

Nearly 20,000 badgers have been culled this year, the highest number ever – David Drew

David

Drew MP, Labour's Shadow Minister for the Environment, Food and Rural affairs, commenting on

the Government's release of badger cull statistics today, said:

"The

Government have released these high figures on the first day of Christmas recess. Nearly 20,000 badgers have been culled this year, the highest number ever, as part of an unsafe and unscientific badger cull.

"These

figures show that the Government failed to meet its targets and has adjusted target numbers up and down for every single cull zone, raising serious questions about the accuracy of current badger population estimates.

"In

the same month as announcing a Bill on animal welfare, this Government have overseen a doubling in the number of badgers killed compared to last year.

It's

clear that despite their warm words, the Tories still have a serious problem when it comes to animal welfare.

"Labour

calls on the Government to halt the badger cull across England and formally review its policy on how to tackle bovine TB."

Labour criticise Government for doing nothing about Bombardier tariffs imposed by US – Owen Smith

Owen Smith MP, Labour's Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary, criticising the failure of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to act on the Bombardier Tariff imposed by the US Department of Commerce, said:

"The Government has let these workers down again and again by not taking a hard enough line with Boeing and the US Government.

“Staff and suppliers of Bombardier in Belfast are rightly concerned about this week’s announcement from the US Department of Commerce.

“The Government haven’t done anything on this issue when they should be doing all they can to see this decision reversed.”

Government defeat in a landmark court case against PIP legislation – Debbie Abrahams

Debbie Abrahams MP, Shadow Work and Pensions

Secretary, commenting on the Government defeat in a landmark court case against “discriminatory” Personal Independence Payment (PIP) legislation, said:

“This landmark ruling is a damning indictment of the Government’s discriminatory approach to PIP support and its refusal to make this support available to people with mental health conditions. So much for the Prime Minister’s commitment to deliver parity of esteem for mental health.

“When the Government should have been listening to successive court rulings on PIP payments and correcting injustices for people with debilitating mental health conditions, they decided to undermine the legal basis for the judgments and introduce emergency legislation. This was a step too far, even for this Tory Government.

“Labour is committed to overturn the emergency regulations and make PIP available to people with mental health conditions, as well as scrapping the PIP assessments to develop a personalised, holistic assessment process which provides each individual with support and a tailored plan.”

Ends

[“Appalling winter downturn” as almost 50,000 patients languish in ambulances for over 30 minutes](#)

Labour’s analysis of the latest weekly winter data (11 December to 17 December) released today by NHS England reveals that in the first month of winter:

- 46,993 patients have been stuck in the back of ambulances for over 30 minutes and 9,775 have had to wait longer than one hour. There has been an 86% rise in the number of delays for over one hour in just the past two weeks as the cold snap has hit.
- Average bed occupancy has risen at an alarming rate. Last week it averaged at 95%- a 0.7% increase since winter began. This is 10% higher than the recommended safe level of 85%.
- There have already been 105 diverts from A&E Departments.

Jonathan Ashworth MP, Labour’s Shadow Health Secretary, responding to Labour’s analysis of the first month of winter, said:

“Patients should be under no illusions: there has been an appalling winter downturn across our NHS over the past month.

“Despite the heroic efforts of our brilliant NHS staff, it’s unacceptable that so many patients have been stuck in the back of ambulances for such a long time.

“With vacancies of 100,000 across the NHS, alongside the biggest financial squeeze in its history, patients are paying the price for Theresa May’s neglect of the NHS this winter.”

[John McDonnell responds to Public Sector Finance figures](#)

John McDonnell MP, Labour’s Shadow Chancellor, commenting on Public Sector Finance figures published today by the ONS, said:

“These figures are further bad news just before Christmas following on from the IMF’s gloomy outlook issued yesterday. They only remind us yet again of the broken Tory promises to eliminate the deficit by 2015. The national debt

continues to grow despite the tricks the Chancellor attempted in his Budget last month with Housing Association debt to hide his failure on the economy. This continued failure by the Tory Government over these past seven years is simply unacceptable.

“These figures today reaffirm why we need an urgent change of course next year, halting the growing emergency in our public services and ending the failed Tory austerity cuts.

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

Ends