

[NHS recruits being driven away before they've even started – Jonathan Ashworth](#)

Jonathan Ashworth MP, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, responding to official UCAS figures published today which show that applications for undergraduate nursing degrees starting in September 2017 are down 23 percent compared with the previous year, said:

"The Government have been warned repeatedly that cutting bursaries and funding for student nurses would cut off the future supply of NHS staff. Now we have the proof that those warnings were right – 23 percent fewer people have applied to study nursing this year.

"Misguided reductions in training places under the Tory Government, combined with a never-ending pay squeeze, have left the NHS dangerously short of staff. Patients are seeing wards closed, operations cancelled and treatments delayed. Now the new recruits which the health service so desperately needs are being driven away before they've even started.

"The staff are the lifeblood of our NHS. They give their all to keep the system going in the face of underfunding and mismanagement by the Tories. The Government ought to get a grip, show our nursing students that their time and commitment is really valued, and give them the support they need when they're setting out on their careers."

[It's welcome news that simplifying fares will be trialled but it is clear that this is just tinkering around the](#)

edges – Andy McDonald

Andy

McDonald MP, Labour's Shadow Transport Secretary, commenting on reports that reforms to the rail fare system will be trialled this May, said:

"It's welcome news that simplifying fares will be trialled but it is clear that this is just tinkering around the edges.

"Privatised rail has created a fragmented system with a jumble of operators offering a complicated array of fares for passengers to navigate.

"Passengers don't want to shop around for tickets, they want to get from A to B for the cheapest price. This is why Labour will bring our railways back into public ownership, creating an integrated national network with simple and affordable fares for all."

John McDonnell MP responds to Resolution Foundation Report

John

McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, commenting in the Resolution Foundation report out today, which shows that Britain is on course for the biggest increase in inequality since Thatcher, said:

"This report is damning of the unfair economic policies of this Chancellor, as the gap between working families and a wealthy few gets wider, with the poor getting poorer and the rich getting richer. It demonstrates to us all once again that the economy under a Tory government will be rigged for those at the top, with poor and middle income households facing their worst Parliament for income growth since the 1960s.

"Labour called on the Government at the Autumn Statement to end the unfair cuts to in work benefits, whilst they were going ahead with tax giveaways to a wealthy minority, but Philip Hammond chose to carry on with the work of his predecessor.

"It is becoming clearer by the day that

working families will be forced to pay for a Tory Brexit that favours the rich and not the rest of us, as our country faces its biggest rise in inequality since Margaret Thatcher.

“The next Labour government would rewrite the rules of our economy in favour of working families, with a real living wage expected to be £10 an hour by 2020, and proper investment to ensure no one and no community is left behind.”

[Sarah Champion responds to posthumous pardons for thousands of gay men](#)

Sarah

Champion MP, Labour’s Shadow Secretary of State for Women and Equalities, commenting on the posthumous pardons for thousands of gay men as Turing’s Law receives Royal assent, said:

“The Government’s decision on pardons is welcome and long overdue. Sadly, nothing can undo the suffering of those men convicted, but at least they, or their families, will now be able to clear their name.

“I hope this announcement will bring some comfort. However, with reported incidents of hate crime against the LGBT community increasing, high levels of LGBT homelessness and cuts to LGBT youth services across the country, we still have such a long way to go in terms of real LGBT equality.”

[Richard Burgon responds to Government’s publication of its employment tribunal fees review](#)

Richard

Burgon MP, Labour’s Shadow Justice Secretary, responding to the Government’s publication of its employment tribunal fees review, said:

“Whatever ministers might say the reality is that the Employment Tribunal fees which

they introduced in 2013 were intended to weaken workers' rights and safeguard unscrupulous bosses.

"The Tories' intransigence in relation to sticking with the Employment Tribunal fees is bad news for working people and bad news for employers who play by the rules. Labour's policy is clear: a Labour Government will abolish Employment Tribunal fees which have seen a fall of around 70 per cent in cases being brought."