

Tory cuts driving crumbling state of our hospitals, Labour reveals

New research published today by the Labour Party reveals the shocking state of hospitals across the country.

Freedom of information requests were sent to every hospital trust in England. 170 trusts responded. The data shows:

- 76 hospital trusts in England revealed that incidents had occurred at their trust due to estates and infrastructure failures in 2018/19.
- Problems included sewage and water leaking on to hospital wards, broken lifts, and ceilings collapsing.
- Some incidents have affected patient care, often leading to the cancellation of appointments and leaving people waiting longer for vital treatment.

Specific shocking examples found include:

- In one Trust in the North West, there was a ceiling collapse on a side ward, water leaking from the ceiling on the top of the maternity landing and a lift broke down trapping two nurses inside.
- In one Trust in Yorkshire and the Humber, call bells were broken on a ward. Also, FOI data shows that faeces were coming through the floor on the ultrasound corridor.
- In one Trust in the West Midlands, a waste pipe above a ward broke, which resulted in waste leaking into the ward area
- In one London Trust, part of the Emergency Department was closed due to a "severe" sewage leak in December 2018.
- In one Trust in the West Midlands, Estates were trying to clear a drain, which resulted in dirt/faeces/slime spurting up through a sink. This landed on a patient's bed, and covered the floor and surrounding area. There was also a "severe" leak from the roof by the maternity unit. Store cupboards were soaked, and water was going into electric fittings.
- In one Trust in the South East, a lift which had initially had a jammed door, stopped working. Staff and patients were unable to use the lift and this impacted on patient care.
- In one London Trust, water poured on to a ward bed from the ceiling and patients had to be moved.
- In one East Midlands Trust, sewage was coming up through the drains

in bathrooms, water flooded into the ward corridor. Only one shower room was able to be used for 19 patients.

- In one East Midlands Trust, due to water leaking from pipes, there were delays to patients being operated on – operating time had to be reduced and some were cancelled, or re-located to other operating theatres.
- In one Trust in the East Midlands, several lifts were out of service. There was no access to the Coronary Care Unit for catering trolleys, bed or patients. A patient was left on the Clinical Decisions Unit in a wheelchair, as they were unable to access CCU for treatment.
- In one Trust in the South, a burst pipe meant no x-rays could be taken.
- In one Trust in the North West, a ceiling panel on a ward collapsed, but fortunately missed the patient.
- In one London Trust, people were trapped in a lift.
- Information received from one Trust in the West Midlands stated that there had been “ceiling leakage” and tiles falling off on numerous areas on a ward, and that on one occasion the labour ward was very cold, and they were unable to keep babies warm.
- In one Trust in the South East, lifts were not in action, making it impossible to get immobile patients upstairs – some were coming directly from clinic for urgent surgery and appointments had to be cancelled.

Infrastructure problems in hospitals come at a time when the Tories have failed to provide investment for capital in the NHS, leaving hospitals with a backlog of maintenance works.

The cost of eradicating ‘high risk’ backlog maintenance rose from £947 million in 2016/17 to more than £1 billion in 2017/18. The total backlog increased from £5.5 billion in 2016/17 to almost £6 billion in 2017/18.

Commenting on Labour’s findings, Jonathan Ashworth, Labour’s Shadow Health and Social Care Secretary, said:

“Years of Tory cuts are pushing hospitals to rack and ruin. From ceilings collapsing, sewage pipes bursting to central heating faltering, patient safety and care put at risk.

“The NHS now faces a staggering £6 billion repair bill, £3 billion of which is considered ‘high’ or ‘significant’ risk.

“Patients deserve to be treated in the very best quality health

facilities with the most up to date equipment, and yet the Tories have utterly failed to invest in the infrastructure capital budgets. Only Labour will give the NHS the funding it needs.”