

Government must come forward with immediate funding and sustainable vision for social care – Pearce

Teresa Pearce, Labour's Shadow

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, responding to the Local Government Finance Settlement, said:

"Time and time again, this Government has ignored warnings of the social care crisis, from health, social care and local government experts and from MPs across the political spectrum."

"This Local Government Finance Settlement is no different to what's come before. It is all smoke and mirrors – pushing numbers around but not offering any new money. Shifting the burden on to council tax payers creates a postcode lottery in social care services. Wealthy areas will prosper whilst poorer communities will struggle. This was made clear by the revelation of the sweetheart deal offered to Surrey County Council behind closed doors, whilst the rest of the country suffers."

"The brutal cuts handed down by this Tory government will leave local councils facing a £5.8 billion funding gap in just two years' time. Libraries, youth centres and Sure Start centres have closed. Child protection services are creaking. Frail elderly people and vulnerable disabled people are being left lonely and isolated."

"This is a crisis made in Westminster but, as per usual, the Tories are pushing the blame on to councils, communities, carers and families. The Government must come forward with immediate funding, as well as a long-term, sustainable and strategic vision for social care."

Ends

It is disappointing news that Rebecca Steinfeld and Charles Keidan have lost

[their Court of Appeal battle to enter into a Civil Partnership – Champion](#)

Sarah

Champion, Labour's Shadow

Secretary of State for Women and Equalities, commenting on the Court of Appeal judgement on Civil Partnerships, said:

"It is disappointing news that Rebecca Steinfeld and Charles Keidan have lost their Court of Appeal battle to enter into a Civil Partnership.

"Labour are proud to have introduced Civil Partnerships in 2004 as a key step in achieving true marriage equality for LGBT people.

"But, now that same sex marriage has been legalised, it is an anomaly that Civil Partnerships are not available to all couples regardless of their gender and sexuality.

"Civil Partnerships should be extended to heterosexual couples who wish to have a legal union in accordance with their individual beliefs and values.

"Labour will continue to push the government to look again at this important issue."

[Night flight restrictions at Gatwick, Heathrow and Stansted](#)

The Government is currently consulting on proposals for night flight restrictions at Gatwick, Heathrow and Stansted. The Government's proposals relate to:

- Environmental objectives
- The length of the restrictions
- The structure of the restrictions
- Movement limits at each airport
- Noise quota limits at each airport

The consultation can be found here: <http://bit.ly/2j4uhwI>. It closes on 28

February 2017.

[Sarah Champion commenting on the Government's failure to act on cross-party recommendations to reduce the gender pay gap](#)

Sarah Champion MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Women and Equalities, commenting on the Government's failure to act on cross-party recommendations to reduce the gender pay gap, said:

"The cross party Women and Equalities Committee's recommendations aim to improve working conditions for women of all ages and sectors right across the country.

"But, sadly, it seems that their recommendations are again falling on deaf ears.

"The Government has systematically ignored the evidence the Committee, charities, experts and individuals have worked so hard to produce.

"This Government continues to ignore the voices and lived experiences of thousands of women in chronically low paid, under-valued sectors of the economy such as care, hospitality and retail. Industries where zero hour contracts and bad practice have been allowed to run rife.

"The structural causes of the gender pay gap must be addressed, otherwise women will simply continue to be left behind.

"The lack of meaningful response to the Women and Equalities Committee shows that when it comes to tackling the serious, underlying causes of gender inequality in our country, this Tory Government isn't willing to take the bold action needed."

Misuse of sanctions is further evidence of the Tory Government letting vulnerable groups down – Debbie Abrahams

Debbie Abrahams MP, Labour's Shadow

Work and Pensions Secretary, commenting

on the findings of the Public Accounts Committee report on sanctions, said:

“Two years after the Work and Pensions Select Committee inquiry the Government has failed to implement even their limited actions to address sanctions failings.

“This report makes it clear that sanctions have been used inconsistently to punish those struggling to get by with seven wasted years of austerity.

“This deplorable misuse of sanctions is further evidence of the Tory Government letting vulnerable groups down.

“Labour has committed to scrapping the Tories' punitive sanctions regime, under our plans to transform the social security system to ensure that, like the NHS, it is there for us all in our time of need.”