

Labour calls on the Government to address the injustice and damage caused by their unlawful Employment Tribunal Fees policy

Richard Burgon MP,
Labour's Shadow Justice Secretary has written to David Lidington MP,
Secretary
of State for Justice, following Unison's Supreme Court victory, where the
Employment Tribunal Fees introduced by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat
coalition were declared unlawful, to call on the Government to make sure that
all those who were treated unfairly are now able to access the justice they
deserve.

In the letter, Burgon
condemns the Government's shameful decision to unlawfully restrict access to
justice
for its own citizens, and calls for answers on how much public money was
wasted
defending their unjust policy, as well as a Government commissioned
independent
review of the effects on access to justice of the fees in other Courts and
Tribunals.

Full text of the
letter

Dear Secretary of State,

I'm writing to you
following the Supreme Court's Judgment yesterday that the Employment Tribunal
Fees introduced by the Conservative / Liberal Democrat Coalition in 2013 are
unlawful and impede access to justice.

This means the Ministry
of Justice has been operating unlawfully for four years. Given this, it is
now
vital that you take urgent steps to address the injustice, unfairness and
damage caused by your unlawful policy.

Your junior Minister
Dominic Raab MP had no other option than to concede that the Government will
have to "take immediate steps to stop charging fees in employment tribunals
and
put in place those who have paid".

Please could you inform

me:

- How much money from the public purse your Government has spent defending its unlawful and unjust policy?
- When the Government will be issuing a full and unequivocal apology to working people and their families for deliberately and unlawfully blocking their access to justice?
- When the Government will be issuing a full and unequivocal apology to people and families who had to undertake disclosure of their personal financial circumstances in an intrusive and even humiliating level of detail as part of the Government's failed 'Fee Remission' Scheme for Employment Tribunals?
- By what date the Government will have fully reimbursed all those who were unlawfully required to pay Employment Tribunal Issue Fees and Employment Tribunal Hearing Fees?
- Whether your Government will be setting up a scheme, system or arrangements to ensure that all those who were unlawfully treated by their employers but didn't issue an Employment Tribunal case because of the applicable Issue Fee, or didn't proceed to the Employment Tribunal Hearing because of the applicable Hearing Fee, are restored to the position in which they would have been had it not been for your Government's unlawful policy?
- Given the Supreme Court's Judgment states that "In order for the fees to be lawful, they have to be set at a level that everyone can afford, taking into account the availability of full or partial remission", will your Government now commission an independent review of the effects on access to justice of the fees in other Courts and Tribunals? Given your Government's record of denial in relation to your unlawful Employment Tribunal Fees, it is clear that your Government cannot be trusted to carry out this review itself.

Congratulations are due to Unison for righting this wrong at the Supreme Court. It is just a shame that the Government did not listen to the trade unions, the legal community, the Labour Party or myself. If the Government had done so, it would not have found itself in the shameful position it now does – found to have unlawfully restricted access to justice for its own citizens.

Given the level of public interest in this matter, I have made this letter public. I believe it would also be in the public interest for your reply to be made public.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Burgon MP

Shadow Secretary of State
for Justice & Shadow Lord Chancellor

[The prison crisis is a stark example of failure by the Conservative government – Richard Burgon](#)

Richard Burgon MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Justice, responding to the latest Ministry of Justice statistics, said:

"The crisis in our prisons is a stark example of failure by the Conservative government. Violence and assaults on staff are now at record levels. This has resulted in a failure to rehabilitate prisoners, meaning the system is failing to keep the public safe.

"We have also seen record numbers of prisoners being released by mistake. With staff over worked and underpaid it is hardly surprising that our prisons are in such a desperate state.

"The public and those who work in our prisons deserve better."

[More than half a million pupils are now crammed into supersize classrooms](#)

Labour today publishes analysis of overcrowding in English primary schools with more than half a million pupils being taught in super-size classes. It reveals:

- 542,679 children are now in super-size classes in primary school, as class-sizes continue to rise
- 39,000 primary pupils are in classes of over 36 pupils and 16,571 are now in class sizes of at least 40
- The mounting pressure on school places is now starting to hit secondary schools, with figures showing an increase in the number of pupils in very large classes in the last year
- The South East and North West are the two worst hit areas with latest figures showing over 90,000 primary school pupils in classes over 30
- The number of infant school children (between the age of 5 and 7 years) in classes over 30 has almost trebled since 2010

Commenting

on the figures, Shadow Schools Minister, Mike Kane, said:

“These figures expose seven years of Tory failure in our schools. The number of pupils being taught in super-sized classes is skyrocketing while schools face the first real terms cuts to their budgets in a generation.

“This situation is unsustainable. If the Tories wanted to give every child the education they deserve they would ensure that children were not crammed into super-sized classes.

“A Labour Government would ensure that schools are built where they are needed, and cap class sizes at 30 for all primary school pupils.”

[There should be no attempt to reform the immigration system until this report has been published and debated – Abbott](#)

Diane Abbott MP, Labour’s Shadow Home Secretary welcomed

the Government's commissioning of a report on the role of EU nationals in the UK economy and society and said:

"There is far too much heat and not enough light about immigration, so any truly objective and well-informed analysis must be welcome.

"We already know that immigrants, both EU and non-EU, make a huge contribution to the economy and to wider society. They occupy both high-skilled, high-wage jobs and lower-skilled, lower paid ones, adding value across a wide range of economic sectors. They help make the UK more internationally competitive, and sectors with staff shortages, such as the NHS, social care and agriculture, would be in serious difficulty without them.

"The report should be published. There must be no repeat of the buried Home Office reports into international students, or the Saudi funding of terrorism. And there should be no attempt to reform the immigration system until the report has been published and debated."

Ends

Labour's objective is tariff free access to the single market – Starmer

Keir Starmer MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, speaking at a Labour in the City event this evening, said:

"Labour's objective is tariff free access to the single market, no new red tape at customs and a deal that works for services as well as goods. It is vital that we retain the benefits of the single market and the customs union. How we achieve that is secondary to the outcome and should be part of the negotiations. We need to be flexible in our approach and not sweep options off the table."

Ends