

Tory spending plans will hit public services and the economy – John McDonnell

John McDonnell, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, responding to the IFS manifesto analysis, said:

"The IFS assessment of the Conservatives is clear: their plans would damage our economy and public services with five more years of damaging austerity.

"They also confirm that the Tories have not specified any additional funding for the NHS, meaning a continued crisis in our health service if they are re-elected next month. The Tories plans on schools will mean continuing to sell away our future, with continued real terms cuts to per pupil spending.

"Today has confirmed that only a Labour Government would give our NHS and schools the essential funding they need, and that our increase in infrastructure investment would boost GDP and tax receipts. The IFS confirms that Labour are on target to meet our manifesto commitments in regards to our Fiscal Credibility Rule, to balance the budget on day to day spending in the coming parliament and have debt falling as a share of GDP as we have committed.

"We believe the IFS has underestimated the revenue raising effectiveness of some of the tax changes we would make, but we recognise the potential for uncertainty which is why we have allowed headroom in our plans.

"The only numbers we saw in the Tory manifesto were the page numbers. But what has become clear today is the choice at this election – continued austerity and falling living standards under the Tories, or higher wages and increased investment in our public services and infrastructure under Labour."

Jeremy Corbyn speech

***CHECK
AGAINST DELIVERY***

Jeremy

Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party,

speaking at a speech in central London today, said:

Our whole

nation has been united in shock and grief this week as a night out at a concert

ended in horrific terror and the brutal slaughter of innocent people enjoying themselves.

When I

stood on Albert Square at the vigil in Manchester, there was a mood of unwavering defiance.

The very act

of thousands of people coming together sent a powerful message of solidarity and love. It was a profound human impulse to stand together, caring and strong.

It was inspiring.

In the past few days, we have all perhaps thought a bit more about our country, our communities and our people.

The people we have lost to atrocious violence or who have suffered grievous injury, so many of them heart-breakingly young .

The people who we ask to protect us and care for us in the emergency services, who yet again did our country proud: the police; firefighters and paramedics; the nurses and doctors; people who never let us down and deserve all the support we can give them.

And the people who did their best to help on that

dreadful Monday night – the homeless men who rushed towards the carnage to comfort the dying, the taxi drivers who took the stranded home for free, the local

people who offered comfort, and even their homes, to the teenagers who couldn't

find their parents.

They are the people of Manchester. But we know that attacks, such

as the one at the Manchester Arena, could have happened anywhere and that the people in any city, town or village in Britain would have responded in the same

way.

It is these people who are the strength and the heart of our

society. They are the country we love and the country we seek to serve.

That is

the solidarity that defines our United Kingdom. That is the country I meet on the streets every day; the human warmth, the basic decency and kindness.

It is our
compassion that defines the Britain I love. And it is compassion that the
bereaved families need most of all at this time. To them I say: the whole
country reaches out its arms to you and will be here for you not just this
week, but in the weeks and years to come.

Terrorists
and their atrocious acts of cruelty and depravity will never divide us and
will
never prevail.

They
didn't in Westminster two months ago. They didn't when Jo Cox was murdered a
year
ago. They didn't in London on 7/7. The awe-inspiring response of the people
of
Manchester, and their inspirational acts of heroism and kindness, are a
living
demonstration that they will fail again.

But these
vicious and contemptible acts do cause profound pain and suffering, and,
among
a tiny minority, they are used as an opportunity to try to turn communities
against each other.

So let us
all be clear, the man who unleashed carnage on Manchester, targeting the
young
and many young girls in particular, is no more representative of Muslims,
than
the murderer of Jo Cox spoke for anyone else.

Young
people and especially young women must and will be free to enjoy themselves
in
our society.

I have
spent my political life working for peace and human rights and to bring an
end
to conflict and devastating wars. That will almost always mean talking to
people you profoundly disagree with. That's what conflict resolution is all
about.

But do
not doubt my determination to take whatever action is necessary to keep our
country safe and to protect our people on our streets, in our towns and
cities,
at our borders.

There is

no question about the seriousness of what we face. Over recent years, the threat of terrorism has continued to grow.

You deserve to know what a Labour Government will do to keep you and your family safe.

Our approach will involve change at home and change abroad.

At home, we will reverse the cuts to our emergency services and police. Once again in Manchester, they have proved to be the best of us.

Austerity has to stop at the A&E ward and at the police station door. We cannot be protected and cared for on the cheap.

There will be more police on the streets under a Labour Government. And if the security services need more resources to keep track of those who wish to murder and maim, then they should get them.

We will also change what we do abroad. Many experts, including professionals in our intelligence and security services have pointed to the connections between wars our government has supported or fought in other countries, such as Libya, and terrorism here at home.

That assessment in no way reduces the guilt of those who attack our children. Those terrorists will forever be reviled and implacably held to account for their actions.

But an informed understanding of the causes of terrorism is an essential part of an effective response that will protect the security of our people, that fights rather than fuels terrorism.

Protecting this country requires us to be both strong against terrorism and strong against the causes of terrorism. The blame is with the terrorists, but if we are to protect our people we must be honest about what threatens our security.

Those causes certainly cannot be reduced to foreign policy decisions alone. Over the past fifteen years or so, a sub-culture of often suicidal violence has developed amongst a tiny minority of, mainly young, men, falsely drawing authority from Islamic beliefs and often nurtured in a prison system in urgent need of resources and reform.

And no rationale based on the actions

of any government can remotely excuse, or even adequately explain, outrages like this week's massacre.

But we must be brave enough to admit the war on terror is simply not working. We need a smarter way to reduce the threat from countries that nurture terrorists and generate terrorism.

That's why I set out Labour's approach to foreign policy earlier this month. It is focused on strengthening our national security in an increasingly dangerous world.

We must support our Armed Services, Foreign Office and International Development professionals, engaging with the world in a way that reduces conflict and builds peace and security.

Seeing the army on our own streets today is a stark reminder that the current approach has failed.

So, I would like to take a moment to speak to our soldiers on the streets of Britain. You are doing your duty as you have done so many times before.

I want to assure you that, under my leadership, you will only be deployed abroad when there is a clear need and only when there is a plan and you have the resources to do your job to secure an outcome that delivers lasting peace.

That is my commitment to our armed services.

This is my commitment to our country. I want the solidarity, humanity and compassion that we have seen on the streets of Manchester this week to be the values that guide our government. There can be no love of country if there is neglect or disregard for its people.

No government can prevent every terrorist attack. If an individual is determined enough and callous enough, sometimes they will get through.

But the responsibility of government is to minimise that chance, to ensure the police have the resources they need, that our foreign policy reduces rather than

increases the threat to this country, and that at home we never surrender the freedoms we have won, and that terrorists are so determined to take away.

Too often government has got it wrong on all three counts and insecurity is growing as a result. Whoever you decide should lead the next government must do better.

Today, we must stand united. United in our communities, united in our values and united in our determination to not let triumph those who would seek to divide us.

So for the rest of this election campaign, we must be out there demonstrating what they would take away: our freedom; our democracy; our support for one another.

Democracy will prevail. We must defend our democratic process, win our arguments by discussion and debate, and stand united against those who would seek to take our rights away, or who would divide us.

Last week, I said that the Labour Party was about bringing our country together.

Today I do not want to make a narrow party political point. Because all of us now need to stand together.

Stand together in memory of those who have lost their lives

Stand together in solidarity with the city of Manchester

And – stand together for democracy.

Because when we talk about British values, including tolerance and mutual support, democracy is at the very heart of them.

And our General Election campaigns are the centrepieces of our democracy – the moment all our people get to exercise their sovereign authority over their representatives

Rallies, debates, campaigning in the marketplaces, knocking on doors, listening to people on the streets, at their workplaces and in their homes – all the arts of peaceful persuasion and discussion – are the stuff of our campaigns.

They all remind us that our government is not chosen at an autocrats' whim or by religious decree and never cowed by a terrorist's bomb.

Indeed, carrying on as normal is an act of defiance – democratic defiance – of those who do reject our commitment to democratic freedoms.

But we cannot carry on as though nothing happened in Manchester this week.

So, let the quality of our debate, over the next fortnight, be worthy of the country we are proud to defend. Let's have our arguments without impugning anyone's patriotism and without diluting the unity with which we stand against terror.

Together, we will be stronger. Together we can build a Britain worthy of those who died and those who have inspired us all in Manchester this week.

Thank you.

[Statement by Jeremy Corbyn on the planned resumption of campaigning in the 2017 General Election](#)

As a mark of respect for the victims of the horrific terrorist attack in Manchester on Monday, the Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn suspended the party's General Election campaigning after consultations with the Prime Minister.

Following further discussions with all the main parties, Labour will resume local campaigning tomorrow (Thursday) followed by a phased return to national campaigning on Friday.

Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party, said:

"The British people are united in their resolve that terror will not prevail. It will not prevent us going about our daily lives or derail our democratic process.

"Resuming democratic debate and campaigning is an essential mark of the country's determination to defend our democracy and the unity that the terrorists have sought to attack."

Statement from Jeremy Corbyn on the suspected terrorist attack in Manchester

Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party, said:

"I am horrified by the horrendous events in Manchester last night. My thoughts are with families and friends of those who have died and been injured.

"Today the whole country will grieve for the people who have lost their lives.

"I have spoken with Andy Burnham, the mayor of Manchester, who has fully briefed me on the operational response in the city.

"I would like to pay tribute to the emergency services for their bravery and professionalism in dealing with last night's appalling events.

"I have spoken with the Prime Minister and we have agreed that that all national campaigning in the general election will be suspended until further notice."

The Tories offer pensioners nothing but insecurity – Debbie Abrahams

Labour is today (Tuesday 23 May) challenging the Tories to come clean on their plans for older people, after they caused confusion with their failed attempt to 'clarify' their social care policy.

Labour is calling on Theresa May to guarantee pensioners won't be hit with further cuts to universal benefits or further hits to their incomes.

The challenge comes as Labour warns that, having broken their promise on social care already and announced plans to means test Winter Fuel

Payments, hitting up to ten million pensioners, the Tories could next come for other benefits, including free bus passes and TV licences.

Debbie Abrahams, Labour's Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary, said:

"The Tories have plunged pensioners into insecurity. Their manifesto promised to take away winter fuel allowances; it ditched the security of the triple lock; and proposed making people pay for essential care with their homes.

"Yesterday, they attempted to back away from their plans, but only raised more questions about what they were going to do instead. They could offer no reassurance to worried pensioners.

"Given the gaping hole in the Tory plans, and the dumping of their existing promises, the risk is now that the Tories could have other nasty surprises for pensioners up their sleeves. There's a real possibility that other hard earned benefits like bus passes and free TV licenses could be next."

"The promises in the Tory manifesto are clearly no longer worth the paper they're written on. So we are today calling for Theresa May to come clean, set out what exactly she's planning and rule out definitively further attacks on pensioners' living standards.

"You can't trust the Tories to protect pensioners. They offer only insecurity."

ENDS

Background:

"Nothing has changed" – the Tories promise insecurity for pensioners

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We have a crisis in social care under the Tories:

- o The Tories have starved the system of money, taking £4.6 billion out of social care between 2010 and 2015.

- o The number of people receiving state funded social care fell by over a quarter under the Tories.

- o This year care firms have ended contracts with 95 councils, warning they are unable to

deliver services on the amount they are being paid^[i].

o There are now 1.2 million older people (1 in 8) with unmet care needs in England.

o There is a currently a funding gap of £600 million for 2017/18, which will rise to £2.1bn by 2019/20.^[ii]

· To help address the Tory social care crisis, Labour has promised to invest £8bn into social care in the next parliament, including an immediate £1bn.

“Our first urgent task will be to address the immediate funding crisis. We will increase the social care budgets by a further £8 billion over the lifetime of the next Parliament, including an additional £1 billion for the first year.”

The Labour Party Manifesto 2017

· The Tories haven't promised to match this funding. Instead they came forward with a plan which originally said that they would cap care costs and would help pay for it by means testing Winter Fuel Payments.

“So we will means test Winter Fuel Payments, focusing assistance on the least well-off pensioners, who are most at risk of fuel poverty. The money released will be transferred directly to health and social care, helping to provide dignity and care to the most vulnerable pensioners and reassurance to their families.”

The Conservative Party Manifesto 2017

“we will introduce a single capital floor, set at £100,000, more than four times the current means test threshold. This will ensure that, no matter how large the cost of care turns out to be, people will always retain at least £100,000 of their savings and assets, including value in the family home.”

The Conservative Party Manifesto 2017

· They explicitly rejected the policy of having a cap as proposed by Andrew Dilnot.

Jeremy Hunt: At the moment if you end up going into a care home, you could get down to £23,000 and now we're quadrupling that amount. And what is the alternative? I think this is the important thing

because I know you had Sir Andrew Dilnot on earlier. If you have that cap that was his proposal...

Nick Robinson: Excuse me, it was your proposal in your last manifesto. You promised to implement it; you passed a law to implement it. You then said let's delay it a few years. So let's not slop it off to Sir Andrew Dilnot, this was a Tory manifesto promise.

JH:
Yes, and we couldn't be being clearer.

NR:
You're dropping it.

JH:
Yes, and not only are we dropping it but we are dropping it ahead of a general election and we're being completely explicit in our manifesto that we're dropping it. We're dropping it because we've looked again at this proposal and we don't think it's fair.

BBC Radio Four: Today, 18 May 2017

· Despite a chorus of disapproval in response to their plans, Theresa May herself defended the policy just this weekend.

"You have a situation where two widows are living side by side in homes of the same value. One of them [has] saved up all their life and has over £23,000 in savings, now finds that they need care in a home and has to pay for that because they are above the current threshold.

Then there is [the widow] next door who has perhaps lived the good life and doesn't have those savings and gets in for free. And I think we are equalising home and residential calculations and setting the threshold four times higher at £100,000.

'We are being fair to those who have saved over time.'

Theresa May, The Times, 20 May 2017

· Now they've changed their minds, but they can't provide detail about what their plan will mean. And they have announced no extra money for social care.

· This is not just a chaotic change of direction, it's a repeat of a

broken promise. In their 2015 Manifesto, the Tories promised to introduce a cap on charges.

“We will cap charges for residential social care from April 2016 and also allow deferred

payment agreements, so no one has to sell their home.”

Conservative Party Manifesto 2015, Page 65

· Only weeks after the 2015 general election, they broke their promise and announced that the cap on charges for residential social care would be delayed until 2020.

“we have taken the difficult decision to delay the introduction of the cap on care costs system until April 2020.”

Written Statement: Care Costs, Lord Prior of Brampton, 17 July 2015

The Tories have broken their promise before, how can they be trusted not to do so again?

What will the Tories do to fill the gap?

The Tory reversal leaves a substantial black hole in the Tory manifesto. To date there is no detail on how the cap will operate, at what level it will be set, who it will apply to and, crucially, how the Tories will deal with the funding gap in social care which must be filled to give the system the stability it needs.

· The Tories also have a £2bn black hole in their plans caused by their reversal on NICs earlier this year.

· After the U-turn on NICs Hammond said that he would address the £2bn black hole in the forthcoming Autumn Budget which would be ‘broadly fiscally neutral’. The £2bn would come from either higher taxes or more cuts elsewhere.

As a result of the decision I have announced today, the spring Budget is no longer broadly fiscally neutral, but I am committed to addressing that issue in the autumn. The intention remains to balance the measures that we are delivering between spending and taxation.

Philip

Hammond, 15 March 2017

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2017-03-15/debates/8C87BBE6-1F11-44F8-A01E-1D99ECBD0ACA/Class4NationalInsuranceContributions?highlight=broadly%20fiscally%20neutral#contribution-A24CFA97-B0EC-4B6D-8C7F-DC88B51F6250>

· Today's U-turn, and Hammond's commitment to a 'broadly fiscally neutral' Autumn Budget, means we can expect either post-election tax rises or further cuts to vital public services under a Tory government.

· The Tories already pose a threat to pensioners with their plans to cut Winter Fuel Payments for up to 10 million pensioners.

o Scrap the Triple Lock on state pensions after 2020.

o Cut Winter Fuel Payments for up to 10 million pensioners.

o Raise the State Pension age for up to 34 million workers.

· **That threat could now get even greater, as the Tories may look to means-test other pensioner benefits such as free bus passes and free TV licences.**

· The Tory Manifesto's wording only commits Theresa May to maintaining the existence of current benefits throughout the duration of the parliament.

"We will maintain all other pensioner benefits, including free bus passes, eye tests, prescriptions and TV licences, for the duration of this parliament."

Conservative Party Manifesto, 2017

· This potentially leaves the door open to the introduction of new means-testing and plans to phase out, reduce, or end benefits after that parliament.

· More than 4 million over 75s receive a free TV licences and 9

million pensioners receive a free bus pass in England alone.

· Theresa May has refused to rule out cutting other universal pensioner benefits. Just two days before the publication of the Conservative Manifesto, Theresa May refused to give a straight answer when asked to commit to keeping free bus passes.

Robert Peston: Thomas is concerned you might take away bus passes from pensioners and the disabled?

Theresa May: Well, again, there may be a number of questions that will come in which are issues that will be addressed when we publish our manifesto later this week. I'd rather wait until we publish that package in the manifesto for people to see what we're going to do.

ITV News Facebook Live, 15 May 2017

Other senior Tories have in the past opposed universal pensioner benefits

· The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Damian Green has described free bus passes as a "bribe" saying they "take the prize for sheer all-encompassing pointlessness".

"Many Chancellors have indulged in pre-election bribes, some effective, some ineffective and some straightforwardly cynical, but to offer free off-peak bus passes for pensioners takes the prize for sheer all-encompassing pointlessness in the large areas of the country where there will be no one to receive the bribe that the Chancellor is trying to give them."

Damian

Green, House of Commons debate, Hansard, 22 March 2005, Column 810

<https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200405/cmhansrd/vo050322/debtext/50322-27.htm>

· Senior Ministers Sajid Javid, Matthew Hancock and Liz Truss have

supported the Free Enterprise Group which has previously called for free bus passes and free TV licences to be means-tested.

“Pensioners with incomes of more than £50,000 should lose their free TV licences, bus passes and winter fuel allowances to help cut the deficit, senior Tory MPs have said [...] The Free Enterprise Group numbers 39 Conservative MPs among its supporters, including the Treasury minister Sajid Javid, the skills minister Matthew Hancock, and the childcare minister Elizabeth Truss”

Telegraph, 22 November 2012,
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/9694503/Wealthy-pensioners-should-lose-free-bus-pass-MPs-suggest.html>

· Former Culture Secretary John Whittingdale has previously spoken of the case for means-testing TV licences.

“I can see a case for means-testing on the same grounds of why should a rich retired person get a winter fuel payment, so why should they get a free TV licence? [...]“But these are matters for the BBC to consider. They could get rid of the free TV licence altogether if they chose to do so but they could not do it until 2020.”

John Whittingdale, reported in The Times, ‘Free TV licences could be means tested for over 75s’, 21 May 2017

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/free-tv-licences-could-be-means-tested-for-over-75s-8ktzgbn9t>