

There is great untapped potential here for exports and growth – Gardiner

Barry Gardiner MP, Shadow Secretary of State for International Trade, responding to today's announcement of a partnership between UKEF and high street banks, **said**:

"Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of our economy, but have been neglected for too long. Lack of adequate export finance continues to be a big barrier to trade for British SMEs, which make up to 60 percent of private sector jobs, but currently only one in five exports. There is great untapped potential here for exports and growth.

"Labour has repeatedly called for more to be done to support and ensure that UK Export Finance (UKEF) is broadened away from arms and big ticket items exclusively, and in our General Election manifesto we committed to championing SME export interests.

"Today's announcement from the government is a welcome agreement with us. However, export finance underwritten by British taxpayers should be subject to the most stringent scrutiny, risk assessment and ethical controls. Banks should not be allowed to pass ordinary lending risks to the taxpayer, nor should they be able to undertake undue risk under this scheme.

"This initiative should be used to support the growth in strategic sectors for the future of the UK economy. It should work in tandem with our industrial strategy so that taxpayer subsidised export credit does not put British industries and British jobs at risk."

The public has a right to know if any governments, foreign or domestic

organisations or individuals are funding extremism in this country – Diane Abbott

Diane Abbott MP, Labour's Shadow Home Secretary, responding to the Government's decision to not publish the extremism funding report in full, said:

"The public has a right to know if any governments, foreign or domestic organisations or individuals are funding extremism in this country, and what the UK government intends to do to prevent that.

"Of course, security intelligence should not be compromised but this is easily achieved by redaction and other means. The Government would never have commissioned this report if it considered this problem insurmountable.

"Instead, there is a strong suspicion this report is being suppressed to protect this Government's trade and diplomatic priorities, including in relation to Saudi Arabia. The only way to allay those suspicions is to publish the report in full."

There is clear and strong cross-party concern about leaving Euratom – Paul Blomfield

Paul

Blomfield MP, Labour's Shadow Minister for Brexit, speaking after a Westminster Hall debate today on the UK's future membership of Euratom, said:

"This is yet another important debate that the Brexit department has dodged, instead sending a Business Minister who was unable to provide any answers.

"The former Chancellor has indicated that David Davis and Greg Clark were overruled on continuing membership of Euratom by the Prime Minister. Reports from David Davis' former chief of staff suggested that this was because of the Prime

Minister's absolutist and obsessional stance on the ECJ.

"There is clear and strong cross-party concern about leaving Euratom. It is time for David Davis to clarify if he is content to allow the Prime Minister's reckless red line, threatening jobs and cancer treatments, to stand."

[The Tories have completely failed to deliver an energy system that works for people, businesses or our environment – Rebecca Long-Bailey](#)

Rebecca

Long-Bailey, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, responding

to the Citizens Advice Bureau report calling for £7.5 billion of profit made by energy network operators to be returned to bill payers, said:

"The Citizens Advice Bureau's figures showing that energy networks have made over £7.5 billion unjustified profit over an 8 year period, are quite simply eye watering. The Tories have completely failed to deliver an energy system that works for people, businesses or our environment.

"It is simply unacceptable that customers are forced to accept such costs in their bills. They have no choice, there is no option to shop around as these companies hold a monopoly over the network, which is why Labour proposed to gain greater public control and transparency over these companies in our manifesto.

"The Government must direct Ofgem to take action on this unjustified behaviour immediately. Sadly, despite the Government promising to cap energy bills during the General Election, they have already rowed back on such strong action under pressure from the Big Six energy companies."

We welcome the overall increase in employment, but are deeply concerned that millions have faced a real terms pay cut under this Government – Debbie Abrahams

Debbie

Abrahams MP, Labour's Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary, commenting on today's

Labour Market Statistics, said:

"We

welcome the overall increase in employment, but are deeply concerned that millions have faced a real terms pay cut under this Government.

"The

cost of basic essentials continues to rise as real wages decline under the Conservatives. Millions are struggling to get by while Theresa May hands £1 billion to the DUP to keep herself in a job.

"Too

many people also continue to face barriers to getting a job on the basis of their age, ethnicity, disability or where they live. These same groups bear the brunt of this Government's failed austerity plans.

"A Labour government will implement a real Living Wage of £10 per hour, and bring an immediate end to Tory austerity."