

Jonathan Ashworth responds to the workforce plan

Jonathan Ashworth MP, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, responding to the workforce plan, said:

"Labour welcomes any proposals that, as we have called for, genuinely improve staff wellbeing but overall this report is thin gruel ducking the big challenges of how to solve an escalating staffing crisis because Tory ministers have refused to back up the plan with the cash that is so desperately needed.

"As Dido Harding's report hints at, scrapping the bursary, cuts to career development budgets, pay restraint and ongoing austerity means the NHS is left struggling with 100,000 staff shortages including 40,000 nurses and 10,000 doctors. The consequence is patient safety at risk and poorer standards of care.

"Expected recommendations to recruit 5,000 nurses a year internationally have mysteriously vanished from the final draft.

"Without immediate determined action, backed up by investment, the NHS workforce crisis will only get worse.

"Ministers should have today announced they were restoring the bursary, reversing cuts to training budgets, and legislating for safe staffing on wards. Instead, we have a government in meltdown and a Health Secretary jockeying for a prominent role in the next Tory Cabinet. Only Labour will properly deal with the workforce problems our NHS face."