

[This landmark ruling on Uber is a hard-fought victory for worker's rights – Rebecca Long-Bailey](#)

Rebecca Long-Bailey MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, commenting on Uber losing its court appeal against ruling that drivers should be treated as workers rather than self-employed, said:

"This landmark ruling is a hard-fought victory for worker's rights and I congratulate the drivers and trade unions for taking this all the way to the courts.

"Uber, and companies like it, must now stop exploiting its workforce. They must immediately implement changes to ensure that workers receive the rights and protections to which they are entitled.

"The next Labour government will support workers with equal employment rights and clamp down on bogus self-employment."

[Chronic underfunding of social care since 2010 is having a severe impact on local authorities – Barbara Keeley](#)

Barbara Keeley MP, Labour's Shadow Cabinet Minister for Social Care, commenting on new figures which show the number of NHS delayed days due to a lack of social care are up by nearly a quarter compared with last year, said:

"These are alarming figures. The chronic underfunding of social care since 2010 is having a severe impact on local authorities under pressure to find social care for vulnerable people, which in turn increases pressure on the NHS.

"The Tory Government must listen to the will of the House of Commons expressed in our recent debate on the funding of social care and as such we call on the

Chancellor to use his Budget and end the crisis in social care which Labour recognised when we pledged an additional £8bn of funding in our election manifesto.

Ends

Notes to
editors:

Text of
motion

“That
this House notes the Conservative Party’s manifesto commitment to a funding proposal for social care which would have no cap on care costs and would include the value of homes in the means test for care at home; further notes that this proposal would leave people with a maximum of only £100,000 of assets; calls on the Government to confirm its intention not to proceed with this commitment; and further calls on the Government to remove the threat to withdraw social care funding for, and stop fines on, local authorities for Delayed Transfers of Care and to commit to the extra funding needed to close the social care funding gap for 2017 and the remaining years of the 2017 Parliament.”

[New statistics show the Conservatives haven't given enough attention to social housing – John Healey](#)

John

Healey MP, Labour’s Shadow Secretary of State for Housing, commenting on new statistics

showing the number of new social rented homes has fallen to the lowest level since records began, said:

“After

the Grenfell Tower fire Theresa May admitted the Conservatives haven’t given enough attention to social housing. These shocking figures show she was right.

“The

number of new social rented homes being built is now at the lowest level on record, and the number of new low-cost homes to buy is at just half the level it was under Labour.

“After

seven years of failure on housing the Chancellor must use the Budget to tackle the housing crisis.”

[Our steel industry could be fatally compromised if the government fails to act – Barry Gardiner](#)

Barry Gardiner MP, Shadow International Trade Secretary, responding to concerns from the steel industry over the government’s Trade Bill, said:

“There is a real danger that our steel industry could be fatally compromised if the government fails to deal with unfair trading practices by other countries. Proper structures must be put in place as our exit from the European Union is planned.

“Labour is committed to a robust and comprehensive trade remedies regime that will ensure we can defend British manufacturing jobs from unfair competition.

“We understand the fears expressed by industry and trade unions at the prospect of job losses in such an important sector. A Labour government would act. This government must not stand idly by.”

[Jeremy Corbyn speech at Labour’s Make Homes Safe launch](#)

*****CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*****

Jeremy Corbyn MP, Leader of the Labour Party, speaking at Labour’s Make Homes Safe launch today, said:

We are here today less than 150 days after the country woke up to the devastating news of the fire at Grenfell Tower.

It was a fire that shocked the whole country.

A 24 storey tower block subsumed in flames. Whole families, adults and young children alike, trapped inside the tower with no chance of escape.

The scenes inside that tower would have been unimaginable hell.

Firefighters entered the burning building nonetheless at huge risk to themselves, saving many lives.

But far too many, at least 80 people, were beyond rescue.

On the morning after the Grenfell Fire I visited the scene and I talked to those who lived in the tower and the surrounding area.

They were in shock and they were grieving. People simply did not believe that such a horrifying event could take place in 2017, in the UK's richest borough, in the 5th richest nation on earth.

But tragically it didn't happen by chance but because of shockingly avoidable political decisions, driven by a cruel and failed economic ideology.

The country was shocked and the local community was hurting but it was this shock and pain that prompted such an inspirational response from the local community in this part of West London.

It was a response stirred by the shared grief of innocent adults and children having their lives taken from them in the fire.

Stirred by the pain of seeing that burning building, knowing there were people trapped inside and stirred by the anger of knowing that working class voices had been ignored once again; and that a tragedy of this shocking scale had been allowed to happen.

Although the local council of Kensington and Chelsea has faced criticisms for its response to

the
fire, other local authorities, such as here in Hammersmith and Fulham,
deserve
to be acknowledged for their efforts to help those affected by the fire.

Whether it was running
fundraising events or directly offering the use of their own council services
and council officers free of charge, it was this council, along with others
including my own, that did what it could to help those in need.

Local organisations
and community groups have also played a huge part in the response. Queen's
Park
Rangers Football Club for instance managed to raise almost one million pounds
for legacy projects that will leave a lasting impact in the area around
Grenfell.

Combined with the
efforts of individuals, charities and local small businesses, this response
was
a heartening example of the unbreakable strength of communities and sense of
solidarity in this hugely diverse and multi-faith area of London.

On the morning that I
visited Grenfell I also had the chance to talk to some of the firefighters
who
battled that deadly inferno for hours.

Utterly exhausted,
these were the women and men who saved large numbers of people – adults
and children.

I asked them why they
did it? Why did they put themselves in such danger, saving the lives of
people
who they've never even met.

They answered without
any hesitation: "We do it because it's our job".

Because on that night,
firefighters of the London Fire Brigade did do their job.

Firefighters across
the country have faced the harsh reality of politically driven austerity.

Along with the other
emergency services across the UK they have been forced to deal with repeated
budget cuts since 2010.

In the last seven
years 10,000 frontline firefighter jobs have gone; equivalent to one in six
positions.

This is a staggering figure and is compounded by the loss of fire stations, equipment and the loss of almost a third of fire safety inspectors in the same period, with some areas such as West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue, which covers the city of Leeds, having lost as many as 70 per cent of its inspectors.

Indeed, because of the continual loss of firefighters' jobs, if the fire at Grenfell had occurred outside of London there would not have been enough firefighters in the vicinity to tackle a blaze of that size.

That is why Labour is committed to recruiting 3,000 new firefighter jobs with a full review of staffing levels.

This is essential if we are to improve response times and ensure the fire and rescue service has the resources it needs to do the job – which they do with such professionalism – of keeping us safe.

As firefighters themselves say: if we are serious about reducing deaths and injuries from fire, we need a co-ordinated approach across government. We need a well-funded fully staffed fire and rescue service but what is also needed is a strong focus on fire prevention.

We must make sure that nothing like the fire at Grenfell Tower can ever happen again.

But to make sure it doesn't we need action and we need action now.

Of course we are all waiting for the result of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry but there is some action that we believe the government could, and should take immediately.

The retrofitting of sprinklers in all high rise social housing is something that could make a vital difference to people's safety.

The evidence is clear: where sprinkler systems have already been fitted, injuries sustained from fires have been cut by approximately 80 per cent and deaths from fires have almost

been eliminated entirely.

But don't just take my word for it.

Take the word of the Chief Fire Officers Association. They support retrofitting because they recognise that sprinklers are both the most effective and the most efficient method to quell fires which occur in high rise buildings.

Take the word of the London Fire Brigade; the very people who risked their lives at Grenfell Tower and risk their lives every single day to put out other fires across this city, who have repeatedly called for retrofitting of sprinklers.

And take the word of the Coroner in its 2013 report after the fire at Lakanal House who recommended the retrofitting of sprinklers in all high rise residential buildings.

Two Conservative governments in succession have failed to act on that Coroner's report.

We said after that dreadful fire at Lakanal House in 2009 we would never allow anything similar to happen again, and yet here we are, eight years later, after an even worse avoidable fire.

The evidence is overwhelming. When almost every authoritative source on the matter is saying the same thing: that retrofitting of sprinklers is necessary in high rise housing.

This measure is just common sense and will protect thousands of lives.

It is our duty to listen to this clear and unambiguous advice.

Retrofitting of sprinklers is something that many Local Authorities know is necessary to ensure the safety of residents in high rise social housing. But with their budgets slashed by an average of 40 per cent since 2010 it is something that very few of them can afford.

A small number of Local Authorities such as the London Borough of Croydon have managed to find the funds to retrofit sprinklers. But of course on councils' shoe string budgets, doing this can mean cuts to other vital services.

That is why people
across the country are now looking at central government to act.

The government tells
us time and time again that there are difficult choices to be made. "We are
all
in this together" they used to say.

And yet while people
are living in potential death-trap homes without essential safety protections
such as sprinklers, it is an obscenity that we have super rich elites and
major
corporations who are allowed to avoid paying their taxes. There can be little
disagreement. The government must get its act together, take on the tax
avoiders and put the billions of pounds that is being taken from the pockets
of
the British people back into the public services and safe homes we all so
desperately need.

Social housing in this
country has been badly and dangerously neglected for far too long.

Deregulation imposed
by successive governments has caused a shocking collapse in standards.

While luxury
accommodation proliferates across our big cities far out of reach of the vast
majority of the population, the poorest in our country are forced to live not
just in dilapidated run-down housing, but also in dangerous housing.

Time and time again
this government has shown itself to be callous and indifferent to working
class
concerns.

But now we are asking
this government to do something positive for those who live in social
housing.

With the budget
approaching imminently the government has a genuine opportunity to make a
real
difference to people's lives by making available the government funds that
local councils are crying out for to improve the safety of high rise
residents.

It is the primary
responsibility of any government to ensure the safety of its citizens and we
believe it is therefore the responsibility of the Prime Minister and the
Chancellor to make this money available to local authorities and devolved
administrations across the whole of the UK.

We must be serious

about people's safety and governments cannot protect people on the cheap.

We see ourselves as a civilised society. We know that as a nation we should provide universal healthcare for the sick, decent pensions for the elderly, good quality education for every child to get on in life, but we also need to ensure that everybody has a home that is not just secure but also safe.

Funding retrofitting of sprinklers is an immediate step that Theresa May can take in the Autumn Budget.

It will ensure that high rise residents can sleep more safely in their beds.

That is why today, Labour is launching our campaign to Make Homes Safe.

The campaign's aim is for sprinklers to be fitted in all social housing throughout the country which is 30 metres or above – around ten or more storeys.

We are asking for the public's support to make sure the government listens to the concerns that we share with tower block residents, the Fire and Rescue Service and other professionals.

Retrofitting of sprinkler systems is a basic demand but it is one that will save lives if the government decides to make it happen.

Grenfell was an avoidable tragedy. It did not have to happen and it would not have happened if adequate precautions, including sprinklers, were in place.

So please, sign our letter and help us make sure that residents of high rise social housing can sleep safely in their beds, safe in the knowledge that they are being listened to.

Thank you

ENDS