

Greater restrictions and rationing proposed today are a direct result of Theresa May's underfunding of the NHS – Jonathan Ashworth

Jonathan

Ashworth MP, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, commenting on reports that NHS England is to develop new guidelines in order to stop GPs from prescribing certain medicines, said:

"This

Government has forced the NHS through the longest period of financial squeeze in its history. Indeed, hospital bosses have recently warned it will be 'mission impossible' to achieve the standards of care the public demand given the scale of the underfunding.

"We

have long warned this underfunding would lead to greater rationing of services and treatments. Ministers need to explain what today's restrictions will mean for those eligible for free prescriptions such as the elderly, pregnant and those on low incomes.

"Of

course, NHS bosses are right to demand the best possible value for money from the medicines they buy so that every penny can go towards patient care. But let's be clear: the greater restrictions and rationing proposed today are a direct result of Theresa May's underfunding of the NHS."

Pat Glass responds to announcement First Group & MTR are to take over the South Western Franchise

Pat Glass MP, Labour's Shadow Transport Minister,

commenting on the announcement that First Group and MTR are to take over the South Western Franchise, said:

"In

an agreement made in January of last year, the Government announced that the South Western franchise around London was to be taken over by TfL at the end of the franchise period. It is therefore disappointing to see that it has now been handed over to a private operator which is partly owned by a foreign company. We are now in a ludicrous situation where 75 percent of our railways are now wholly or partly controlled by foreign states or foreign companies.

“It is also hugely disheartening to hear that bidders were required to include plans for Driver Only Operation. It is important that the new franchisee is aware of the safety critical role of the second member of staff on board and they should not seek to remove this. It seems that the Government is deliberately intent on spreading the disruption faced daily by commuters on Southern to commuters passengers using the South Western Network.

“First Group and MTR have promised more trains, more seats and a better service but now only time will tell as to whether they will deliver that.”

[It is crucial that there is effective judicial oversight of the security services' access to encrypted messages – Abbott](#)

Diane Abbott MP, Labour's Shadow Home Secretary, speaking in response to the controversy over encrypted messages in the wake of the terrorist attack at Westminster, said:

“Labour opposes an open access trawl of all messaging. Good counter-terrorism measures are nearly always intelligence led.

“In the cases of suspects or perpetrators of serious crime or terrorism, it is crucial that there is effective judicial oversight of the security services' access to encrypted messages.

“Amber Rudd will be keen to set out exactly how the Government will ensure that law-abiding

citizens' privacy is not breached.

"Fighting terrorism is a serious business, and should not be used for political grandstanding."

[This is the second big Government contract cancelled in the space of six months – Rebecca Long- Bailey](#)

Rebecca

Long- Bailey MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Energy, commenting on the Government announcement today that the tax payer will incur nearly £100m in costs and damages due to the mishandling of nuclear decommissioning contracts, said:

"By cancelling just two years into a 14 year contract, the Government has shown dramatic levels of incompetence in the procurement process of this deal.

"British tax payers who stand to lose nearly £100m should be asking themselves not just whether they are willing to put up with such ineptitude but also whether the Government actually has a well thought out and long term nuclear decommissioning strategy.

"This is of course the second big Government contract cancelled in the space of six months after the Concentrix tax credits scandal earlier this year. With Concentrix, a similar pattern of Government behaviour emerged, they failed to recognise key failures in service provision and were forced to cancel the contract."

[Louise Haigh responds to BT's £42 million fine from Ofcom](#)

Louise

Haigh, Labour's Shadow Minister for the Digital Economy, commenting on

BT's £42 million fine from Ofcom, said:

"It's right that Ofcom has taken this so seriously. The sluggish upgrade of our digital infrastructure has already left swathes of the UK behind; and now it's clear that BT failed to give proper notice that it was not going to meet roll out deadlines, failed to pay compensation and then did not comply quickly and fully with the information demands Ofcom made of them.

"It's just not good enough that time again promises on advertising speeds and roll-out have been broken. It's right that BT is being made to pay for these failures."