

Relationship support will not replace social security support stripped from struggling families – Cunningham

Alex Cunningham MP, Shadow Work and Pensions Minister, commented on the Government's plan to fund relationship support for unemployed families, said:

"Stronger relationships can help families to escape poverty, but the support announced today is a tiny response to funding the work that needs to be done to tackle rising inequality, child and pensioner poverty figures.

"All the evidence suggests that income is a central factor in poverty and inequality.

"Relationship support will not replace the social security support stripped from struggling families under seven years of failed Tory austerity."

Ends

Use of chemical weapons by anyone cannot be tolerated – Thornberry

Emily Thornberry MP, Labour's Shadow Foreign Minister, commenting on the suspected chemical attack in Syria, said:

"This was a shocking and barbaric attack, and our thoughts are with all the victims and their loved ones.

"The use of chemical weapons by anyone cannot be tolerated, as the Syrian government itself accepted when it joined the Chemical Weapons Convention, and there must be no impunity for those found responsible."

Ends

Tory Government is failing the victims of trafficking as statistics show rise – Abbott

Diane Abbott, Labour's Shadow Home Secretary, responding to National Referral Mechanism statistics showing that child trafficking is rising, said,

"This Tory Government is failing the victims of trafficking.

"Recorded child trafficking has reached a record high, but these figures are still well below the Government's own estimate. Meanwhile, decisions to provide support for victims have fallen to a record low.

"The Tories promised in their manifesto to tackle trafficking and child exploitation. Instead they have imposed even further cuts on the Border Force and police, the frontline in the fight against these horrific crimes."

Ends

Notes to editor

1. Annual statistics on reports to the National Referral Mechanism show that in total there were 3,805 potential victims of trafficking in 2016; a 17% increase on 2015. However, child exploitation referrals rose by 30% to 1,278.
2. The figures also show that positive conclusive decisions – which enable victims to access support – decreased to 635, compared with 1,028 the previous year.
3. Full report – National Crime Agency, NRM End of Year Summary 2016, 29 March 2017,

<http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/national-referral-mechanism-statistics/2016-nrm-statistics/788-national-referral-mechanism-statistics-end-of-year-summary-2016/file>

Jeremy Corbyn speech to launch Labour's Local Election campaign

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party, will today launch Labour's Local Election campaign and say:

Thank

you for that introduction Bethany and for all that you do in mobilising our student members in Nottinghamshire.

Labour

depends on all its members to deliver our message of investment and social justice in every community across Britain.

Over

a quarter of a million more people joined Labour over the past eighteen months

they saw Labour has broken with the failed politics of the past and that they could be part of a new project for real change: bold, confident and, yes, angry too.

Because

who wouldn't be angry?

When

they see people lying on trolleys in hospital corridors?

When

they see more and more people homeless on the streets?

When

they hear about a high street chain trying to pay young people in leftover food?

When

huge numbers of Sure Start centres have closed under the Tories?

Or

when class sizes are rising – as the Tories divert funds to grammar schools for a privileged few?

And

when social care for the elderly and disabled is in crisis – while the super-rich and big business get tax giveaways worth £73 billion?

How can you not be angry and demand major change when life expectancy projections have fallen in Britain for pensioners? We are a rich country, the sixth richest in the world. We are not at war, there is no epidemic sweeping our land.

But, whether the Conservative Party chair can face the facts or not, life expectancy has actually fallen – by a year for 65-year-old women and 6 months for 65-year-old men – since 2013.

The truth is that the Tories are running our country down.

Home ownership, opportunities for our children, wages and conditions at work, the NHS, care for our elderly, and now, life expectancy: they're all going backwards, run down by a Conservative government that looks after those at the top and manages decline for the rest of us.

Britain is a wealthy country but you wouldn't know it from the way people are held back in their everyday lives – from making a home for themselves and their families, building a career, pursuing their interests and ambitions.

Local councils have made a huge difference to people's lives – providing libraries and leisure centres, schools, building houses, making sure the elderly have the support they need.

But since 2010 councils have seen their funding cut by 40%.

Over ninety percent of councils are putting up council tax this year to try to compensate for the huge cuts in the grant they get from government.

Meanwhile police budgets are cut, social care budgets are cut, schools budgets are cut, Sure Start centres are closed, libraries are closed, houses aren't built.

Whole communities are being held back and jobs, services and hope destroyed. But it doesn't have to be like this.

Labour

is standing up for you. In Westminster and in every community across the country.

Labour

councils are making a difference across the country. Stepping up where the Government fails to act.

Faced

with the growing housing crisis, Birmingham Council is delivering 30% of all new homes in the city. And Lancashire County Council has formed a joint venture to buy 800 affordable homes for sale and social rent.

Faced

with the crisis in social care 15 Labour councils have signed up to the Ethical Care Charter for minimum standards of safety, quality and dignity of care and improve pay and training for care workers. I signed it myself last week in Blyth.

Faced

with so many people struggling to make ends meet Liverpool council is setting up a not-for-profit energy company – “the Liverpool LECCy” – to sell gas and electricity at a lower cost, building on what’s been done down the road in Nottingham with Robin Hood Energy. And just west of here in Derbyshire the Labour Council’s Welfare Rights Service has helped local people claim £18 million in benefits they otherwise would have lost.

Faced

with the Government’s failure to invest in our economy the ‘Nottinghamshire Economic Development Capital Fund’ has lent £3.5 million to help more than 30 businesses secure good jobs in Nottinghamshire. And in Northumberland, the council-owned Arch property business generates jobs and homes, as well as a return of nearly £5m a year that supports council services like schools, roads and social care. I was really pleased to visit their Blyth Workspace site last week which offer huge opportunities.

Faced

with an epidemic of low pay 89 Labour councils have delivered the real Living Wage for council employees and contractors to ensure better wages for local people. I’m particularly proud that my own borough led the way on that.

These

are just a few examples of how Labour councils are standing up for you and why you need Labour to be in power in towns, counties and city regions as well as Westminster.

The

Conservatives justify tax cuts for the richest and big business by saying they will lead to an increase in investment. But in fact investment has fallen, leaving us with antiquated infrastructure and uncompetitive industries.

The future of our country cannot be left to the free market and the whims of the wealthy.

That is why Labour will set up a national investment bank and regional development banks – including our ‘Bank of the North’ – to help unlock £500 billion to fund major capital projects and finance growth.

Our plan will use public investment to build up new investment by the private sector. It means creating hundreds of thousands of good quality jobs in manufacturing and in green and other cutting-edge industries of the future.

As every successful business knows, there’s nothing reckless about borrowing to invest quite the opposite.

Investment in infrastructure, skills, broadband and high speed rail generates growth and tax revenues. It more than pays for itself. This is just what the Welsh Government is doing with the launch of the Welsh Development Bank, which draws on 20 years of Labour experience in power.

At this crucial time we need to look to the future and ask ourselves what sort of country we want Britain to be.

Theresa May’s Government is trying to use Brexit to turn Britain into a low-wage tax haven for big business.

We are offering a real alternative that reflects the priorities of the majority of our people to rebuild and transform Britain so that no one and no community is left behind.

Instead of a country run for the rich, we want to see one in which all of us can lead richer lives.

A

Labour Government will end the rip-off on the railways and bring them into public ownership.

Labour will overturn the Government's ban on council-owned bus companies as part of a plan to put the public back into buses.

We'll stop the corporate tax cuts and make sure the tax dodgers pay their fair share.

We'll invest in our children's education and skills for our workers.

We'll give six million people a pay rise by introducing a real living wage of at least £10 an hour.

We'll reinstate nurses' bursaries and give more people the chance to train to be nurses, so that the sick get the care they need.

We'll invest in housing, building the homes our country needs, creating thousands of good construction jobs and apprenticeships and allowing councils to borrow to build council housing.

Together we can create a Britain where each of us can lead richer lives investing in a better Britain, creating educational opportunity for all, guaranteeing the health and social care services you need, providing safer neighbourhoods and building homes people can afford.

In the coming weeks of this campaign Labour will be setting out more of our policies to show how Labour will stand up for you.

This election is your chance to send a message to the Tories: that you won't accept our NHS in crisis, your children's future betrayed, a deepening housing crisis, damaging cuts to the police and insecure jobs that don't make ends meet.

It doesn't have to be like this. Things can and they will change.

So use your vote for Labour on 4th May.

Ends

[It's time the Government started giving mental health services the money they need – Barbara Keeley](#)

Barbara Keeley MP,
Labour's Shadow Cabinet Minister for Mental Health, commenting on the NHS report on Out of Area Placements In Mental Health Services for February, said:

"These statistics show yet another rise in the number of mental health patients being treated hundreds of miles away from their homes due to lack of beds in their local area. These are some of the most vulnerable people in our communities and the fact that some are having to go over 180 miles from where they live just to get a bed creates extra pressures on them and their families.

"Last week's NHS Five Year Forward View report says that some areas of the NHS have: '...been living off bail-outs arbitrarily taken from other parts of the country or from services such as mental health'. Using mental health budgets to plug financial black holes elsewhere is leading to issues like these out of area placements.

"The Tory government has talked a lot about parity of esteem between physical and mental health but the reality is simply not matching the rhetoric. It's time the Government ended the warm words and started giving mental health services the money they need."