

[End of an era for Murdochs who after decades of aggressive empire expansion are now in retreat – Watson](#)

Tom Watson MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, commenting on the news that Disney are to buy most of 21st Century Fox, said:

"This is the end of an era for the Murdochs who after decades of aggressive empire expansion are now in retreat.

"The decision to sell off key assets follows their UK business being engulfed in a phone hacking scandal, and ongoing revelations about sexual harassment at Fox News in the USA – scandals which have been in sharp focus recently thanks to the Murdochs' attempted takeover of Sky.

"It's important for Disney, a highly respected global media brand, that they do not allow the toxic corporate culture we have seen in the Murdoch empire to contaminate their business and tarnish their reputation.

"We hope that the company will ensure that no one who still has questions to answer over criminal conduct or corporate governance failure in the Murdochs' businesses is allowed into the new entity.

"We wait to see what impact this proposed merger will have on the attempt by 21st Century Fox to buy Sky, but the Competition and Markets Authority needs to continue its investigation and ensure that the proposed deal does not threaten media plurality or broadcasting standards."

[Shocking impact of cold snap revealed with 27% increase in patients stuck in ambulances for over an hour](#)

Labour reveals "shocking" impact of cold snap with 27% increase in patients stuck in ambulances for over an hour

Labour's analysis of the latest weekly winter data (4 December to 10 December) released today by NHS England reveals almost 2,500 patients were stuck in ambulances

for
over an hour in just one week.

Labour's
analysis of the latest NHS England combined performance data also reveals a shocking 62% increase in the number of patients waiting longer than 18 weeks for operations in just seven years.

Jonathan

Ashworth MP, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, responding to the latest NHS Weekly Winter and Monthly Combined Performance statistics, said:

"Last
week's cold snap demonstrated once again the crisis facing our NHS this winter
and Government inaction will only make the challenge facing the NHS that much harder.

"Patients
will be deeply concerned that despite the heroic efforts of our brilliant NHS staff, there was a shocking 27% increase in the number of patients stuck for over an hour in the back of an ambulance in just one week.

"Despite
the pressures which all frontline NHS staff were warning of, the winter fund announced in the Budget has still not been fully allocated to struggling Trusts. Patients expect ministers to urgently get a grip."

[The scale of rising homelessness should shame all of us and Conservative Ministers most of all – John Healey](#)

John

Healey MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary for Housing, responding to the latest quarterly statistics on homelessness, said:

"The
scale of rising homelessness should shame all of us, and Conservative
Ministers
most of all.

"Homelessness

fell at an unprecedented rate under Labour, but after seven years of failure on housing under the Tories, the number of rough sleepers has more than doubled and 121,000 children will be without a home this Christmas, up 70 per cent since 2010.

“This is a direct result of decisions made by Conservative Ministers: a steep drop in investment for affordable homes, cuts to housing benefit, reduced funding for homelessness services, and a refusal to help private renters.

“The next Labour government will end rough sleeping within a Parliament and tackle the root causes of rising homelessness with more affordable homes and stronger rights for renters.”

[The Tories' mismanagement of the NHS workforce has been a disaster for staff and patients – Justin Madders](#)

Justin Madders MP, Labour's Shadow Health Minister, commenting on the publication of Health Education England's workforce strategy for England to 2027, said:

“The Tories' mismanagement of the NHS workforce has been a disaster for staff and patients and a sustainable strategy is long overdue.

“Ministers have repeatedly promised to boost staff numbers but have failed to deliver and now Health Education England has confirmed that there are thousands of vacant posts, difficulties in recruitment and a huge rise in turnover for key positions.

“Under this Government we have seen a series of failed policies with historic cuts to training places, the end of the nurses bursary and the self-defeating public sector pay cap which have all contributed to huge gaps in the NHS workforce.

“It is essential that the Government finally gets behind a long-term solution to NHS staffing problems by providing the resources the NHS needs to make this strategy work. Our NHS staff have reached breaking point and need hope that things are going to change.”

Today's report shows far too many children are not being given excellent education – Angela Rayner

Angela

Rayner MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Education, commenting on the Annual Report of HMI 2016/17, said:

“This report shows that far too many children are not being given the excellent education that should be their right.

“The fact that under the Tories schools have consistently struggled to improve, have struggled to recruit staff and had high levels of turnover should come as a wake-up call to this Government over its failed approach to the teaching profession.

“While Ministers continue to act as if their funding of early years education is sufficient, over 5,000 early years providers have been lost in the last year alone, as the Government has rolled-out their under-funded 30 hours policy.

“Missing recruitment targets in five successive years, slashing school budgets by £2.7 billion, and imposing real terms cuts in public sector pay that leave teachers £5,000 a year worse off will only make things worse in some of our most challenging schools.

“If the Government was committed to giving every child the best start in life, they would do well to start with Labour's commitment to providing new funding to end the public sector pay cap, to help schools recruit and ensure every child can access a great education.”

Ends