

[Press release: Spam email alert](#)

It has been brought to our attention that some people have received spam emails, purportedly sent from an ofsted.gov.uk email account, prompting them to confirm their payment details via PayPal.

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[Tory manifesto commitment on mixed sex wards in tatters as incidents rise 50% in a year](#)

Tory manifesto commitment on mixed sex wards in tatters as incidents rise 50% in a year

Theresa

May has been accused of abandoning yet another Tory Manifesto commitment as new figures reveal the number of NHS patients in mixed sex wards running 50% higher than this time last year.

New

figures published by NHS England today show that hospitals breached mixed sex accommodation rules 1750 times during January and February this year –

compared
to 1164 in the same period last year

Mixed
sex accommodation breaches have gone through the roof since Theresa May took
over last July – with 5618 in the 8 months since she became Prime Minister,
compared with just 4259 in the whole of 2015.

Ending
mixed sex wards was a key pledge of David Cameron's Government in 2010 and
the
2015 Conservative Manifesto included a promise to "continue to eliminate
mixed
sex wards".

Labour
said today's figures showed that Theresa May's decision to restrain NHS
spending was pushing hospitals to the brink.

**Jonathan
Ashworth MP, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, said:**

"Tory
cuts to social care have seen hospital attendances rocket and now it seems
Theresa May has given up on her manifesto promise to eliminate mixed sex
wards.
Patients expect dignity and respect when they're being treated in hospital
but
this Government is letting them down. The Government has overseen a
catastrophic collapse of patient standards and this failure on mixed sex
wards
is yet another sign that England's hospitals are at breaking point.

"The
Prime Minister needs to get a grip and explain what she is going to do to fix
the crisis which she has created. Every day that goes by brings more news of
patient care getting worse under this Government. Quite simply the
Government's
policy of underfunding and mismanaging the NHS has left hospitals on the
brink."

Ends

Editors notes

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The [Conservative Manifesto 2015](#) (P37) said: "We
will ensure that English hospitals and GP surgeries are the safest in the
world, places where you are treated with dignity and respect. We will
continue

to eliminate mixed-sex wards.”

“Mixed sex wards virtually gone.” *Jeremy Hunt, Speech to Conservative Party Conference, 1 October 2013*

<http://www.ukpol.co.uk/jeremy-hunt-2013-conservative-party-conference-speech/>

“The number of hospital-acquired infections continues to go down and *mixed-sex* wards have been virtually eliminated.” *Jeremy Hunt, Hansard, 23 October 2012*

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2012-10-23/debates/12102347000022/NHSCost?highlight=mixed%20sex#contribution-12102347000044>

“We said that we would sort out mixed-sex wards and hospital-acquired infections—promise delivered.”

David Cameron, Hansard, 18 March 2015, Column 756

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Mixed sex accommodation breaches available here:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/mixed-sex-accommodation/msa-data/>

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There were 1040 breaches in January and 710 in February – a 50% rise on the combined 1164 for the same two months last year.

BCC comments on interest rate decision

BCC comments on the Monetary Policy Committee’s interest rate decision.

16th March 2017

Commenting on today’s interest rate decision by the Bank of England’s Monetary Policy Committee, Suren Thiru, Head of Economics at the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC), said:

“While the Bank of England’s decision to keep interest rates on hold was widely expected, there was a surprising shift in the committee’s voting pattern, with one member voting for a rate rise. This partly reflects the fact that the Monetary Policy Committee are facing a more challenging period, with inflation likely to move materially above the 2% target in the coming

months. Furthermore, if US monetary policy continues to tighten as expected, it may weigh on UK rate decisions by increasing the downward pressure on Sterling, pushing UK price growth higher.

“However, with UK economic conditions likely to become more subdued over the near term, and little evidence that higher inflation is becoming entrenched in stronger pay growth, the MPC has sufficient leeway to tolerate a prolonged period of above target inflation. Therefore, while the next move in interest rates is likely to be upwards, we don’t expect this to happen until the end of 2018.

“With the MPC close to exhausting the monetary policy tools available to them, the government must do more to support business confidence and incentivise investment, particularly by tackling the rising input costs faced by businesses.”

Ends

Notes to editors:

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) sits at the heart of a powerful network of 52 Accredited Chambers of Commerce across the UK, representing thousands of businesses of all sizes and within all sectors. Our Global Business Network connects exporters with nearly 40 markets around the world. For more information, visit: www.britishchambers.org.uk

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[The only way to get all of the evidence Ofcom needs to make this assessment is to go ahead with part two of the Leveson Inquiry – Tom Watson](#)

Tom

Watson MP, Labour’s Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport,

commenting on Karen Bradley's announcement that she has today referred the Sky bid to Ofcom, said:

"Intervening in this proposed merger was the only legitimate course of action for Karen Bradley to take.

"It is right that Ofcom applies a 'fit and proper' assessment to the bid and considers any public interest test, in addition to concerns about plurality and broadcasting standards.

"But a comprehensive fit and proper test will take time, so that all of the Murdochs' failures of corporate governance during the phone hacking scandal and elsewhere can be properly investigated.

"The only way to get all of the evidence Ofcom needs to make this assessment is to go ahead with part two of the Leveson Inquiry – as David Cameron promised to the victims of phone hacking. If the Government was really committed to the fullest investigation of this bid, they would commence it immediately."