

[A victory for everyone who has campaigned to protect live music – Tom Watson MP](#)

Tom Watson MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, commenting on changes to planning regulations around music venues, said:

"This is great news for music venues, artists and music lovers, and a victory for everyone who has campaigned to protect live music. John Spellar deserves huge credit for bringing his private members' bill forward and building such a broad coalition of support. The campaign mobilised the whole of the UK's music industry to call for change – and it won.

"I'm delighted that this policy from Labour's 2017 manifesto is being accepted by the Government. We must now all make sure that the commitments made today are carried forward as promised by Ministers, so that new building developments take the needs of existing music venues into account."

[Peter Dowd MP responds to National Audit Office report](#)

Peter Dowd MP, Labour's Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, commenting on the NAO's report out today on the costs and benefits of the Public Finance Initiative (PFI), said:

"The National Audit Office confirms that, not only is there little evidence of the benefits of private finance procurement, but also that it "results in additional costs compared with publicly financed procurement".

"According to the NAO's analysis of a schools building project, costs under the Tories' new PF2 schemes are 40% higher than through direct government funding.

"Worryingly,

despite this and the Office for Budget Responsibility's description of PFI as a "fiscal illusion", it seems that the Treasury has actively decided against removing budgetary incentives which exist in favour of PFI.

"Today's report only further demonstrates this Tory government's continued commitment to fleecing tax payers for the benefit of large PFI firms. It also raises more questions over the use of PFI in a week in which the Carillion scandal has left many fearing for their jobs and standard of their public services.

"The next Labour government will draw a line under the failed PFI approach to public investment, and will replace it by a transparent and accountable approach, which will reduce the costs and deliver significant savings to the taxpayer."

Ends

[100,000 stuck in ambulances this winter 'entirely unacceptable' – Jonathan Ashworth](#)

Labour's analysis of the latest NHS England winter data reveals that over 100,000 patients have been stuck in the back of ambulances this winter.

Labour's analysis further reveals that almost 25,000 patients have been forced to wait longer than one hour. The recommended ambulance handover time according to NHS Improvement is 15 minutes.

Jonathan Ashworth MP, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, responding to Labour's analysis of ambulance delays, said:

"Despite the brilliant efforts of our NHS staff, these findings reveal the uncomfortable reality for many patients this winter. It is unacceptable that over 100,000 patients have been stuck in the back of ambulances for over 30 minutes, a waiting time which is more than double the recommendation of NHS Improvement.

“Under

the Tories bed numbers have been cut by over 14,000, and as a result bed occupancy has remained at dangerously high levels this winter. Last week it was

94.9 per cent, which is nearly 10 per cent higher than the recommended safe level.

“Labour

will give our health service the funding it needs to remain a world class service for all.”

Ends

[This new attempt to address the refugee crisis in Calais is in reality an admission of failure – Abbott](#)

Diane Abbott MP, Labour’s Shadow Home Secretary, speaking in response to reports of a new deal on Calais refugees, said:

“This new attempt to address the refugee crisis in Calais is in reality an admission of failure.

“We have repeatedly been told that security measures would solve the problem, but it has just shifted it from Calais to Sangatte and back to Calais again.

“We need humane treatment of all these people, safe and legal routes for genuine refugees and the UK Government needs to honour our moral obligations by taking our fair share of refugees.”

[Today’s findings are damning indictment on Government’s failure to tackle gender pay gap – Butler](#)

Dawn Butler MP, Labour’s Shadow Minister for Women and Equalities, commenting on reports by the ONS and the Young Women’s Trust on the gender pay gap, said:

"Today's findings are a damning indictment on the Government's failure to tackle the gender pay gap. While the Government claims progress, this latest analysis exposes severe work inequalities faced by women across the country and it is clear that we need urgent action to address it.

"This year marks 100 years since some women were allowed to vote for the first time. Although much has been achieved since this historic moment, there is still a lot of progress to be made in terms of gender equality and achieving equal pay is one of them.

"Addressing the barriers that contribute to the gender pay gap is key to this. Labour will make it a priority to tackle discrimination in the workplace and provide free childcare. We will close the gender pay gap and introduce a civil enforcement system to ensure compliance with gender pay auditing. It is not right that women across the country face this unfair treatment."