

[Nia Griffith responds to reports Armed Forces are facing a £10bn funding shortfall](#)

Nia Griffith MP, Labour's Shadow Defence Secretary, commenting on reports our Armed Forces are facing a £10bn funding shortfall, said:

"This is deeply worrying, and the result of years of mistakes and poor decisions made under the Tories.

"The severe cuts imposed on the defence budget since 2010 has led to countless knee-jerk decisions, like scrapping the Nimrod maritime patrol aircraft, which has left us reliant on allies to track Russian subs off the UK coast.

"Last year we saw the Army shrink below 80,000 for the first time, far short of the Government's manifesto pledge to keep it above 82,000.

"Further cuts of £1bn each year, to make up for this mis-management of the defence budget, will do yet more severe damage to our Armed Forces. Reports that the Royal Marines could be further cut are particularly concerning.

"On the Today programme, the Defence Secretary kept referring to investment in equipment but he needs to be investing in our forces personnel to ensure that professional standards remain high, and that they are trained to be able to operate and maintain new kit. Our Armed Forces are driven by the hard working men and women who serve and it's time the Tories recognised that.

"It simply isn't good enough for ministers to say they can't verify whether these reports are accurate. They urgently need to get a grip and explain where they intend these savings to come from."

[Barbara Keeley responds to CLG select committee social care report](#)

Barbara Keeley

MP, Labour's Shadow Cabinet Minister for Social Care, commenting on the CLG select committee report in to social care, said:

"This report is yet more evidence of government failure on social care.

"With less than 10 per cent of directors of adult social care confident they will be able to fulfil their statutory duty to provide care this coming year, it's clear that the Government simply has not done enough to give social care the funding it needs.

"The underfunding of social care is hitting the care work force with nearly half of all care staff on zero-hours contracts and hundreds of thousands of them scandalously earning less than the living wage. And as the cuts to budgets bite, we are seeing the number of people caring for family and friends unpaid going up faster than population growth. This is bad for the family carers and can put great strain on families.

"The Government should heed the recommendations from the committee and make sure that their upcoming Green Paper does not rule any future funding options out. We need social care to be put on a long term sustainable financial footing and we need an end to this on-going funding crisis."

[Government are obsessing over arbitrary targets for apprenticeship starts but doing nothing to ensure the right outcomes for learners – Gordon Marsden](#)

Gordon Marsden

MP, Labour's Shadow Skills Minister, commenting on a report from a sub-committee of the Education and Business Select Committee, claiming that the Government's apprenticeship levy

lacks focus and targets the wrong industries, said:

"Today's report confirms what Labour have been saying all along, that while the Government are obsessing over reaching an arbitrary target for apprenticeship starts, they are doing nothing to ensure the right outcomes for learners.

"The fact that the Government's approach lacks focus and targets the wrong industries shows that they have failed to develop an industrial strategy worthy of the name, and can only offer headline chasing gimmicks instead.

"Closing the skills gap and giving young people and older learners the skills they need should be essential to securing our post-Brexit future, yet once again this Government have nothing serious to offer the country."

[Plan confirms that May's Government has broken its promise by failing to give the NHS the funding it needs – Jonathan Ashworth](#)

Jonathan

Ashworth MP, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, responding to the publication of

***NHS England's Next Steps on the NHS Five Year Forward View* said:**

"NHS

England's Five Year Forward View update contains welcome ambitions around mental health and cancer care that Labour endorses. However reading between the lines this plan confirms that Theresa May's Government has broken its promise by failing to give the NHS the funding it needs. The plan admits the public are 'concerned' for the future of the NHS and that the health service is under 'real pressure' to cope with rising demand within the current spending envelope.

"Labour has warned repeatedly that the NHS funding squeeze imposed by the Government is damaging standards of patient care. Now the Forward View confirms that the main 4 hour A&E target won't be met for at least the next year.

Waiting lists are growing as a direct result of the financial crisis. The collapse in standards in the past year has been nothing short of astonishing.

“What’s more the plan confirms more and more rationing of treatments is taking place across the NHS.

“One of the biggest problems laid out by the new NHS plan is the massive workforce challenge for the health service. We welcome NHS England reinforcing Labour’s calls for the Government to guarantee the status of European health staff as soon as possible. Sadly Jeremy Hunt has no plan whatsoever to help the NHS through the challenge of Brexit and is being enormously complacent about the impact for the NHS. The Government need to be much clearer about how they will guarantee there are enough staff in place in the health service to keep patients safe for the years to come.”

[Staggering that Grayling thinks the growing revolving door scandal around HS2 is ‘not a massive issue’ – McDonald](#)

Andy

McDonald MP, Labour’s Shadow Transport Secretary, commenting on the Government’s refusal to set up an inquiry into the cancellation of HS2 Ltd’s £170 million contract with engineering firm CH2M, said:

“I’m staggered Chris Grayling thinks the growing revolving door scandal over HS2 Ltd, CH2M and a £170m contract is ‘not a massive issue.’

“The fact both HS2 Ltd’s Chief Executive and his predecessor previously worked for CH2M and a former HS2 Chief of Staff worked on the winning bid for CH2M should have rung alarm bells at the Department for Transport

“Now HS2’s Director General has resigned and Phase 2 could be delayed even further.

“This whole business stinks to high heaven, and the Department for Transport must

urgently address the key questions. When did it know about these substantial conflicts of interest and what due diligence did it do on the bid?"

Ends