

UK growth accelerated in the fourth quarter of last year

The fourth quarter saw UK growth speed up to 0.7% for the three months. The quarterly pattern last year according to the ONS was 0.2% in Q1, 0.6% in each of Quarters 2 and 3, and 0.7% in Q4. The ONS says this amounts to 1.8% growth for the year as a whole, though the four quarters as reported gives you a figure of 2.1%. What is clear from these figures is the economy grew faster after the Brexit vote than before by a decent margin, the opposite of the official and expert forecasts at the time.

As the ONS rightly said “In the fourth quarter the UK experienced the strongest arte of growth among European groupings and G7 countries”. Let’s hope the Treasury adjust their forecasts for our economy in the Budget statement, as their recent forecasts have been far too low.

Green Party calls for investigation following claims of child inmates kept in solitary confinement



Green Party

22 February 2017

The Green Party has demanded the Government investigates allegations of young offenders being held in solitary confinement in British prisons [1].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“It was already clear our prison system was reaching crisis point but these stories reveal a new level of callous disregard for the human rights of some of the youngest and most vulnerable offenders.

“Being kept in solitary confinement for even just short periods of time causes severe distress and has lasting impact. I fail to see how the Ministry

of Justice can possibly think this treatment will result in positive outcomes. These young offenders need to be rehabilitated, not punished further using one of the most cruel and unhelpful methods possible. We urgently need an investigation into these allegations.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/uk-prisons-child-inmates-solitary-confinement-un-torture-rules-young-offenders-institutes-break-jail-a7591781.html>

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[Debbie Abrahams comments on CAB report on workplace pension schemes](#)

Debbie

Abrahams MP, Labour's Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary, commenting on the findings of the Citizens Advice Bureau report, said:

“It is shocking to see that hundreds of thousands of low income workers, most of whom are women, are being blocked from these workplace pension schemes by the Tory Government.

"This month Labour demanded the Government look at how people working multiple jobs could be allowed to save. They refused.”

“While the Tories abandon older people, Labour wants to ensure that everyone can have the secure, dignified retirement that they deserve.”

The Government needs to concentrate on increasing capacity and improving schools in the areas that need it the most – Angela Rayner

Angela Rayner MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Education, commenting on an NAO report on capital funding for schools, said:

"Hundreds of secondary schools in England are already full to capacity, while thousands more are crumbling and in desperate need of repair. Yet the Tories continue to waste millions opening free schools in areas that do not need them.

"The Government needs to concentrate on increasing capacity and improving schools in the areas that need it the most."

It is crucial that the criminal justice system works in the interests of all victims – Carolyn Harris

Responding to the Victims' Commissioner's review into the treatment of child victims of sexual and violent offences, **Labour's shadow home office minister, Carolyn Harris, said:**

"It is crucial that the criminal justice system works in the interests of all victims.

"But it is clear from this review that young victims of some of the most serious offences feel they are still being let down.

"Rather than trying to downplay the findings, the Government should accept there is a problem and get on with producing the Victims' Law they promised to address it."