

# Latest incoherent and inadequate proposals on customs arrangements are designed to gloss over Cabinet divisions – Starmer

**Keir**

**Starmer MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, commenting on the Government's latest proposals on customs arrangements, said:**

"These are incoherent and inadequate proposals designed to gloss over deep and continuing divisions within the Cabinet.

"Businesses, trade unions and the country need certainty about our future trading and customs arrangements. They also need a pragmatic and considered approach that delivers the best deal for Britain.

"Instead, the Cabinet remain split on key issues and cannot decide between two very different but equally unachievable options. The first proposal suggests "a new customs border with the EU" could be introduced without disrupting trade; the second suggests a new borderless customs partnership could somehow be agreed while Britain also signs external trade deals.

"These fantastical and contradictory proposals provide no guidance for negotiators or certainty for businesses. The proposals also make it less likely that necessary transitional arrangements will be in place by March 2019.

"Labour is clear that we need to retain the benefits of the Customs Union and avoid a cliff-edge for the British economy. That means committing now to strong transitional arrangements on the same basic terms we currently enjoy – including the Single Market and the Customs Union."

**Ends**

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## [This is yet another example of the Government's shameful record on social mobility – Angela Rayner](#)

**Angela**

**Rayner MP, Labour's Shadow Education Secretary**, responding to a Teach First report on access to university, said:

"This is yet another example of the Government's shameful record on social mobility.

"In the poorest postcodes in the country, just one in five young people get to university; meanwhile, more and more pupils from private and grammar schools are getting into higher education.

"After their failed attempt to reintroduce grammar schools, it's clear that the Tories have their heads in the sand on social mobility and need to wake up to the calamity they have created.

"By trebling tuition fees and cutting maintenance grants, ministers have made access to university so much harder for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

"The next Labour government will address the growing crisis of social mobility by abolishing tuition fees and bringing back maintenance grants to support students."

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## [Rebecca Long-Bailey response to the RAA announcement on Tata Steel](#)

**Rebecca**

**Long-Bailey MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy**, responding to the RAA announcement on Tata Steel, said:

"This

is a welcome announcement which finally puts an end to the months of uncertainty that tens of thousands of steelworkers have faced.

“Trade

unions representing steel workers have worked tirelessly to secure workers’ futures and protect Britain’s steel industry, which people and communities across the UK rely on. The company must ensure they continue to engage with unions so their members get the support and guidance they need.

“Labour

has stood up for steelworkers and fought to save our steel industry. Now it is

vital that Tata Steel, supported by the Government, follows through with their

commitment to invest in their whole steel business to protect jobs and secure the long-term future of UK steelmaking.”

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## [Labour calls on Government to make taking of “upskirt” photos illegal](#)

**Richard**

**Burgon MP, Labour’s Shadow Justice Secretary,** has written to David Lidington MP, the Justice Secretary, to call on the Government to make the taking of “upskirt” photographs a sexual offence in law.

In the

letter, Burgon echoes Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner Dame Vera Baird’s call for this necessary change and urges the Government to close the current gap in the law that exists.

Full text

of the letter from Richard Burgon MP to David Lidington MP

Dear

Secretary of State for Justice and Lord Chancellor,

I am writing

in support of the campaign, started by Gina Martin, to make disgraceful, invasive “upskirting” photographs a sexual offence in law.

The scope for

people to take “upskirting” photographs has clearly increased with developments

in mobile phone technology since the enactment of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

At present, there is a gap in the law that has allowed – and is continuing to allow – people who have taken such photographs in public places to escape prosecution. This needs to be changed. Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner Dame Vera Baird has also made the case for this necessary change.

I believe that in the country there is strong support for Gina Martin's campaign for this necessary change in the law.

The law must be changed so that women are protected, offenders are punished and potential offenders are deterred.

Given the very welcome public interest in – and support for – this campaign, I have made this letter public, and hope that you will publicly respond very soon with an announcement of plans to change the law so that the taking of “upskirting” photographs is a sexual offence in law.

Yours  
sincerely

Richard  
Burgon MP

Shadow  
Secretary of State for Justice & Shadow Lord Chancellor

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**[This government is failing to make any real impact on growing British exports and reducing our trade deficit – Barry Gardiner](#)**

**Barry Gardiner MP, Shadow Secretary of State for International Trade**, commenting on today's trade statistics release from the ONS, which shows UK trade performance for the year since the EU Referendum vote, said:

“Despite Liam Fox traversing the globe in search of new trade deals, the latest trade figures show that the monthly trade deficit is at the worst since November 2011. This government is failing to make any

real impact on growing British exports and reducing our trade deficit. In the twelve months since the EU Referendum and the creation of the Department for International Trade there has been no promised boom in trade as any increases in exports are closely matched by the increasing volume of imports and the total trade deficit has continued to widen.

“The Secretary of State’s overseas junkets have not materialised in tangible results as, in the last quarter, exports to non-EU countries have actually decreased by 1.4 per cent whilst exports to EU countries has increased by 2.0 per cent – a clear reminder of the need for the Government to prioritise our trading relationship with the EU.

“Globetrotting, sporadic arms sales and dependence on foreign exchange arbitrage opportunities is not a trade strategy – the Secretary of State must bring forward a coherent trade plan that sets out how he intends to grow British exports by integrating our industrial and international trade strategies in order to promote domestic industries.”