

Tomorrow's Budget needs to see a real change of direction – McDonnell

John McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, speaking ahead of the Budget tomorrow, said:

"The Chancellor has already shown he doesn't live in the real world. That's why the Autumn Budget needs to be a real change of direction in economic policy.

"Instead of gimmicks such as driverless cars, or tricks to fiddle the figures just so Philip Hammond can pretend he is reaching his own targets, there must be a recognition of the emergency in our public services and an actual end to austerity.

"The Chancellor must also pause the roll out of Universal Credit, and have a complete reform. It won't be good enough just to reduce the number of weeks people are waiting, because we will still have families who won't be paid by Christmas and forced into poverty. We have already seen families faced with eviction due to this delay, so we need urgent action.

"Furthermore, this Budget cannot be one of empty promises and piecemeal measures. He must launch a full scale house-building programme and provide serious infrastructure funding across the whole country, as even his fellow Tory MPs have called for.

"The public sector pay cap must come to an end. We are the sixth richest country in the world and we cannot afford to have our dedicated public sector workers such as nurses, reliant on food-banks. The fact is that wages are not keeping up with prices, and many working families are struggling to make ends meet.

"If Philip Hammond can fund tax giveaways worth billions for the super-rich and big business, then he can properly fund our public services and public sector workers. Austerity is a political choice, not an economic necessity.

"If the Tories refuse to act, then they should step aside. The next Labour Government will provide the proper investment our country needs to build the high-wage, high-skilled economy of the future."