

## [John McDonnell response to latest ONS Public Sector Finance figures](#)

**John McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor**, commenting on the latest Public Sector Finance figures published this morning by the ONS, which show that £128.5 billion was added to the national debt since June 2016 and public sector net borrowing increased by £2 billion last month compared with June 2016, said:

“These figures reveal the continued failure of Philip Hammond and the Conservatives. Seven years of Tory cuts have left our economy weaker with falling wages, yet the deficit has not been eliminated two years after they claimed it would be, and the national debt continues to rise.

“The Chancellor should stop handing out massive tax giveaways to big businesses and the super-rich, and instead give our hard-pressed public sector workers a pay rise; so we can end the travesty in our country of nurses having to rely on food banks.

“Only a Labour Government will set out a serious plan for the public finances with strategic investment underpinned by our Fiscal Credibility Rule, to help build the high wage, high skill economy of the future for the many not the few.”

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## [That there are apprentices who are paid less than minimum wage is unacceptable – Rebecca Long-Bailey](#)

**Rebecca Long-Bailey MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy**, responding to reports that nearly one in five apprentices are being paid less than the minimum wage, said:

“That there are apprentices who are paid less than minimum wage is unacceptable, that the practice is on the rise is shocking.

“The Government has not taken sufficient steps to enforce payment of the minimum wage. Employment rights are only safe in Labour hands.”

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## Sharon Hodgson response to recent developments on the inquiry into the Contaminated Blood Scandal

**Sharon Hodgson MP, Labour's Shadow**

**Minister for Public Health**, responding

to recent developments on the inquiry into the Contaminated Blood Scandal, said:

"The Government is running roughshod over the affected community, who have campaigned for justice for so long.

"The community have not been sufficiently consulted on the terms of reference of the inquiry and the Government has left open the possibility that the Department of Health could lead on it, despite the Department's role in the contaminated blood scandal.

"Over recent days there has been growing opposition from the affected community, campaigners, organisations and MPs from across Parliament. The Department of Health should have no involvement in the inquiry and it should be transferred to another Department.

"Ministers must now keep their promises, place the affected community genuinely at the centre of this inquiry, and ensure their views are taken seriously."

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## The lack of progress in these negotiations is deeply concerning and does not bode well for the future – Keir Starmer

**Keir Starmer MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Exiting**

**the European Union**, commenting on the second round of Brexit talks, said:

"The lack of progress in these negotiations is deeply concerning and does not bode well for the future. On issues such as the rights of EU

citizens in the UK and UK citizens in Europe, Labour has been calling for action since July last year. 12 months later, after having been promised a swift resolution of the issue, we learn today that there remain “fundamental divergences” on this key issue. This means more waiting and more anxiety for millions of families.

“The lack of progress on this and other issues also calls into question whether phase two of the negotiations can commence in October.

“That will trigger deep concern for businesses and communities across the U.K, who need much greater certainty and reassurance than they are getting from this Government.

“The reality is that we have a Government that is unprepared, divided and incapable of securing a good deal for Britain. We urgently need a fresh approach.”

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## [Diane Abbott response to the latest Home Office data on police numbers and crime in England and Wales](#)

“This a damning indictment of the Tory record.

“The Tories have cut police officer numbers again in the latest 12 months and now there are well over 20,000 fewer than in 2010. And despite promising to protect budgets, they continue to cut funding even as a senior figures in policing line up to warn they are overstretched and struggle to cope with demand.

“Now police have recorded their highest number of crimes in a decade, including over a million violent offences, and yet today’s figure also reveal a shocking fall in the rate of charges and summonses.

“The Tories simply aren’t allowing the police to protect the public. Labour in government will tackle rising crime. We pledge to bring back 10,000 officers. It’s what the police need and the public deserve.”