

Ministers have squandered a real opportunity to curb highly addictive Fixed Odds Betting Terminals – Tom Watson MP

Tom

Watson MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, responding

to the Government's review into gambling stakes and prizes and social responsibility measures, said:

"This response from the Government is deeply disappointing.

"Ministers have squandered a real opportunity to curb highly addictive Fixed Odds Betting Terminals, which can cause real harm to individuals, their families and local communities. After months of delays they've simply decided to have another consultation.

"And instead of taking firm measures on the proliferation of gambling advertising, on TV and online, the Government have again been found wanting.

"Britain is suffering from a hidden epidemic of gambling addiction. The measures announced today will do very little for those suffering from gambling addiction and for the millions, including hundreds of thousands of children, who are at risk of developing an addiction.

"Labour is committed to reducing the maximum stake for FOBTs to £2 a spin and will ban gambling company advertising on football shirts."

Next month's budget must address unprecedented workforce crisis in our

[NHS – Jonathan Ashworth](#)

Jonathan Ashworth MP, Labour's

Shadow Health Secretary, responding

to the Health Foundation's warning that NHS workforce planning is 'not fit for purpose', said:

"Theresa May has overseen an unprecedented workforce crisis in the NHS. This latest warning is the culmination of an incompetent strategy, which has left our health service with a shortage of 40,000 nurses, 3,500 midwives and 10,000 GPs.

"For years the Tories have taken NHS staff for granted and asked them to do more for less, resulting in a recruitment and retention crisis which threatens patient care on a daily basis.

Evidently the Government's hope of recruiting 2,000 extra foreign GPs by 2020 looks thoroughly unlikely.

"The public is under no illusions:

a repeat of last winter is entirely intolerable. In next month's Budget the Government must take urgent action to secure a sustainable workforce in our NHS in years to come."

[John McDonnell responds to IFS research on public finances ahead of the Budget](#)

John McDonnell MP,

Labour's Shadow Chancellor, commenting on analysis published today by the IFS on the public finances ahead of the Budget, said:

"The IFS have today confirmed seven years of Tory austerity policies have failed to drive up investment and productivity, with serious potential consequences for the public finances. Tory economic failure means wages and salaries are lower today than when they came to power, and still falling, whilst their mishandling of Brexit

is now also adding to the uncertainty around future borrowing plans.

“Instead of dragging millions of ordinary people through the endless misery of Tory spending cuts, the Chancellor now needs to make a decisive break with past Tory failure and end austerity. If he cannot, Labour stands ready to govern, end the appalling failure of Tory austerity and build an economy that works for the many, not the few.”

[Jeremy Hunt's remarks bear no resemblance to the reality of our mental health services – Barbara Keeley](#)

Barbara Keeley

MP, Labour's Shadow Cabinet Minister for Mental Health, commenting on the Government's record on Mental Health, following Jeremy Hunt's appearance on the Andrew Marr show, said:

“Jeremy Hunt's remarks bear no resemblance to the reality of our mental health services; the Tory Government's record on mental health has been dismal.

“Mental health nurse numbers have fallen, more than a quarter of CCGs underspent their mental health budgets for 2016/17 and some children are waiting as long as eighteen months to be treated.

“The Tories will not be taken seriously on mental health unless they invest more in services and ring-fence budgets, as Labour pledged to do at the General Election.”

PFI companies are profiting at the expense of our public services – John McDonnell

John McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, responding to reports that PRO companies have paid little or no tax, said:

"It has been clear for some time that PFI is an inefficient and opaque system for delivering public services. PFI companies are profiting at the expense of our public services: if they are also avoiding their tax while doing so, the Government must immediately take action to end this scandal by banning shares in PFI companies being bought up by corporations based in tax havens.

"Labour under Jeremy Corbyn will end the PFI racket, bringing existing contracts back in-house, and delivering more money into our public services more accountably, transparently and efficiently."