

Sue Hayman speech to the Northern Farming Conference

Sue

Hayman MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, speaking to the Northern Farming Conference, said:

Thank you for inviting me to speak to you today.

I've been Shadow Secretary for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs since February this year, since when I've been building relationships with farming and food organisations across the country.

For those of you who don't know me I'm the MP for Workington, a very large rural constituency with a lot of hill and livestock farming and many small food producers.

My number two in our team – the Shadow Minister for Farming – is David Drew, the very experienced MP for Stroud in Gloucestershire, also a large rural constituency but with different issues to my own.

So I believe that Labour has a strong team with a good working knowledge of rural issues and I know some of you believe that has not always been the case.

So I've become Shadow Secretary of State at this most critical time for our country's farming and food industries.

We really are at a crossroad, with so much hanging in the balance during the EU negotiations.

Everyone here will know that one of the most important industries that must be protected in these negotiations is our farming industry. In a survey commissioned by the NFU, 85% of people said they believe that it is important that Britain has a productive and resilient farming industry.

That figure shows how important farming is to Britain. It is a key component of the economy, providing 475,000 jobs and driving growth in rural communities up and down the country. Not only is the industry a major part of our economy, it also provides 61% of Britain's food and farmers act

as custodians for our environment, managing more than 70% of the UK landscape.

The Brexit negotiating team must step up to the plate and get the best deal for Britain. We have to have a plan that protects the rights of private citizens and also enables businesses to flourish and our industries to remain successful across the continent.

And food and farming must be a part of our trade talks from day one.

Brexit brings an opportunity to fundamentally review the objectives and design of the UK's long-term agricultural policy, shaping the future of British farming and food production for generations to come. And it has led to new, fresh thinking about the future of food and farming.

But as well as opportunity Brexit brings challenges and risks.

It is impossible to emphasise just how much is at stake for farming during and after the Brexit negotiations.

Agriculture has been more exposed to EU law-making over the past four decades than any other sector of the economy. 80% of all UK food legislation has been negotiated at EU level and many British farmers are heavily dependent on EU farm subsidies for survival.

- 40% of the entire EU's budget is related to agriculture and rural development
- About 80% of our agricultural exports currently go to the European Union
- 94% of farming imports and 97% of exports are with countries with which the EU has negotiated a free trade agreement

So we need to negotiate trade agreements that work for British farming, while recognising and protecting the high standards of food safety and animal welfare that consumers expect – frictionless, tariff-free trade and new markets that exploit this proud record of production standards.

Future trade deals should not undercut British farming in a race-to-the-bottom

Brexit

on food standards and animal welfare. We must not allow the UK to become swamped by imports of food produced to lower environmental, social and animal welfare standards than those of UK producers.

Food and farming should be a clear strategic priority for the Government, one of the cornerstones of a broad industrial strategy. There remains a clear need for a food and farming plan to grow more, buy more and sell more British food.

We have an opportunity to export even more, putting farming at the heart of our future as a great trading nation.

But the government's vision for the UK as a leading free-trade nation with low tariff barriers to the outside world does not sit easily with its declared commitment to high quality and welfare standards in British farming. Combining and delivering these two objectives will be a considerable challenge.

But what is at stake here if the UK gets this wrong is far more than the interests of one industry. It's our nation's food security, nutrition, environment and public health.

I was so pleased to lead Labour's celebration of Back British Farming Day earlier this year – celebrating and recognising the value and contribution of farming to the UK.

British farming provides jobs, driving rural growth both in food production and in diversified industries such as renewable energy and tourism.

And this really cannot be emphasised enough – that farming provides the bedrock for the UK's largest and most thriving manufacturing industry – the £108bn food and drink manufacturing sector.

I would like to assure you all here today that my team and I are working hard to emphasise the importance of British food and farming and drive it up the Brexit agenda, to provide the prominence, attention and thinking time that it deserves.

Farming is an integral part of Labour's vision of a fairer society, one that tackles the increasing social ills of food poverty, poor diets, environmental degradation and inequality.

The

creation of our new British agricultural policy must be ambitious. It should aim to establish a new deal with society – a consensus on what the modern-day farming industry can deliver for the economy, for rural communities, for consumers and for the environment.

Just

as the Government must ensure the nation has a secure energy supply, it must ensure there is a safe, affordable supply of food in the long term. Change cannot be left to market forces alone, as farming is critical to our nation's food security and stewardship of the natural environment. It requires Government leadership and support.

And

I believe that government needs to do more to help and encourage consumers to buy British food. The UK produces some of the best food in the world, with the highest standards of safety and animal welfare and we should celebrate that but currently only 61% of the food eaten in Britain is produced here.

But

if we are going to encourage consumers to buy British better food labelling is vitally important. For our farmers to be able to compete fairly within any new trade deals product labelling must be clear and unambiguous so that people know exactly what they are buying – including the country of origin and method of production. And we can build trust by continuing to promote accreditation schemes such as Red Tractor, which will become increasingly important.

We

should also do more to promote the wide range of regional and speciality food producers – both at home and abroad. In my home county of Cumbria we run the very successful 'Taste of Cumbria' food festivals and value is added to, for example, Lakeland Herdwick lamb by demonstrating its quality and authenticity in the labelling. We should look to develop this once we are out of the EU in order to promote our excellent products right across the globe.

Labour

is committed to increasing the powers and remit of the Groceries Code Adjudicator, to reinstating a form of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme and to consider how future farming payments could be reconfigured around environmental and public good.

As a member of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Rural Business I met with other members to press the Minister that the review of the GCA should increase her powers and remit. We held sessions in parliament where farmers and producers could give evidence anonymously so as to not prejudice their businesses in any way.

The shared message that came from witnesses was that an extended GCA is necessary to:

- Support transparent trading relationships along the supply chain that give farmers predictability of income and the ability to make informed decisions about their businesses
- Prevent farmers bearing disproportionate risk, which can send a competent business bankrupt
- Support sustainable supply chains that produce high quality for the consumer

So the GCA needs to have the power to ensure that farmers are paid a fair price and tackle unfair trading, while at the same time ensuring that food is affordable. In many areas we seem to have lost the relationship between the price paid to the farmer and the price set by the retailer and this situation is not helped by the volatility of the market in, for example, the dairy industry. I'm sure that consumers would not expect fresh produce to be sold at below the cost of production.

The issue of farm labour is critical and immediate. UK farmers and food processors and producers need to have access to the labour market in Europe. And labour that is properly qualified to do the job.

Findings from a recent NFU labour survey showed the number of seasonal workers coming to work on UK farms has dropped 17%, with more than 1,500 unfilled vacancies in one month alone.

Without access to this labour resource, both the agricultural sector and food manufacturers will face severe difficulties.

A lack of labour will lead to a number of consequences for UK agriculture, including produce left to waste, the movement of investment and operations out of the UK, and the likelihood of price inflation for consumers.

And we also need to invest in skills, training and the exchange of knowledge.

The CLA has argued for a focus on building a high-tech, efficient and resilient industry with opportunities for all, developing a future pipeline of talent. Young people are leaving the countryside; with the average age of a British farmer now at 59.

We need to examine freeing up the market to develop new lower-cost ways for a people from a wider range of ages and backgrounds to enter food growing and farming.

This is essential if we are to enable a new generation to enter farming affordably and create the pipeline of talent needed for a sustainable future for the sector.

I was delighted to attend the awards ceremony for agriculture and land management earlier this year at Newton Rigg College near Penrith and was really impressed with the students' achievements.

We need to look at what skills and training the different sectors need for the future and how we encourage on-going development amongst those already working in the industry and selling agriculture as an exciting and fulfilling career to the younger generation.

I'll now look at some of the challenges we face when considering what could replace the Common Agricultural Policy.

We know that in many cases the profitability of farms is too dependent on direct payments from the CAP. But, because of the huge diversity in farming and the volatility in many areas, we will need to consider how to support farms in becoming more resilient while at the same time mitigating against this volatility.

We are still developing our thinking and policy on what should replace the CAP, but we believe that a future payments system must broadly seek to do the following:

- We need to look at how we target support to farmers who provide the most amount of public good but may struggle to compete in the market through no fault of their own – e.g. a Lakeland hill farmer
- Add transparency – any future system must be transparent as well as relevant, easily accessible and cost-effective.
- Reward environmentally sustainable practice and environmental stewardship – for example management of habitat, of natural resources, of the cultural and

historical landscape for the benefit of all of us. We can promote tourism as part of this.

- Support

flood mitigation through land management – extreme rainfall has become significantly more serious over the last 20 years and we need to look at developing programmes which support farmers in slowing the flow of water through catchments, and for storing water in times of flood.

- Encourage

technological innovation. This is an area I've been discussing with the NFU looking at how investment could meet the broad aims of improving resource efficiency, improve animal health and welfare, manage disease and add value. It could also be used to encourage investment in machinery and software but at the same time there has to be a commitment to fully connect every business to a fast broadband network.

- Support

rural communities – farming is central to the economy and sustainability of our rural communities and the contribution that farming makes should be recognised.

We are still working on this in close collaboration with farmers, environmental stakeholders and local communities to develop our ideas so that any new system that we propose will enable profitable and sustainable farming businesses that support a dynamic rural economy.

I was interested to read the CLA's report that was launched earlier this week on how to improve the profitability of farming and forestry. It brings the kind of vision, determination and positive thinking that we need to see right across the sector.

The report is absolutely right in saying that productivity gains should not be at the expense of the environment. Farming practices that produce more in the short term but over time destroys its own assets – the land and soil – is not economic progress and leaves the industry less resilient to cope with challenges such as climate change and extreme weather.

Over the coming months the Labour shadow Defra team will be working closely with stakeholders in farming and

agriculture to make sure we get our response to the government's Agriculture Bill right.

Farmers have been telling me that they need more certainty about the future and we will be doing all we can to help secure as much certainty and direction for the sector as possible to allow your forward planning.

And I hope that we can strengthen our relationship so that over the coming months we can work together.

With your expertise, your experience and your energy an ambitious and progressive vision for farming and food can be developed and taken to government.

Thank you.

[Simon Stevens has rightly set out the stark implications of failing to give the NHS the funding it needs – Jonathan Ashworth](#)

Jonathan

Ashworth, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, responding to NHS England Chief Executive Simon

Stevens' speech to the NHS Providers Conference, said:

"Simon

Stevens has rightly set out in the clearest terms the stark implications of failing to give the NHS the funding it needs on the eve of its 70th anniversary.

"Unless the

Chancellor comes forward with an urgent and sustainable funding package, waiting lists will climb further to 5 million, and the 18 week target will potentially be permanently abandoned. Hospitals will fail to meet ambitions on

staff retention and recruitment, while mental health services and cancer services will deteriorate.

"Theresa

May simply cannot carry on ignoring the dismal consequences for patient care

of
refusing to properly fund the NHS.

“Theresa
May and Philip Hammond must now take these heavyweight warnings seriously and
in the upcoming Budget finally provide the investment our NHS now desperately
needs.”

[The Prime Minister has at least four serious grounds to launch an investigation into breaches of the Ministerial Code by Priti Patel – Jon Trickett](#)

Jon

Trickett MP, Labour’s Shadow Minister for the Cabinet Office, commenting on
further reports about
Priti Patel’s secret meetings with members of a foreign Government, said:

“Tonight

Downing Street has confirmed that even after she was caught, Priti Patel was
far from frank in her meeting with the Prime Minister yesterday about her
secret meetings and discussions with members of a foreign Government.

“Incredibly,

Number 10 have confirmed that the first they knew that Priti Patel had
discussed giving aid to a foreign army was when it was reported today by the
BBC.

“The

Prime Minister has at least four serious grounds to launch an investigation
into breaches of the Ministerial Code by Priti Patel.

“She

should act now to launch an investigation of these serious breaches of the
ministerial code or explain why even given this she believes that Priti Patel
can stay in post.”

Jeremy Corbyn speech at the CBI Annual Conference

***CHECK
AGAINST DELIVERY***

Jeremy Corbyn MP, Leader of the Labour Party, speaking at the CBI Annual Conference today, said:

It's a pleasure to be with you here for the second year running.

And a good deal has changed since I came to your conference last year.

We've had a surprise General Election and to many people here, perhaps an even more surprising result. A result that returned a weak and divided Conservative Government and a Labour opposition stronger and more united than before.

We have also seen the terms of economic debate shift dramatically.

I put it to you last year that for too many people the economic system simply isn't working.

A system that has delivered rising inequality and falling living standards for the majority, when six million of those in work are earning less than the living wage.

It's a system in which large numbers of people have lost confidence.

And it's not hard to see why. The richest 10 per cent now own 900 times the wealth of the poorest 10 per cent and in recent years half of the increase in personal wealth has gone to the top 10 per cent.

I put it to you this year that a crucial reason for the surprising election result; the biggest turnaround in polls during an election campaign in British history, is that Labour went to the country with a vision that offered hope and change.

Our
manifesto, For the Many Not the Few, set out a fully costed programme to
build
an economy which gives everyone the chance of a secure and fulfilling life.

Since
the General Election in June the political establishment has finally begun to
catch up.

Calls
to end austerity now come from all sides in parliament.

Senior
cabinet members are taking their lead from Labour and pushing for more
radical
solutions to the housing and student debt crises.

Sajid
Javid advocates £50 billion of borrowing for investment in housing.

Jeremy
Hunt has broken ranks and called for an end to the public sector pay cap.

Few
would have predicted this a year ago. And of course we've yet to see if
they've
convinced the Chancellor.

It
is a measure of the essential pragmatism of business people that so many have
changed their outlook too.

Business people across the country have expressed to me a
growing awareness – and acceptance – that things need to change.

The London Chamber of Commerce recently called for councils to
be allowed to borrow freely to build housing.

We all know an economic model that allows a few to grow very
rich while the majority face falling incomes and rising indebtedness; that
leaves too many people in unfulfilling and insecure work; that is overly
reliant on one sector in one region of our country, is neither stable nor
sustainable.

And in this Living Wage Week, of all weeks, we have to be clear
that Britain needs a pay rise.

When too much of household income is going to pay debts or rent,
that's less money for consumers to spend on productive businesses. That's why
Labour backs a Real Living Wage and sensible controls on rents and debts.

Because
it isn't good for business either.

We understand that Labour has changed and you have changed.

But there is one thing that hasn't changed.

A year ago, we were just five months on from the referendum vote to leave the European Union. The Government's sluggish response to which had already created unprecedented uncertainty for business.

A year on, Article 50 has been triggered, Brexit negotiations are underway but businesses feel no closer to having the clarity about the direction of travel they desperately need.

Indeed, watching chaos and confusion grow at the heart of Government and Brexit negotiations stuck in stalemate, many of you probably feel that the situation is more uncertain and precarious than ever.

Time is running out. We know, as you do, that firms are deciding now whether to continue to invest in the UK, and that guarantees in key areas are needed now to stop firms from cutting the UK out of their business models.

A few weeks ago, you joined forces with Britain's other major business organisations, the Engineering Employers Federation, the Chamber of Commerce, the Institute of Directors and the Federation of Small Business, to ask the Government to heed the needs of business as they negotiate our exit from the European Union.

We agree. We need a Brexit that puts jobs and living standards first and it is Labour that has common ground with you on putting the needs of the economy front and centre stage.

We have common ground on the need for transitional arrangements to be agreed immediately so that businesses know they won't face a cliff-edge Brexit when the two year negotiating period is up.

Because let me be clear: to delay a transition deal until a final deal is agreed as the Prime Minister says she wants to do, is simply not good enough.

The prospect of sudden changes in the legal and regulatory environment in which people do business is affecting your decisions right now.

And

we have common ground on the threat of “no deal” which, contrary to the claims of the Secretary of State for International Trade, is potentially a nightmare scenario. One that involves tariffs on our food imports and our manufacturing exports, queues at our ports and a hard border in Northern Ireland with all the dangers that could bring.

The

fact that some in the cabinet want “no deal” to re-launch Britain as a race-to-the-bottom deregulated tax haven on the shores of Europe only adds to the risks.

And

we agree on the need to signal that the UK remains open to the rest of the world that Europe is not the “enemy” but our partner in a strong cooperative relationship for the future.

And

that EU citizens living in the UK are our friends and fellow workers, which is why the Government should immediately and unilaterally guarantee them full rights to remain here; in fact they should have done so months ago. And indeed Labour called for that in July of last year.

Like

you, we have always said that we respect the result of the referendum. Like you, we have always said that the economy, jobs and living standards should come first in the negotiations, which means it is crucial that the final deal maintains the benefits of the common market and the customs union.

I

promise you today between now and March 2019, we will use every opportunity we can find to put pressure on the Government to do the same.

But,

as Carolyn has so rightly pointed out, we mustn't use up all our energies on the Brexit negotiations – there is vital action to be taken at home too.

What

will be determined in the next two years is not just our relationship with the EU, but the kind of economy – and country – we want to live in.

A

bad Brexit deal risks exacerbating existing weaknesses in our economy – low investment, low productivity, low pay.

We

will be letting the country down if we don't seize on this period of change to tackle those weaknesses at their root causes by working together to give shape to a new economic model that will create a fairer, richer Britain for all.

I believe we share a great deal of common ground over how this should be done.

Again, I echo Carolyn; if we are to raise wages and living standards we must solve our productivity crisis.

And it is a crisis.

It continues to take a worker in Britain five days to produce what a worker in France or Germany produces in four.

If the OBR decides that our recent dismal productivity performance is not an aberration but the new normal, and revises down their projections when they report to Parliament later this month it will take a huge toll on our public finances – as the Institute for Fiscal Studies has pointed out.

It couldn't be clearer: our productivity crisis is making our country poorer.

The answer to our productivity crisis lies in investment, in infrastructure, in new technologies and in people.

Business investment is being held back by creaking infrastructure and a shortage of skilled workers. So Government must act first.

Yet under the Conservatives, crucial infrastructure investment has been delayed – from rail electrification to the Swansea Tidal Lagoon; the adult skills budget has been slashed. They even went into the election promising to cut per pupil schools funding in real terms.

The Chancellor should use his Autumn Budget to change direction, and invest for long-term growth.

That is what Labour has already pledged to do.

With

a National Transformation Fund to upgrade our country's infrastructure and reverse years of under-investment in the regions; investing in transport, energy and digital infrastructure right across the country.

We

will establish a National Investment Bank with a network of regional development banks that will provide patient finance for firms wanting to adopt and implement existing innovations and to develop new ones. We are a very creative country.

And

we'll build a National Education Service to ensure that, when businesses create skilled jobs, there are people able to fill them. And when businesses adopt new technologies, there are employees who know how to use them.

These

policies will help create the conditions businesses need to invest... but they will only deliver the improvements our economy needs if they are backed up by a bold industrial strategy.

Again,

this Government is failing to act. We have heard a lot of warm words on industrial strategy, but we are still waiting to hear how they will take it forward.

Labour's

industrial strategy, built on national missions – for energy transition and to increase R&D spending to 3 per cent of GDP by 2030 – will lay down the challenges to business, and provide the foundations on which they can be met.

We

will invest £1.3bn on R&D in our first two years in Government, to galvanise private investment, set up two new catapult centres for retail and metals, centres of collaboration and innovation, to drive productivity improvement and harness the £200bn spent by the public sector each year to boost local economies and supply chains, to bring prosperity to every region of the country.

This

is how we deliver properly funded public services in the long run, and ensure everyone earns enough to live on.

If

we get this right, it is not just our economy that will be stronger, but our political institutions and our social bonds as well.

We will, as you know, raise some taxes to pay for it, to ensure that our spending plans fit within the constraints of our fiscal credibility rule.

But when we do, we will be clear and open about our tax plans, as we were during the general election campaign. We won't do it by stealth.

And we will seek to improve the functioning of business taxation wherever possible by uprating business rates in line with CPI instead of RPI, moving to annual revaluations, and exempting new plant and machinery and by looking at staggering tax incentives for investment and innovation.

We will do this because a fair and functional taxation system is the only way to deliver the investment in infrastructure and skills that are so desperately needed across the country.

I'm sure everyone here will agree, providing good infrastructure and education is what responsible governments do.

And it's not just government that has a duty to be responsible, business does too. From ensuring their suppliers, often small businesses, are paid promptly, to ensuring they pay their taxes in full too.

The shocking revelations from the Paradise Papers today, yet again of widespread tax avoidance and evasion on an industrial scale must lead to decisive action and real change.

It is by no means all big businesses but these actions by a few undermine trust in all businesses.

And businesses are the victim too, not just reputationally but financially.

Those businesses that play by the rules and pay the taxes they owe are being undercut by those who don't.

The vital revenues government needs to fund an industrial strategy, good infrastructure and the world class education system we aspire to; these things can only be

delivered by fair taxation.

So
while we mustn't tarnish all businesses by the actions of the few, we also have
a duty to come down hard on those who are avoiding the responsibilities and give HM Revenue & Customs the resources it needs.

As
our Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell has set out this morning, we need a full public inquiry into tax avoidance and evasion, on and offshore, a register of companies and trusts, and who benefits from them, and a new tax enforcement unit in HMRC and an end to public contracts for companies abusing the system.

And
we will look at using a withholding tax where individuals or companies are involved in abusing the system and end public contracts for companies engaged in abusive tax avoidance.

Please understand the public anger and consternation at the scale of tax avoidance revealed yet again today. We are talking about tens of billions that are effectively being leached from our vital public services by a super-rich elite that holds the taxation system and the rest of us in contempt. We must take action now to put an end to this socially damaging and extortionately costly scandal.

And
there's another area where we all have a duty to act – and act now.

Faced
with the ongoing revelations about sexual harassment we should make this a turning point and a moment of real change. We must no longer allow anyone to be
abused in the workplace.

Such
abuse, sexism and misogyny is, sadly, very far from being confined to Hollywood
and the corridors of power, but is also widespread in our schools and universities, in our businesses and workplaces, in our newspapers and on our TV
screens. It is all around us.

That
must change and business has an essential role to play. All of you need to look
hard at yourselves, as we in the Labour Party are doing ourselves, to see how your processes and procedures can be improved. How it can be made easier for women to speak out and for victims to get the support they have a right to expect.

Businesses

can have a vital partner in rooting out injustice in the workplace – trade unions. They are crucial to taking on and rooting out sexual harassment and discrimination. And I would encourage each and every business serious about improving your workplace culture and tackling sexual discrimination at work to engage with trade unions.

Governments

also have other responsibilities – enforcing a fair and transparent regulatory framework so that, for example, businesses aren't destroyed by the likes of RBS abusing their power, providing for the health of our citizens and, yes, in some cases, running essential public utilities.

Because

every one of you in this room who knows what goes into seeing an idea brought to market or what it takes to survive the cut and thrust of consumer choice month to month, knows that privatised monopoly utilities are not real markets.

Where's the pressure for efficiency and innovation if consumers cannot go elsewhere when they are dissatisfied?

I

know some of you disagree and think that bringing some parts of the economy into public ownership won't be good for the reputation of business, but it's not good for the image of business when water companies pay out billions in dividend and interest payments through opaque financial arrangements, while households see their bills go up to pay for it.

It's

not good for business people if their employees have to spend huge amounts of time and money getting to and from work each day on expensive and unreliable services.

It

is not good for manufacturers to have among the most expensive energy in Europe, or see energy transition held back because the necessary investments to transform our energy grid are not being made.

And,

just as it wouldn't be good for business to be locked into inefficient funding arrangements that don't provide finance on the best terms available, or inflexible contracts that don't adapt to your needs, nor is it good for the public.

That's

why we will end the Private Finance Initiative – because PFI contracts have

over-charged the public to the tune of billions.

You
wouldn't put up with it and neither will we.

But
we won't let ending PFI hold up vital infrastructure investment. We'll end it to make sure that investment happens in a way that gives best value for money for the public, and in a way that better meets user needs.

This
isn't about being anti-business, anti-enterprise, or about closing ourselves off to the rest of the world.

It
is about deciding to attract business from across the world by creating world-class infrastructure that is efficiently funded, cheap and reliable energy, safe and efficient water and transport systems and a skilled and educated population.

Not
by allowing a select few to make monopoly profits from our essential utilities.

This
isn't a throwback to a bygone era; it's entirely in step with what is happening in the rest of the world. Some of the world's biggest economies – Germany, France, even the United States are deciding that key sectors such as energy and water are better off in public ownership. It's time for Britain to catch up.

Building
an economy for the many will mean making some big changes.

But
it will also mean an economy that is stronger, fairer and more stable and business people know more than anyone how important that is.

Common
ground on Brexit, common ground on investment, training and industrial strategy and a government that embraces its responsibilities and carries them out for the common good.

That's
what Labour offers you. That's what Labour offers Britain.

Thank
you.

Ends

Tory cuts to local government will see spending on youth services more than halved

Labour's Shadow Minister for Voter Engagement and Youth Affairs, Cat Smith MP, on the occasion of Youth Work Week, responding to new analysis which reveals that Tory cuts to local government will see spending on youth services more than halved, said:

"Youth workers are the unsung heroes of our communities, helping young people to develop the skills and confidence they need to build a positive future.

However, this analysis demonstrates how this Tory Government's ideologically driven cuts on local authorities have devastated the sector at a time when they are needed more than ever.

Once again we see how the Conservatives treat young people as a second thought. A Labour Government will ensure a Minister for Youth Affairs, who would coordinate youth policy and practice across departments, and be an advocate for young people in government."