

Labour reveals “winter of misery” as 20,000 patients stuck in ambulances for over 30 minutes in just two weeks – Ashworth

Labour’s analysis of the first two weeks of winter data (20 November to 3 December) released today by NHS England, reveals 20,818 patients were stuck in the back of ambulances for over 30 minutes.

Jonathan Ashworth MP, Labour’s Shadow Health Secretary, commenting on Labour’s analysis of the first weekly situation reports issued by NHS England, said:

“After an inadequate Budget for the NHS, healthcare leaders warned of an imminent and unprecedented winter crisis. Today’s data reveals a stark picture of what lies ahead: a winter of misery for patients and unparalleled pressures on our NHS staff.

“Our new analysis of ambulance diverts reveals the dire impact Tory underfunding is already having on thousands of patients unable to promptly access A&E Departments right across the country. Some Trusts are already completely full with no spare beds- an extremely worrying indicator of what is still to come particularly after NHS Improvement’s explicit warning that handover delays “should not occur”.

“Astonishingly, the small pot of winter pressures funding in the Budget has still not been allocated to struggling Trusts. Ministers must urgently explain why this money has not been forthcoming and be held to account for the reality that when the money does eventually arrive it will come far too late to be used to maximum effect.”

Labour demand Commons debate on controversial new Tory health plans

Labour has today called for a series of controversial changes to the NHS to be debated in the House of Commons, after it emerged that Ministers had planned to force through new regulations without debate in the New Year.

Labour has tabled an Early Day Motion in the House of Commons in the name of Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn and Shadow Health Secretary Jonathan Ashworth, together with front bench colleagues, calling for greater transparency on the Government's new Accountable Care plans in the NHS.

Jonathan Ashworth has also written to Andrea Leadsom, Leader of the House of Commons, to call for the Government to provide Parliamentary time for MPs to debate and vote on the proposed changes on the floor of the House.

The letter states:

"Accountable Care Organisations are potentially the biggest change which will be made to our NHS for a decade. Yet the Government has been reluctant to put details of the new arrangements into the public domain. It's essential that the decision around whether to introduce ACOs into the NHS is taken in public, with a full debate and vote in Parliament.

"There are big, unanswered questions about how ACOs will be accountable to the public, what the levels of private sector involvement will be, and what the implications will be for NHS staff. The NHS is experiencing the largest financial squeeze in its history and there are concerns that Accountable Care Organisations could be used as a vehicle for greater rationing of treatment locally.

"The unacceptable secrecy in which these ACOs have been conceived and are being pushed forward is totally contrary to the NHS's duty to be open, transparent and accountable in its decision-making. The manner in which the Government are approaching ACOs, as with STPs before them, fails that test.

“There is a lack of clarity about Government’s intentions for ACOs, and in the absence of a strong lead from the Secretary of State there is again growing public mistrust. It is inconceivable in this context that the Government should make such wide changes behind closed doors, rather than on the floor of the House.”

[Tories have shown their utter contempt for parliamentary democracy – Angela Rayner](#)

Angela Rayner MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Education, responding to the Government’s announcement that it will not follow the decision of the House of Commons to reverse the increase in tuition fees, said:

“Yet again, the Tories have shown their utter contempt for parliamentary democracy. Instead of listening to elected MPs and abandoning their latest hike in tuition fees they have simply recycled a series of old announcements. Ministers have shown once again that they just cannot be trusted with the sweeping powers that they want to give themselves under the Brexit Bill.

“This latest statement leaves more questions than answers on their student funding policy. Students and universities alike are all too aware that the Government has no real plan for how to support our world-class universities and they can’t tell us when the Prime Minister’s promised review will start let alone finish.

“It’s time for the Tories to change their approach. They can make a start by following Labour’s fully funded plans to scrap tuition fees and reintroduce maintenance grants, which would allow every young person to go as far as their talents will take them.”

[Debbie Abrahams responds to Chancellor's comments on disabled people in the workforce](#)

Debbie

Abrahams MP, Labour's Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary, responding to Philip Hammond's comments to the Treasury Select Committee about the impact of disabled people in the workforce on productivity measurements, said:

"It is disgraceful that Philip Hammond is scapegoating disabled people for a productivity crisis created by the Conservatives' failed economic policies.

"This is coming from a Government that has forced disabled people to pay the price of their failed austerity agenda, including by cutting measures that help disabled people into the workforce and scrapping their own manifesto commitment on halving the disability employment gap.

"We should be increasing disabled people's access to employment, not denigrating their contributions. The Chancellor should apologise immediately."

[Sale of student loan book will leave taxpayers worse off – Gordon Marsden](#)

Gordon Marsden MP, Shadow Higher Education Minister, commenting on the Government's announcement of a sale of part of the student loan book at an apparent loss of £800 million, said:

"Today's announcement is proof that this Government is utterly incapable of getting a fair deal for taxpayers.

"In the last Budget Philip Hammond made clear that any sale of the student loan book would have to pass an assessment of

value for money, and it tells you everything you need to know about this Government's economic incompetence that they think a loss of £800 million is good value for money."

"This sale will simply leave taxpayers worse off, as the Government desperately try to flatter their terrible record on our public finances."