Commenting on the recent figures, the Economy Secretary, Ken Skates said:

“In what is an extremely competitive market place, tourism in Wales is in a strong position. We’ve had two record breaking years and our aim is to sustain growth. It’s therefore great news that our day visit figures are showing an increase in 2017. We are working hard to sustain these levels of success through continued investment in marketing and product development.

“Campaign work continues to convert interest and opportunities arising from the weak pound into bookings for the summer. A boost to the Visit Wales budget means that there is £26.3m available to invest in marketing and product development this year enabling us to pull together a more ambitious programme than ever before for 2017.”

More information: [Great Britain Day Visits Survey](#).

[May 2017](#)

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[Jeremy Corbyn speech at Labour's campaign launch](#)

Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party, speaking at the party's campaign

launch in
Manchester, will say:

*****Check
against delivery*****

It's great to be launching our campaign
in Greater Manchester where you showed the way for the rest of the country by
electing a Labour mayor, Andy Burnham.

Andy will be a great mayor – but just
think how much more he will be able to achieve if he is working with a Labour
Government committed to the many not the few.

We have four weeks. Four weeks to take
our message to voters to convince them Britain can be better. It can be
transformed. It doesn't have to be like this.

We can transform Britain into a country
that – instead of being run for the rich – is a one where everyone can lead
richer lives.

And I mean richer in every sense.

Richer because all of us have potential
to fulfil, family to support, interests to pursue, richer when that potential
is not held back.

Because there is no doubt; Britain is being
held back.

If your children aren't getting the
education they deserve because class sizes are too high.

Then your children are being held back.

If you're a young couple, or anyone
trying to get a home and can't make a home because rent and house prices are
too high.

Then you're being held back.

And if you've worked hard all your life,
but can't pursue your dreams in retirement because you're supporting your
family well into adulthood.

Then you too are being held back.

But Britain is a rich country – the sixth
richest in the world.

We caught a glimpse of that wealth only
two days ago when Rupert Murdoch's Sunday Times published its Rich List.

In the last year, Britain's 1,000 richest people have seen their wealth rise by 14 per cent to £658 billion – that's nearly six times the budget of our NHS.

Imagine the outcry if public sector workers put in for a 14 per cent pay rise.

But it's no surprise that the richest have got even richer after the tens of billions the Tories have handed them in tax cuts.

That's what we mean when we say the system is rigged for the rich.

So thanks for making that clear, Mr Murdoch – though I imagine it's the only help you will give us in this campaign.

In fact, we expect hostility. Our challenge to a rigged system is bound to meet hostility.

Change always involves taking on vested interests.

And there is a real danger that the Tories' fearmongering and spin machine will make some people settle for less than they should. Resign themselves to things the way they are – underestimating just how many more burdens the Tories could impose if their mission to rig the system for the rich isn't halted.

The stakes are high. We know from last week's local elections how big the challenge is.

We have to convince the sceptical and undecided. They are not sure which way to turn.

And who can blame them?

People are alienated from politics and politicians.

Our Westminster system is broken and our economy is rigged. Both are run in the interests of the few.

Labour is under attack because we are standing up to the elites who are determined to hijack Brexit to pay even less tax and take even more of the wealth we all create.

Labour is under attack because we are standing up to the corporate interests plundering our NHS. How much more will be privatised if the Tories get another five years?

We're drawing a line. Three decades of

privatisation – from energy and rail to health and social care – has made some people very rich but it has not delivered richer lives for the majority.

In the coming days, we will be setting out our plan to transform Britain – with an upgraded economy run for the many not the few.

Theresa May thinks she can dodge the Tory record by claiming she wants to build a fairer Britain, that she cares about working people.

But does she think people will forget how the Tories have actually treated working people?

It was this Tory leader who sat alongside David Cameron in government for six years.

She was with him when they introduced the bedroom tax.

What's remotely fair about the bedroom tax? What was fair about racking up tuition fees? Or about taking benefits away from people with disabilities?

Or about closing Sure Start Centres. Or starving schools of cash. Or opening up the NHS to be feasted on by profiteers.

In case their talk of fairness doesn't wash, they have another card to play. That this election is all about Brexit and who can play at being toughest with Brussels.

Labour will not allow the Tories to put their party interests ahead of the real national interest; the interests of the British people.

This election isn't about Brexit itself. That issue has been settled. The question now is what sort of Brexit do we want – and what sort of country do we want Britain to be after Brexit?

Labour wants a jobs-first Brexit. A Brexit that safeguards the future of Britain's vital industries, a Brexit that paves the way to a genuinely fairer society, protecting human rights, and an upgraded economy.

Labour's plan to transform Britain will mean:

A big deal to upgrade the economy: new infrastructure to support the industries of the future. And an investment in training and skills to equip our workforce to compete globally.

It means rebuilding our NHS and social care services with the funding they need.

It means building a million homes to rent and buy.

And it means tackling the scandal of air pollution which contributes to 40,000 deaths per year.

We won't be paying lip-service to working people.

We will introduce a comprehensive programme to strengthen rights at work, make sure new jobs are good jobs, and end the race to the bottom in pay, conditions and job security.

Low pay and insecurity have spread like an epidemic under the Tories.

Labour will invest in skills and jobs, and take action to enforce a floor under employment standards across the board – so that all jobs are decent jobs, so that all workers – the true wealth creators – can play their part in transforming Britain and benefit fully from it.

That's why we are fighting to win this election.

So we can transform Britain for the many not the few.

When we win, the British people win. The nurse, the teacher, the small trader, the carer, the builder, the office worker win.

Labour is offering a real choice, a real alternative to the rigged system holding us back and to the Conservatives who are running our country down.

The economy is still rigged in favour of the rich and powerful.

When Labour wins there will be a reckoning for those who thought they could get away with asset stripping our industry, crashing our economy through their greed and ripping off workers and consumers.

When did the Conservatives – David Cameron, George Osborne, Theresa May, Boris Johnson – ever stand up to their financial backers and demand our money back?

Never and they never will.

Instead, they make others foot the bill – they make our nurses, our carers, our soldiers, our disabled, our young people trying to get a home of their own, our elderly looking for dignity in retirement and those working hard to get on, foot the bill.

It makes me angry. And I know it makes the people of Britain angry too.

So today, I say to tax cheats, the rip off bosses, the greedy bankers;

enough is enough.

In this election, Labour is standing for decent jobs, investment for the future, shared wealth creation, security at work, affordable homes for all, a fully funded NHS and schools, training and skills, an end to rip-off privatisation, fair taxation and a fairer, more equal country.

As we set out our detailed plans for Britain, the scale of the change we are offering will become clear.

So let's turn our country around. Let's come together to transform Britain. Together, we can win for the many not the few.

Don't wake up on 9 June to see celebrations from the tax cheats, the press barons, the greedy bankers, Philip Green, the Southern Rail directors and crooked financiers that take our wealth, who have got away with it because the party they own, the Conservative Party, has won.

We have four weeks to ruin their party. We have four weeks to have a chance to take our wealth back.

We have four weeks to show what kind of country we are. We know that the people of Britain don't pass by on the other side. That is the principle we will take into government so that we can unlock every person's potential and everyone can make their best contribution to our society.

We have four weeks to win and transform Britain for the many not the few.

We must seize that chance.

Thank you.

[Figures show SNP's 'shameful' performance on education](#)

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- Figures show SNP's 'shameful' performance on education

9 May 2017



New figures released today have shown that reading and writing standards

among pupils in Scotland have fallen to 'shameful' levels.

The latest Scottish Survey for Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN) showed a rise in the percentage of pupils who are functionally illiterate from 7% to 16% in the last four years.

Fewer than half of S2 pupils in Scotland were performing well in writing, down from 64% in 2012.

The figures also showed that Scotland's attainment gap continues to exist, with pupils from the least deprived areas outperforming those from the most deprived areas at all stages – with the gap similar to that seen in 2012.

Despite the findings in the SSLN, the SNP Government are still planning to cancel all future reports.

Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary Liz Smith MSP said:

"These are shameful results which show that over its ten years in office this SNP government has failed a generation.

"Performance in writing still seems to be the biggest problem, including the fact that there appears to be a disparity between pupils' views of how they are performing in writing and listening and how they are actually performing.

"Given this evidence, it is abundantly clear that the Scottish Government is not doing enough to address the problems in basic literacy that this data highlights.

"It also shows that a very persistent gap between pupils from the most deprived areas and the least deprived areas continues, and that needs to be tackled.

"The SSLN evidence is a central piece of evidence, produced by the Scottish Government, which gives us important information as to how children are performing.

"These figures also show why it is so essential that there is a strong data base, particularly since the Scottish Government has decided to discontinue the SSLN and has removed Scotland from TIMSS and PIRLS."

Some of the statistics included in the SSLN include:

- At P4 level, since 2012 the percentage of children being able to read well or very well has fallen by 5 per cent, and for writing, it has fallen by 2 per cent.
- At P7 level, since 2012 the percentage of children being able to read well or very well has fallen by 2 per cent, and for writing, it has fallen by 7 per cent.
- At S2 level, there was a slight increase of 2 per cent from 2014, but no improvement on 2012 figures. Worryingly S2 pupils who can write well or

very well has dramatically fallen from 65 per cent in 2012 to 49 per cent in 2016.

The percentage of children in S2 who are not at the required level in writing has more doubled in 4 years from 7 per cent in 2012 to 16 per cent in 2016.