

Labour secures vote on amendment to force equality impact assessment of Government's economic policies

Labour has secured a vote on its amendment to the Finance Bill to force the Government to conduct an assessment of the impact of social security changes and fiscal measures on disadvantaged groups.

The Government failed to meet Labour's demand for the Budget to be audited on the basis of gender, race, age, disability, class and region. Other parties have now joined Labour calls for transparency, with 127 MPs from Labour, the Lib Dems, SNP and the Greens, signing Dawn Butler's letter to Justine Greening calling for all Government policy to be assessed for their impact on disadvantaged groups.

Although the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) places a legal responsibility on public bodies, including the Treasury, to conduct equality assessments, the Treasury has failed to publish adequate equalities audits of its fiscal measures.

This comes as analysis shows that 86 per cent of tax and social security changes continue to fall on women and women only received two thirds of the spending men received in this budget.

**Dawn Butler MP,
Labour's Shadow Women and Equalities Minister, said:**

"The Tories' failed austerity project has hit the most vulnerable groups in our society the hardest, forcing women, ethnic minority communities and disabled people to pay the highest price.

"The Finance Bill represents more of the same for groups with protected characteristics who have borne the brunt of Conservative economic failure for too long. We need a detailed assessment to reveal the full damage of Tory austerity.

"The next Labour government will ensure that we publish comprehensive equality impact assessments to enable us to truly build an economy that works for the many,

not
the few.”

Labour demands greater transparency of Tory tax giveaway to big banks

Peter Dowd MP, Labour’s Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, speaking ahead of the committee stage of the Finance Bill in the House of Commons today, has demanded an end to the tax giveaways to the big banks. He also demanded greater transparency in the Government’s planned cuts to the rate of the Bank Levy.

Labour has tabled three new clauses and a paving amendment on the issue of the Bank Levy. The amendments would: force the government to assess the effectiveness of the Bank Levy as a revenue raising measure since its introduction in 2011; to increase the transparency of the levy and its operation; and to ensure that the changes introduced by this Finance Bill are measured and reviewed.

Before the Budget leading children’s charities warned the Chancellor that children’s services required £2bn of additional funding before 2020 to avert a crisis in a system.

Peter Dowd MP, Labour’s Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, said:

“The Tories chose in the Budget to prioritise further tax giveaways to the big banks over spending on our vital public services, such as children’s services.

“Today we are simply asking for greater transparency over this unfair giveaway to already profitable big banks at a time when our public services and working families are struggling just before Christmas.

“These planned cuts in the rate of the Bank Levy will see billions handed out to the major banks by 2020.

“Last

week Labour tried to correct this by amending the Finance Bill to end the £4.7bn cut in the Bank Levy, which last month's Budget failed to reverse, and called for it instead to be channelled into vulnerable children's services. But the Chancellor chose to plough on with this heartless choice.

"Philip Hammond could still change direction. He can either choose to end this injustice in the Finance Bill, or choose for Christmas to come early for the bankers and act like Scrooge to the rest of us."

Ministers should cancel their latest multi-billion pound tax break for bankers and start protecting the most vulnerable children instead – Emma Lewell-Buck

Emma Lewell-Buck MP, Labour's Shadow Education Minister for Children and Families, commenting on the recent findings made by the NSPCC that 90 referrals are made per-week to local agencies over fears of sexual abuse, said:

"This is the latest evidence that demand for child protection services is going up, just as funding is being cut. The Government's own figures show that spending on children's services has already fallen by a tenth under the Tories, and we are heading for a £2bn shortfall by 2020. Ministers should cancel their latest multi-billion pound tax break for bankers and start protecting the most vulnerable children instead."

Ends

Teachers' pay being cut due to lack of annual pay rises says NEU survey – Angela Rayner

Angela Rayner MP, Shadow

Secretary of State for Education, commenting on NEU survey showing Teachers' pay being cut due to lack of annual pay rises and performance related pay progression, said:

"This survey is the latest evidence that the Tories have left schools and teachers in an impossible position. After imposing a pay cap that left teachers £5,000 worse off in real terms, they are now acting as if they have ended the public sector pay cap, but won't give schools a penny to fund pay rises.

"If the pay cap effectively continues by the back door, it will only make it harder for schools to recruit and retain the staff they need to give every child the best possible start in life.

"The next Labour Government will scrap the public sector pay cap, with ring-fence funding to give teachers the pay rise they deserve, as we create a National Education Service and build a country for the many, and not just the few."

Ends

PIP assessment process is not fit for purpose – Debbie Abrahams

Debbie Abrahams MP,

Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, commenting on the Government's response to Paul Gray's second independent review of the personal independence payment assessment, said:

"It is clear the Personal Independent Payment (PIP) assessment process is not fit for purpose. Instead

of

supporting people, the process leaves individuals and their families lives in tatters. The recommendations from Paul Gray's second review regarding improving trust and transparency, timely reporting and quality assurance have not been accepted in full.

"There remains an evident distrust of the assessment process by sick and disabled people. This is no surprise with a record 68% of PIP decisions taken to tribunal being overturned by judges. The assessment process is getting worse, not better.

"Labour will scrap the Personal Independence Payment and Work Capability Assessments and replace them with a personalised, holistic assessment process which provides each individual with a tailored plan, building on their strengths and addressing barriers, whether finance, skills, health, care, transport, or housing related. "

Ends