

Brexit makes action on self-employment all the more urgent – John McDonnell

Brexit

makes action on self-employment all the more urgent, and Britain should lead the way in supporting the self-employed, says Labour

In

the wake of the triggering of Article 50, Labour held a Self-Employment Summit

this morning to discuss the needs of the self-employed in the Brexit negotiations and beyond.

The

Summit, the first held by Labour's Commission on Self-Employment, was hosted by

the Federation of Small Business (FSB) and attended by key stakeholders, including the TUC, the GMB, the British Chamber of Commerce, and the Co-operative Party.

John

McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, said:

"Labour's self-employment summit

today looked at all aspects of self-employment and the gig economy, including how any changes to the tax system should be aligned with increasing support for the self-employed.

"With the number of self-employed

people due to overtake public sector workers by 2018, we will develop a package

of measures for self-employed people that will form a major part of Labour's offer at the next General Election. While the Tories are prepared to attack the

living standards of the self-employed, Labour are listening and will act to address the real issues they are facing."

Mike Cherry, FSB National Chairman, said:

"The future success of the UK economy rests

squarely on the shoulders of the UK's army of the self-employed. These are the entrepreneurs, the risk-takers, the freelancers, the strivers – and without them we simply wouldn't have a thriving economy, just as we face Brexit.

"FSB

worked with the Labour frontbench and MPs from all parties to kill off the £2bn

tax hike on the self-employed. We now need a proper policy debate about future support for this critical part of the UK economy.”

**Tim Roache,
General Secretary of the GMB Union, said:**

“Philip Hammond made a hash of his first Budget by completely failing to look the wide range of issues facing people currently classified as self-employed. This initiative from Labour comes at a crucial time when work in all its forms is increasingly unclear and uncertain.

“GMB has genuinely self-employed members but we also have plenty of members who are at a loss as to what their employment status is or have been wrongly told they are self-employed by employers hell-bent on shirking their legal and moral responsibilities.

“How many scandals and court cases do we have to see before government ministers and HMRC stop twiddling their thumbs and start taking their enforcement role seriously? It’s time that politicians grasped this nettle.”