

## [These statistics show a worrying increase in both poverty and inequality – Debbie Abrahams](#)

**Debbie**

**Abrahams MP, Labour's Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary**, commenting on the Households Below Average Income statistics, said:

"These statistics show a worrying increase in both poverty and inequality. Four million children and two million older people are now living below the breadline. Those living with a disabled person are more likely than ever to be struggling to make ends meet.

"This is a direct result of this Government's seven wasted years of austerity and punitive social security cuts.

"The Tories' shocking failure to tackle the increasing costs of basic essentials, stagnating wages and their ruthless slashing of social security is leaving working families worse off up to 2020."

"Labour would reverse cuts to in-work support, ban the exploitative zero hours contracts being used on hundreds of thousands of workers, and guarantee a real Living Wage."

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## [Tory Government is not doing enough to ensure young people are on the electoral register – Cat Smith](#)

**Cat**

**Smith MP, Labour's Shadow Minister for Voter Engagement and Youth Affairs**, commenting on today's Electoral Registration Statistics, said:

"While the increase in electoral registration numbers following the EU referendum is welcome, this Tory Government is still not doing enough to ensure that young people are on the register.

“That is why the Lords voted in favour of a Labour motion to the Higher Education and Research Bill, requiring universities to give students the option to register to vote when they sign up at university.

“If the Tories are serious about making every voice matter they need to keep this sensible addition when the Bill comes back to the Commons.”

**Ends**

**Notes to editors:**

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The total number of UK parliamentary electors increased by just over 1 million (2.3%) between December 2015 and December 2016, reflecting the high levels of public engagement with the EU referendum. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/elections/electoralregistration/bulletins/electoralstatisticsforuk/2016>

. A study from the Electoral Commission in 2014 found that young people were a particularly under-represented group on the electoral register [http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/169889/Completeness-and-accuracy-of-the-2014-electoral-registers-in-Great-Britain.pdf](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/169889/Completeness-and-accuracy-of-the-2014-electoral-registers-in-Great-Britain.pdf)

. Before the Conservatives rushed the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration, students were automatically enrolled by their universities. However, the Electoral Administration Act of 2013 did not provide for a suitable student registration to be put in place when the old system of household registration was abolished.

. On Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March the House of Lords voted in favour of Baroness Royall’s amendment to the Higher Education and Research Bill. The amendment was passed, defeating the Government, by a majority of 200 to 189. The amendment would require universities to offer students the opportunity to register to vote at the point of enrolment or re-registration as a student at their university, a proposal first made by Paul Blomfield MP in the Commons.

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# John McDonnell response to the Government's u-turn on £2 billion NICs rise in the Budget

**John**

**McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor,**

responding to the Government's u-turn on its £2 billion NICs rise in the Budget

last week, said:

"This

is a humiliating reversal for the Chancellor forced upon him by Labour's opposition. His authority is now shredded after just one Budget, and he tore up

a manifesto commitment to do it.

"We

welcome the Government's decision to finally listen to Labour's calls made in Jeremy Corbyn's Budget response along with those of business groups like the Federation of Small Businesses to not go ahead with an unfair £2bn tax rise on

low and middle earners. But they should never have been placed in this position

to start with, and now we face yet another Tory Budget only a year on with a blackhole in the billions. In 2015, we had the tax credit shambles. In 2016, we

had Personal Independence Payments reversal. Now in 2017 we have the u-turn on

National Insurance Contributions.

"There will be millions of working people who are now breathing a sigh of relief, but it is the Chancellor who should be holding his breath as this episode throws up urgent questions that he and the Cabinet must now answer.

"Did the

Prime Minister or the rest of the Cabinet, who must have seen the Budget in advance and known this measure was to be implemented, raise their concerns with

the Chancellor before he announced it, worrying millions of families? It was in

the weekend papers before the Budget so they can't say they were unaware it was

to happen.

"This is also the second year we have had a Tory Budget with a black hole in it

worth billions. This is not acceptable. What will he do to fill the shortfall

in a Budget he delivered less than a week ago without pursuing unfair tax increases or further cuts to public services? As the Budget will still see working people £1,400 worse off under the Government.

"On the day the Brexit Secretary has admitted that he hasn't looked into the costs of the Prime Minister's negotiating strategy, this is yet more proof that there is disarray at the top of a government clearly making things up as they go along.

"We need answers from the Chancellor and accountability at the top of government. In no workplace would such practices be allowed to continue, and it should not be allowed from those responsible for the public finances. Labour's new roundtable on self-employment will bring together business organisations, trade unions and self-employed groups to lay out a serious and realistic strategy to provide a fair deal for the self-employed at a time of major labour market changes. We are proud to be the party of working people, small businesses, and the self-employed."

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## [The Government is recklessly talking up the idea of crashing out of the EU with no deal – Keir Starmer](#)

**Keir**

**Starmer MP, Labour's Shadow Brexit Secretary**, responding to David Davis' admission that the Government has not carried out an assessment of the economic impact of leaving the EU without a deal, said:

"The Government is recklessly talking up the idea of crashing out of the EU with no deal. They have repeated the mantra that 'no deal is better than a bad deal'.

"But we now know they have made no assessment of the economic impact of the Prime Minister failing to secure a deal.

"What's clear, from the CBI and others, is that there is no result that would be

worse

for the British economy than leaving with no deal; no deal would be the worst possible deal. The Government should rule out this dangerous and counter-productive threat before Article 50 is triggered.”

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## Ministers urgently need to come up with credible and comprehensive strategy to minimise prevalence of lung diseases – Sharon Hodgson

**Sharon**

**Hodgson MP, Labour’s Shadow Minister for Public Health**, reacting to the British Lung Foundation’s report into the economic cost of lung disease in the UK, said:

“Lung disease is a major health issue here in our country. The British Lung Foundation’s eye-opening report today is an important step in highlighting the staggering and rising cost of this illness. There is not only a financial toll for our society but for the NHS as well. It is so important that we do all we can to address the various lung-related illnesses and diseases that people face and make inroads into improving respiratory health.

“Ministers urgently need to come up with a credible and comprehensive strategy to minimise the prevalence of lung diseases in our country, and also to reduce the costs of this illness on our society and our already stretched NHS.

“The cost of lung disease in the UK is getting worse by the year and this enormous human and financial impact just can’t be allowed to continue. The Government must be much more proactive in raising awareness among the public and investing in preventative health measures which can head off the risks of lung disease in years to come.”