

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.”

[Sharon Hodgson responds to proposed sugar limits published by Public Health England](#)

Sharon Hodgson MP, Labour’s Shadow Health Minister, responding

to proposed sugar limits published by Public Health England, said:

“Labour supports action to tackle sugar consumption and with the refresh of the Five Year Forward View published this week there is a chance to set a really radical approach to obesity and children’s health. It should be a matter of shame that obesity affects so many children in the UK and that the circumstances of where you grow up can have such a long term effect on your health outcomes.

“There is clear clinical and public support for measures like sugar taxes which promote healthier living and can keep people fit and well for the years to come.

“Theresa May watered down the Government’s childhood obesity strategy but should be much bolder in

supporting

radical public health measures. Too often the Prime Minister seems happy to settle for second best for the nation's wellbeing when she ought to position Britain at the front of the global drive for better public health."

[There seems to have been a revolving door between CH2M and HS2 which must be investigated – Andy McDonald](#)

Andy

McDonald, Labour's Shadow Transport Secretary, commenting on reports that engineering firm CH2M has pulled out of a deal to provide rail lines for phase 2b of HS2, said:

"It's

remarkable the Department of Transport failed to do proper due diligence on this multi-million pound bid.

"How

could ministers not realise giving CH2M a £170m contract when HS2'S new chief executive and his predecessor both worked for the firm was a massive conflict of interest?

"There

seems to have been a revolving door between CH2M and HS2 which must be investigated. This is just as big a mess as the Department of Transport's mishandling of the West Coast franchise bid.

"Chris

Grayling must come to the House of Commons at the earliest opportunity to explain how this bidding process was allowed to derail. They chose to bury the bad news on Article 50 day. There must now be an inquiry into the serious errors surrounding this bid and the Government must get the construction of HS2, which Labour supports, back on track."

[Cat Smith responds to Association of](#)

Young People's Health 2017 report

Cat

Smith MP, Labour's Shadow Minister for Voter Engagement and Youth Affairs, commenting on the Association of Young People's Health 2017 report, said:

"Labour welcomes this report showing positive downward trends in teenage pregnancy and substance use.

"However, the Tories are short-changing young people when it comes to their mental health. It is completely unacceptable that only 0.7 per cent of NHS funding is spent on young people's mental health while 11 per cent of the NHS budget is spent on mental health services overall.

"I urge this Government to end their distorted austerity agenda, which is hitting young people disproportionately, and start promoting youth-friendly health services."

Instead of deflecting and ducking the Justice Secretary should accept that she failed her first test in the job and apologise – Richard Burgon

Richard

Burgon MP, Labour's Shadow Justice Secretary, responding to recent comments from Lords Neuberger and Thomas before the Lords Constitution Committee, said:

"Liz Truss encouraged the judiciary to speak out and now two of them have – both to criticise her failure to defend the job they do. Instead of deflecting and ducking, the Justice Secretary should accept that she failed her first test in the job and apologise."