

Jonathan Ashworth responds to figures showing NHS trusts are already in a deficit of £886m

Jonathan

Ashworth MP, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, responding to quarter three figures showing NHS trusts are already in a deficit of £886m, said:

"Theresa

May's sustained underfunding of the NHS is stretching the finances of NHS hospitals beyond their limits. Even with the £1.8bn that was set aside in the 'financial reset' last summer hospitals have already run up a deficit of £886m

this year. It will take a heroic effort by NHS staff to meet even the predicted

year-end target in the face of chronic neglect by the Government.

"The

Government needs to be honest about what this crisis means for patient care. It

means cuts to frontline staff, longer waits for treatment and services at risk

of closure. The money which had been set aside for NHS transformation funding,

which should be improving services and bringing the deficit down in future, has

instead had to be used to manage this year's figures.

"Ministers

are in denial, but the staggering decline in the NHS's financial performance is

a direct result of decisions they made. Cuts to social care have driven up hospital attendances while the Government's inept workforce planning has forced

hospitals to drain resources on expensive agency staff.

"The

simple fact is that Tory Ministers have failed to come up with a workable solution to these problems. Their agency cap which was meant to help has been breached more than 2.7 million times already. The Government urgently need to provide a long-term, sustainable financial package to guarantee the NHS services which patients need for the future."