

Government is out of step with rest of the world when it comes to tackling tax avoidance – Peter Dowd

Peter

Dowd MP,

Labour's Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, commenting on the Public Accounts Committee report on tackling online VAT fraud and error:

“The

Public Accounts Committee report reiterates once again that this Conservative Government is completely out of step with the rest of the world when it comes to tackling tax avoidance. Despite having an array of unused new powers, HMRC continues to be outfoxed by large multinational corporations who do not charge

VAT and it is British businesses who are paying for it.

“Instead

of continuing his deluded pursuit of further cuts and more austerity, the Chancellor should take seriously on board the recommendations in this report and tackle VAT fraud which is costing taxpayers billions of pounds a year.

“The

next Labour government will introduce our Tax Transparency and Enforcement Programme which will clamp down on tax avoidance and VAT fraud, so we can build

an economy which works for the many, not the few.”

Labour announce backing for public inquiry into mesh implants scandal

Labour

will today (Wednesday 18 October) announce the party's backing for a public inquiry into the use of surgical mesh implants.

Labour

will also call for use of the products to be stopped in England immediately while the inquiry is undertaken.

The

call comes as MPs prepare to discuss the impact of mesh implants in a debate called by Emma Hardy, MP for Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle, taking place

in Westminster Hall at 9.30am on Wednesday.

Sharon

Hodgson MP, Labour's Shadow Public Health Minister, speaking ahead of today's debate, said:

"Mesh implants have left women in permanent pain, unable to walk, and unable to work. This is an ongoing public health scandal and the Government need to do much more to support those affected.

"Ministers have said NICE will publish updated guidance for these products but not until January 2018. Mesh implants should be taken off the market now until we know more about the threat they pose to women's safety.

"The Government have failed to answer big questions about the extent of this public health scandal, including how many women have been affected and why a product with such terrible risks was allowed into the market in the first place.

"Labour is calling for a full inquiry to uncover the extent of the harm done by mesh implants so we can be sure that this never happens again."

[Labour calls on Conservative MPs to support motion to pause Universal Credit roll out](#)

Ahead of a vote in the House of Commons today (Wednesday 18 October), Labour's Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary has called on Conservative MPs to support a motion to pause the roll out of the embattled Universal Credit programme.

Labour's call to support today's motion follows reports that up to 25 Conservative MPs may be willing to rebel against the Government over their flagship social security programme, as evidence continues to mount that it is pushing people further into debt, rent arrears and even evictions. This will be a major test of a key Government reform.

The Department for Work and Pensions' own data shows that one in four claimants are having to wait over six weeks to receive any funds, with half of those in rent arrears reporting that they went into debt after

claiming
Universal Credit.

Debbie Abrahams MP, Labour's Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary,
calling on Conservative MPs to support the motion, said:

"The Government has so far not listened to MPs' concerns about the mounting issues with their flagship social security programme. We must stand together to make our voices heard.

"I urge Conservative MPs to vote with their conscience and support our motion to pause the roll out of Universal Credit.

"The social security system is meant to protect people from debt and arrears, not exacerbate their situation.

"We must pause and fix Universal Credit now, before millions are made worse off."

The rise in fuel poverty is simply not good enough – Rebecca Long-Bailey

Rebecca

Long-Bailey MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, commenting
on a report from the Committee on Fuel Poverty, said:

"The rise
in fuel poverty is simply not good enough – we are going backwards. As the report points out, in 2019 there will still be thousands of fuel poor households living in Band F and G properties. A cold, poorly insulated home doesn't just mean that lots of heat is wasted resulting in a high bill, it means getting ill, it means repeated visits to the doctor, a much longer recovery time and a greater pressure on the NHS.

"Labour
will insulate four million homes as an infrastructure priority to help those who suffer in cold homes each winter. We would also introduce an immediate price cap so an average dual-fuel household energy bills remains below £1,000 per year while transitioning to a fairer system for bill payers"

Ends

The OECD has been damning of the Tories' bungling of the Brexit negotiations – McDonnell

John

McDonnell MP, Shadow Chancellor, responding to the publication today of the OECD's Economic Survey of the UK, said:

"The OECD has been damning of the Tories' bungling of the Brexit negotiations, and they are fearful of what a Tory Brexit could mean for the UK economy.

"They also paint a damning picture of the Conservatives' economic failure across a range of measures, with forecast growth now expected to be amongst the lowest in the developed world, weak productivity and huge regional inequalities all highlighted as major problems that this government is failing to tackle.

"Like Labour, the OECD recommends a programme of major regional infrastructure investment to unlock the potential of our economy, backed up by increased research spending and improved training. There is now a political consensus on the action needed to turn our economy round after seven years of Tory failure.

"If this weak Tory government continues to refuse to act then the next Labour government will implement the plan needed to build an economy that works for the many, not the few."