

# Policy Brief: General Election 2019

Wednesday 20 November 2019

## Contents

General Election 2019 .....	4
Today's announcement .....	5
Supporting victims of crime .....	5
Previous announcements .....	7
Ending knife crime .....	7
Reducing reoffending .....	9
Life means life for child killers .....	11
Armed Forces Income Tax in Scotland .....	13
Modernising business taxes .....	15
Maintaining the level of corporation tax .....	17
Taking back control of our borders .....	19
Ensuring fairness in our welfare system .....	21
Increasing the NHS surcharge and tackling health tourism .....	23
Nature for Climate Fund .....	25
Blue Planet Fund .....	27
Cutting business rates on the high street .....	29
Community ownership fund .....	31
Connecting more towns to the rail network .....	33
Cycling and walking investment .....	35
Taking back control of our borders .....	37
Launching a green revolution .....	39
Investing in research and development .....	41
Transforming further education .....	43
Infrastructure apprentices .....	45
A new UK Shared Prosperity Fund to boost skills .....	47
Free wraparound childcare for the Armed Forces .....	49
Guaranteed interview scheme for veterans .....	51
Cutting the jobs tax for veterans .....	53
Protecting Armed Forces personnel from litigation .....	55

<b>Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme .....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>HM Veterans' Railcard.....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>50 million more appointments in GP surgeries .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>New fast-track NHS Visa .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>New fiscal rules for a new economic era.....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Alcohol duty review .....</b>	<b>67</b>

## Key messages

**Throughout this campaign, here are the key things you need to remember:**

- The choice at this election is between a majority Conservative government that will end the paralysis and confusion in Parliament, get Brexit done, and let the country move on OR a hung Parliament bringing more confusion and Corbyn in Downing Street.
- Only the Conservatives can win a majority – we only need to win nine more seats to end the gridlock in Parliament. Corbyn can't win a majority but in a hung parliament he would be propped up by the SNP.
- Under Corbyn 2020 would be lost to the chaos of another two referendums – one on Brexit and another on Scottish independence.
- A Conservative Government we can unleash Britain's potential. Investing in our NHS with 40 new hospitals, cutting crime with 20,000 more police, introducing an Australian style points-based immigration system, and giving businesses and families the economic certainty they need to plan for the future with confidence.
- AND REMEMBER Corbyn's plan for unlimited and uncontrolled immigration is the biggest threat to our public services including our NHS – as well as his plans to spend £1.2 trillion which would wreck our economy.

# General Election 2019

The vote to leave the EU was a vote for change. But nothing has changed since.

We are still arguing about Brexit because the 2017 Election created a Parliament where nobody was in charge – creating gridlock, delay, and confusion.

And that has meant the real issues that make a difference to voters' lives – being able to get an appointment to see a GP, feeling safe when walking home, making ends meet at the end of the month – have all been ignored.

**This election is a choice between driving real change for our country or more of the same old politicians arguing.**

At this election voters must choose between the certainty that a majority government brings; or a hung Parliament bringing more of the same confusion, indecision, and arguments we have put up with for the last three years.

With a Conservative majority government you can be sure that on day one of a new Parliament we will start the process to get Brexit done and we will leave with the great new deal that is already agreed by the end of January – giving business and families the confidence to invest in our economy.

And when Brexit is done and dusted, we will unleash Britain's potential – investing in infrastructure, technology, and education as the engines that will turbocharge our economy and drive change – improving local high streets and bus services, creating more GP appointments, investing money in schools, introducing an Australian-style points-based immigration system, and putting more police on the streets.

In a hung Parliament the only thing you can be sure of is more of the same: more of the same confusion and indecision that have plagued the last three years, more going round in circles, and more arguing over Brexit, leaving Britain stuck in gridlock – with our economy suffocating from uncertainty and stuck in first gear.

Only the Conservatives can win a functioning majority government – we only need to win nine more seats than in 2017 to unblock Parliament and get it working again.

**A vote for anyone else will just create another hung Parliament:**

- **The Liberal Democrats** won just 12 seats at the last election and would need to win another 314 to be in power. And as they have ruled out going into coalition with the Conservatives, a Liberal Democrat vote either means Jeremy Corbyn as Prime Minister or another gridlocked Parliament that doesn't work.
- A vote for **the Brexit Party** risks letting a Remain-backing Liberal Democrat or Labour candidate win – and that means one less seat for the Conservatives to get Brexit done – creating another gridlocked hung Parliament that doesn't work.
- **The Labour Party** can't win a majority under Jeremy Corbyn but he could still become Prime Minister with the help of the Liberal Democrats and Nicola Sturgeon's SNP – meaning yet more confusion and delay while they argue about what to do on Brexit – and economic disaster for Britain when Labour wreck the economy, just like they always do. And the price of the SNP's support – another independence referendum in Scotland with yet more politicians arguing.

**So on 12 December, reject more of the same confusion, delay and indecision we are all sick of.**

**Back Boris and vote Conservative to get a majority government that will Get Brexit Done with a deal, and get Parliament working again, and turbocharge our economy to unleash Britain's potential.**

# Today's announcement

## Supporting victims of crime

**Summary:** A majority Conservative government will rebalance the justice system to provide more support to victims.

- **We are toughening up the justice system, but delivering justice does not just mean punishing offenders appropriately – it also means supporting victims to move on.**
- **A majority Conservative government will introduce a range of measures to better support victims, including passing the Domestic Abuse Bill and a new Victims' Law, reforming parole and increasing the victims' surcharge.**
- **Being the victim of crime can have a lasting impact, and we are committed to ensuring victims receive the help and support they need to cope and recover.**

### Background

- **Being a victim of crime can be life-changing, and how people are subsequently treated within the justice system can make a huge difference in helping them to recover.** We are committed to ensuring that victims receive the help and support they need to cope and recover.
- **The latest Crime Survey of England and Wales estimates suggest 1 in 5 adults experienced crime last year.** Sadly, many victims are not made aware of their rights. For example, only 14 per cent of victims recalled being given the opportunity by the police to make a Victim Personal Statement.<sup>1</sup>

### Our solution

- **A majority Conservative government will act on the findings of the cross-system review of rape and commit to an immediate cash injection of £15 million next year to cut delays, speed up charging decisions, and keep more victims engaged with the process until trial.**
- **We will further reform the parole system to better serve victims,** to ensure more victims are notified of parole hearings and decisions affecting them, and by opening up the parole system so victims can attend hearings for the first time.
- **In addition to boosting funding for specialist victim services, we will increase the victim surcharge so convicted offenders pay more towards victim services.** This will raise more funding to support refuges and community support for victims of domestic and sexual abuse.
- **We will introduce a Victims' Law, setting out the rights of victims and giving them means of redress if they are let down by the police or other agencies.** We will consult on the contents in Spring 2020.
- **We will support all victims of domestic abuse and pass the Domestic Abuse Bill** to ensure, amongst other benefits, that domestic abuse victims are treated properly at court. We will pilot integrated domestic abuse courts that address criminal and family matters in parallel, drawing on international best practice.
- **We will pass Helen's Law,** placing a legal duty on the Parole Board to consider the cruelty of killers who refuse to give the location of a victim's remains when assessing their release.

### Conservative record

---

<sup>1</sup> ONS, *Crime Survey of England and Wales: year ending June 2019*, 17 October 2019, [link](#); ONS, *Crime Survey of England and Wales: year ending March 2019*, 22 July 2019, [link](#).

- **In September 2019, we announced £5 million more to support rape and sexual assault victims in 2020-21,** funding a range of services including tailored face-to-face support and counselling.<sup>2</sup>
- **We have given victims a greater voice in government policy making.** In 2014, we established the Victims Panel, to represent victims in policy making and in 2018 we published the Victims Strategy to provide a national, cross government framework to make improvements to policy for victims.<sup>3</sup>
- **We are ensuring victims have a bigger say in the criminal justice system.** Fourteen more offences are being added to the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme so that the punishment of criminals properly reflects the severity of their crime – ultimately ensuring that victims have a voice in the system.<sup>4</sup>
- **We are strengthening the Parole Board and improving communication and support for victims during the parole process.** In February 2019 we announced sweeping changes to the parole system to improve transparency, offer better support for victims and new powers to reconsider decisions.<sup>5</sup>
- **Increased and extended the victim surcharge.** This is charge paid by offenders that goes to support victims’ services. Until 2012 this was limited to £15. We increased this and extended the victim surcharge.<sup>6</sup>

*We are also toughening up sentencing to ensure offenders get the punishment they deserve*

- **Ordering an urgent review into prison sentences for violent and sexual offenders to ensure victims get the justice they deserve.** The review will assess if sentences truly reflect the severity of crimes and consider whether we need to change the law to lock criminals up for longer.<sup>7</sup>
- **Stopping the automatic release of the most serious violent and sexual offenders at the half way point of their sentence.** Instead they will be required to serve two-thirds of their sentence in prison and subject to strict licence conditions on release.<sup>8</sup>

## Political points to make

- **Corbyn’s Labour would scrap short sentences, failing to give justice to victims.** They would scrap all sentences of six months or less, which would mean less criminals going to prison and no deterrent to stop them from committing crimes.<sup>9</sup>
- **Jeremy Corbyn personally supports ‘much shorter sentences’ for all criminals.** ‘I do think that we should be looking for much shorter sentences, much higher level of education within the prison, much more family leave, and much more appropriate, sensible family visiting of people in prison’.<sup>10</sup>

## Q&A

### **Q: Why has the proportion of rapes/sexual assault resulting in a conviction fallen?**

This is extremely concerning and we commissioned a review to look into this. It is encouraging that more victims are reporting rape/sexual assault to the police but unfortunately, only 6 per cent of cases recorded by the police result in prosecution. The most common reason why cases does not proceed to prosecution is because the victim does not support further action. This is why Independent Sexual Violence Advisers are so important, they can support the victim throughout the process and so make it more likely that the victim supports further action.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>2</sup> MoJ, *Press Release*, 18 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>3</sup> Hansard, *Departmental Update*, WS, 31 October 2019, [link](#).

<sup>4</sup> MoJ, *Press Release*, 17 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>5</sup> MoJ, *Press Release*, 4 February 2019, [link](#).

<sup>6</sup> MoJ, *Press Release*, 8 August 2014, [link](#).

<sup>7</sup> MoJ, *News Story*, 12 August 2019, [link](#).

<sup>8</sup> MoJ, *Press Release*, 1 October 2019, [link](#); *Independent*, 14 October 2019, [link](#).

<sup>9</sup> *Labour Press*, 21 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>10</sup> *Interview with Warrington Young Labour*, 27 July 2015, [link](#).

<sup>11</sup> ONS, *Sexual offending: victimisation and the path through the criminal justice system*, 13 December 2018, [link](#).

## Previous announcements

### Ending knife crime

**Summary:** A majority Conservative government will introduce a range of measures to end the scourge of knife crime and make our streets safer.

- **Criminal gangs don't care who they hurt or abuse. They are exploiting our children – forcing them to deal drugs and carry knives as 'protection'.**
- **We will give the police and criminal justice system the powers and resources they need to end this bloodshed. We will task the system with bringing knife carriers to court within days, invest in Violence Reduction Units. Police will be empowered by a new court order to target known knife carriers, making it easier for officers to stop and search those convicted of knife crime.**
- **We hear the British people's concerns about crime. We stand for the law-abiding majority, not the criminal minority. And, those who seek to do right by themselves, their families and their communities should be given the support they to turn their lives around.**

#### We are doing this by:

- **Tasking the criminal justice system with developing a swifter response to knife carriers, so that simple possession cases arising from a stop and search are brought to court quickly.**
  - Cases involving simple possession of a knife following a stop and search should not take weeks to appear in court.
  - We will establish new procedures and allocate new prosecutors to ensure that adult suspects are charged within 24 hours and have their first court appearance within days not weeks.
- **Introducing a new Serious Violence Reduction Order to enable the police to stop and search habitual knife carriers without suspicion.** As proposed by the think-tank the Centre for Social Justice, and backed by Lord Hogan-Howe, these orders will allow police to target known knife carriers.<sup>12</sup>
  - This power would be in addition to the two main types of existing stop and search powers – Section 1, which allows police to stop anyone they suspect is carrying a weapon or contraband, and Section 60, which allows the police to stop anyone in a specific area without suspicion. A Serious Violence Reduction Order would act like a personalised Section 60 search power for individuals who have, in a criminal court of law, been proven to have been in possession of an offensive weapon. This would include pointed or bladed weapons, firearms, and corrosive substances.
  - The Order would apply to both custodial and non-custodial sentences, ensuring that every offender – from the moment they are sentenced at court or from when they leave prison on licence – would face an increased risk of detection.
  - Polling by the Centre for Social Justice found that 70 per cent of ethnic minority Londoners would support Serious Violence Reduction Orders.<sup>13</sup>
- **Ensuring offenders caught with a knife are arrested, cautioned or charged within 24 hours following stop and search, and have their first court appearance in less than a week.** Most of them will be sentenced there and then. All those who receive a community order, suspended sentence, or immediate custodial sentence will also receive a Serious Violence Reduction Order.
- **Continuing to invest in eighteen Violence Reduction Units allocating £35 million in 2020-21 to enable them to implement a long term, multi-agency, preventative approach.** In parts of the country with violent crime hotspots such as London, Manchester, Hampshire and the Midlands, the police, councils, and other agencies will have the resources they need to better coordinate their response to knife crime –

<sup>12</sup> CSJ, *It Can Be Stopped*, 27 August 2018, [link](#); Lords Hansard, 26 February 2019, *Vol.796 Col.196*, [link](#).

<sup>13</sup> CSJ, *It Can Be Stopped*, 27 August 2018, [link](#).

sharing data on violence and investing in preventive measures to intervene early in the right places.

## Conservative record

- **Recruiting an additional 20,000 police officers to keep our streets safe.** The unprecedented drive to deliver 20,000 more police officers over the next three years has begun with the launch of a national recruitment campaign, overseen by a new National Policing Board and backed by £750 million next year.<sup>14</sup>
- **We announced a £85 million funding boost for the Crown Prosecution Service in August 2019.** This is about a 17 per cent increase in the CPS's budget.<sup>15</sup>
- **Given police Chief Constables the funding they need to equip more of their officers with Tasers, should they want to do so.** We recently announced a ringfenced £10 million fund over the next 12 months. This will help the police to tackle the most violent offenders, helping them to maintain public order and keeping themselves safe in volatile situations.<sup>16</sup>

## Political points to make

- **Corbyn's Labour would only but 10,000 more police officers on our streets, half the number we are delivering, and would not fund them properly.** FullFact found that Labour's plans to fund their 10,000 officers did not add up as their costing didn't factor in recruitment, training and equipment costs and they concluded that Labour couldn't justify their claims.<sup>17</sup>
- **Diane Abbott opposes the stop and search powers the police need to keep our streets safe.** Abbott said random stop and search is 'one of the worst abuses of police powers' and 'is heavy on police time, with little result', insisting that they 'take too many resources for what they achieve' and only '[pick] up a relatively tiny number of infringements of the law' – ignoring the fact that every knife taken off the street saves lives.<sup>18</sup>
- **Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell voted against changing the law so anyone caught carrying a knife for a second time would face a custodial sentence.** They were two of only three Labour MPs to do so.<sup>19</sup>

## Q&A

### **Q: Won't a power to stop and search without suspicion lead to more loss of trust between the police and minority communities?**

Every single community wants to feel safe. If the police can reduce knife crime, that will help to improve safety and confidence in the rule of law. Of course, the police must use stop and search proportionally. This new court order will allow police to target their use of stop and search, reducing the risk of discrimination and helping them to focus on known knife-carriers who refuse to desist. Police will continue to be able to use existing Section 1 (PACE) powers to stop people where they have reasonable grounds of suspicion, and in rarer situations, to use Section 60 powers to designate areas where officers can stop anyone without suspicion in order to prevent serious violence.

---

<sup>14</sup> Home Office, *Press Release*, 26 July 2019, [link](#); Home Office, *News Story*, 5 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>15</sup> CPS, *CPS response to additional £85m funding*, 12 August 2019, [link](#).

<sup>16</sup> Home Office, *Press Release*, 27 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>17</sup> *Full Fact*, 11 May 2017, [link](#).

<sup>18</sup> *Hackney Gazette*, 27 October 2018, [link](#); Diane Abbott, *Twitter*, 22 May 2018, [link](#); Diane Abbott, *Twitter*, 9 August 2017, [link](#).

<sup>19</sup> Hansard, *Criminal Justice and Courts Bill – Division 8*, 17 June 2014, [link](#).



# Reducing reoffending

**Summary:** We will provide extra support to reduce high rates of reoffending by prisoners, get more prisoners working and learning, and tackle the barriers to employment for ex-offenders.

- **People who commit crimes should be punished but as Conservatives we believe in giving people a second chance. Tackling barriers to employment can help reduce reoffending and prevent more people becoming victims of crime.**
- **We will invest in our prisons to ensure they can deliver more purposeful activity and prison industries to prepare prisoners for employment, establish a Prisoner Education Service to ensure they have the skills they need when they leave, provide career advice in every prison, and provide education-focused custodial environments for young offenders.**
- **Getting a job is one of the best ways to reduce reoffending and will allow prisoners to start contributing to society as soon as they are released.**

## Background

- **The reoffending rate is stubbornly high.** The reoffending rate is currently 29.3 per cent, and has been stuck at around 30 per cent for over a decade. Reoffending costs society approximately £18 billion a year and 81 per cent of offenders convicted in 2018 had at least one previous conviction or caution.<sup>20</sup>
- **Education and employment offer a route out of re-offending and to a better life.** Too many prisoners have only basic education and along with employment, these are the two surest ways to reduce the chances that a released prisoner will go back to crime. Ex-offenders who get a job after prison are up to 9 percentage points less likely to reoffend. Education in prison also reduces reoffending, with options including Open University degrees and distance learning.<sup>21</sup>

## Our solution

- **Set a goal of at least doubling the number of released prisoners in employment six weeks after release.** To increase the figures from 1 in 5 to 1 in 10, we will install dedicated work coaches throughout our prisons to help prepare more prisoners for work before they are released and continue to support partnerships with socially-responsible employers like Timpson to take on more ex-prisoners.
- **Continue to increase the hours worked by prisoners every year over the next Parliament.** We remain committed to the ambition to increase work in prisons and to have more prisoners working and working longer hours in an ‘employment-like’ atmosphere. The aim of this is to ensure that prisoners are occupied in purposeful activity whilst in establishments and to give offenders the opportunity to learn new skills and better prepare them for employment on release.
- **Create a dedicated Prison Education Service focused on work-based training and skills.** This new service will oversee the education and skills training offered across all jails. This will build upon the new Prison Education Framework issued in April 2019, and provide a new focus across the whole system on raising educational standards of all prisoners serving sentences in England and Wales.
- **Develop the Secure Schools programme.** Secure Schools are a new model of custody for young offenders following the findings of the Youth Justice Review led by Charlie Taylor in 2016. In 2018, the Government set out a vision for what it wants Secure Schools to achieve. Unlike a Young Offender Institute, these

<sup>20</sup> MoJ, *Proven reoffending statistics quarterly bulletin, July 2017 to September 2017*, 25 July 2019, [link](#); MoJ, *Economic and Social Costs of Reoffending*, 18 July 2019, [link](#); MoJ, *Criminal Justice System statistics quarterly: March 2019*, 15 August 2019, [link](#).

<sup>21</sup> HMPPS, *Guidance: Education in Prison*, 15 May 2019, [link](#); MoJ, *Employing prisoners and ex-offenders*, May 2018, [link](#); MoJ, *Justice Data Lab Analysis: Reoffending Behaviour after Support from the Open University*, July 2019, [link](#); MoJ, *Justice Data Lab: Employment and benefits outcome*, 12 July 2018, [link](#).

facilities will be smaller, secure custody environments where regimes are built around education and young offenders are held closer to home.<sup>22</sup>

## Conservative record

- **Commissioned a comprehensive review into prisoner education and published an Education and Employment Strategy for prisoners.** The 2016 review included recommendations around improving prisoner education and the majority were adopted, including devolving education and training budgets to prison governors. In 2018, we published a jobs strategy to cut reoffending – giving governors control of education so they could tailor it to prisoners’ needs; providing training designed to meet local labour market requirements; designing a new vocational training route to offer guaranteed jobs on release; matching prisons to employers; and calling on employers to shift attitudes ‘from shop floor to boardroom’ including a government commitment to employ ex-offenders.<sup>23</sup>
- **Enabled some prisoners to gain employment experience outside of prison.** We are engaging with employers to take on ex-prisoners via the New Futures Network and have recently introduced reforms to increase the opportunities available to prisoners to gain experience in real workplaces through an expansion of Release on Temporary Licence.<sup>24</sup>
- **Helped thousands of ex-offenders into work since 2010.** The Conservatives have helped thousands of ex-offenders into work since 2010. According to independent analysis, the Work Programme has helped 19,500 ex-offenders.<sup>25</sup>

## Political points to make

- **Corbyn’s Labour would scrap short sentences, keeping more criminals on our streets and failing to rehabilitate them.** They would scrap all sentences of six months or less, which would mean less criminals going to prison and no deterrent to stop them from committing crimes.<sup>26</sup>
- **Jeremy Corbyn personally supports ‘much shorter sentences’ for all criminals. He has said:** ‘I do think that we should be looking for much shorter sentences’ and: ‘I do not normally favour a tough sentencing policy’.<sup>27</sup>
- **Almost half of criminals reoffended within a year under Labour.** In 2010, 47.5 per cent of prisoners were reconvicted within twelve months of release.<sup>28</sup>

## Q&A

### Q: Why has reoffending not reduced over the last decade?

Since 2010, overall reoffending has fallen from 31.6 per cent to 29.4 per cent. Reducing reoffending requires a holistic approach, incorporating stable housing, positive relationships, and good mental health, but we are adamant that prisons must do more – improving employment skills and job readiness, which will contribute to reduced reoffending in the long-term.

### Q. Will this mean more prisoners released into the community to work?

Improving the job readiness of prisoners may involve more use of day-release to approved training or work placements, where judged appropriate by prison governors.

---

<sup>22</sup> MoJ, *Collection: Secure Schools*, 1 June 2018, [link](#); MoJ, *Review of Youth Justice System*, 12 December 2016, [link](#).

<sup>23</sup> MoJ, *Press Release*, 24 May 2018, [link](#).

<sup>24</sup> MoJ, *Press Release*, 28 May 2019, [link](#).

<sup>25</sup> ERSA, *Work Programme Performance Report*, September 2016, [link](#).

<sup>26</sup> *Labour Press*, 21 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>27</sup> *Interview with Warrington Young Labour*, 27 July 2015, [link](#); Hansard, 15 April 1994, *Col.588*, [link](#).

<sup>28</sup> Hansard, 9 January 2013, *Col.18WS*, [link](#).

# Life means life for child killers

**Summary:** We will change the law so that adults who commit premeditated murder of children will serve their whole life in prison without parole.

- **Society rightly regards the murder of a child as the worst crime imaginable, and the public expect it to be punished accordingly.**
- **For the small number of the very worst offenders, their crimes are so heinous that no rehabilitation can ever allow for release. However, for the vast majority of prisoners, we believe in rehabilitation and when they have served their punishment they should be supported to make a fresh start.**
- **By taking a tougher stance and removing any chance of release, these changes will act as a powerful deterrent and help restore public confidence in our justice system.**

## Background

- **The murder of children is on the rise.** There were 67 child victims (under 16) of homicide in 2017-18, up from 46 in 2009-10 - a 46 per cent increase.<sup>29</sup>
- **The vast majority of criminals given a mandatory life sentence will be released from prison at some point, including child murderers.** Under the Criminal Justice Act 2003, in most cases a judge will set a minimum sentence to be served – the Minimum Tariff – after which time the prisoner will be kept in prison until the Parole Board declares them safe for release. This, as opposed to a Whole Life Order (where the individual is never eligible for release), is the starting point for sentencing adults who have killed a child.

## Our solution

- **We will reform the life sentence regime and make a Whole Life Order the starting point for sentencing all adults who murder children.** This would apply to all convicted adults found to have committed a premeditated killing a child with intent to kill. Although a Whole Life Order would become the starting tariff, judges would still be able to exercise their usual discretion and depart from this in exceptional circumstances. It will apply to all crimes committed after the revised schedule is implemented.

## Conservative record

- **The Prime Minister has announced an urgent review of sentencing to ensure the public are properly protected from the most dangerous criminals.** This will focus on whether violent and sexual offenders are serving the right sentences and consider whether changes are needed to lock criminals up for longer.<sup>30</sup>
- **Under the Conservatives, the length of sentences has increased, as has the average sentence given to criminals.** For example, sentences for sexual offences have gone up from 43 months in 2007 to just under 61 months in 2018. The length of the average sentence for indictable offences has also increased from 16 months in March 2009 to 20 months in March 2019.<sup>31</sup>
- **We have restricted early release for serious criminals and are ensuring those that are guilty of the worst crimes receive sentences their actions warrant.** In 2015 we introduced stricter requirements for the worst offenders, such as child rapists and terrorists, to be eligible for early release – moving away from automatic release at the half way point. We have also added 14 more offences to the Unduly Lenient

---

<sup>29</sup> ONS, *Homicide in England and Wales*, 7 February 2019, [link](#).

<sup>30</sup> MoJ, *News Story*, 12 August 2019, [link](#).

<sup>31</sup> MoJ, *Speech to Reform*, 18 February 2019, [link](#).

Sentence Scheme so that the punishment of criminals properly reflects the severity of their crime – ultimately ensuring that victims have a voice in the system.<sup>32</sup>

- **We are making sure the most serious violent and sexual offenders now serve at least two-thirds of the sentences they are given in prison.** We are changing the law so that offenders who are sentenced to at least 4 years in prison for the most violent and sexual crimes will no longer be released early halfway through their sentence but instead be required to serve two thirds of that sentence in prison.
- **We are creating 10,000 extra prison places to hold the additional offenders who will be caught, charged and sentenced as part of our wider crackdown on crime.** Up to £2.6 billion will be spent on creating modern, efficient prisons to better reform criminals and keep the public safe, while an extra £100 million will aid the crackdown on crime within prisons.<sup>33</sup>

## Political points to make

- **Corbyn opposed mandatory life sentences for reoffending rapists and other violent criminals.** In 1996, Corbyn criticised the Labour leadership for supporting Conservative plans to introduce automatic sentences: ‘This Tory measure runs a grave risk of being authoritarian. The idea that our leadership backs it is bad news politicians aren’t in court to hear the particulars of every single case’.<sup>34</sup>
- **Corbyn’s Labour would scrap short sentences, keeping more criminals on our streets.** They would scrap all sentences of six months or less, which would mean less criminals going to prison and no deterrent to stop them from committing crimes.<sup>35</sup>
- **Jeremy Corbyn personally supports ‘much shorter sentences’ for all criminals.** ‘I do think that we should be looking for much shorter sentences, much higher level of education within the prison, much more family leave, and much more appropriate, sensible family visiting of people in prison’.<sup>36</sup>
  - **And has made it clear he does not favour a tough sentencing policy.** ‘I do not normally favour a tough sentencing policy’.<sup>37</sup>
- **Jeremy Corbyn supports prisoners having the right to vote.** ‘When, for example, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that prisoners have a right to vote – which is something I personally believe very strongly, they do have a right to vote. They have that right to vote in South Africa and I believe that should be a right that is extended all across Europe’.<sup>38</sup>

## Q&A

### Q: To whom will this apply?

This will apply to adults aged 21 or over who are convicted in an English or Welsh court of a premeditated killing of a child under 16 with the intention to kill.

### Q: Will they automatically get a Whole Life Order?

Not automatically, as under Schedule 21, judges retain discretion. However, a Whole Life Order will become the starting point and apply in most cases. In exceptional cases the judge can choose to go down and impose a fixed minimum tariff.

### Q: Why don’t we have Whole Life Orders for every murder?

Given how broad the definition of murder is, it would be inappropriate to have automatic Whole Life Orders for every murder. But is right that we expand the category of murders that are eligible for a Whole Life Order.

<sup>32</sup> MoJ, *Press Release*, 12 February 2015, [link](#); MoJ, *Press Release*, 17 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>33</sup> MoJ, *Press Release*, 11 August 2019, [link](#); MoJ, *Press Release*, 13 August 2019, [link](#).

<sup>34</sup> *The Sunday Times*, 25 February 1996, [archived](#).

<sup>35</sup> *Labour Press*, 21 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>36</sup> *Interview with Warrington Young Labour*, 27 July 2015, [link](#).

<sup>37</sup> Hansard, 15 April 1994, Col.588, [link](#).

<sup>38</sup> *Express*, 7 August 2017, [link](#).

# Armed Forces Income Tax in Scotland

**Summary:** A majority Conservative government will permanently protect personnel stationed in Scotland from having to pay the SNP's higher income taxes.

- **Thanks to the SNP's decision to make Scotland the highest taxed part of the UK, Armed Forces personnel living in Scotland faced getting paid less than personnel that they serve alongside.**
- **Over the past two years, the UK Government has paid the difference in extra tax so that our service personnel are not penalised for living in Scotland, saving them up to £2,200 each. We will now ensure that tax mitigation is permanent, giving certainty to our service men and women that they will never have to pay the SNP's higher taxes.**
- **Only the Conservatives will stand up to Sturgeon and stop a second independence referendum, so that Scotland can move on from the SNP's constitutional obsession.**

## Background

- **The SNP have made Scotland the highest taxed part of the UK, with everyone earning over £27,000 having to pay more income tax.** 45 per cent of Scots, over one million workers, pay more tax than they would if they lived in the rest of the UK with personnel earning £40,000 paying £130 more and those earning £60,000 paying £1,644 more.<sup>39</sup>

## Our solution

- **Making our tax mitigation for Armed Forces personnel in Scotland permanent.** We will end the annual uncertainty around armed forces personnel having to pay the SNP's higher income tax by making the mitigation's permanent. This will be done by making it permanent MoD policy to ensure that service personnel are not discriminated against by different income tax regimes in different parts of the UK. This will ensure that armed forces personnel are not penalised from living in Scotland. This will benefit the over 8,000 service personnel living in Scotland who are paid over £27,000.

## Conservative record

- **We have stopped our Armed Forces from having to pay the SNP's higher income tax over the past two years.** This has meant that 8,000 personnel have and will receive payments at the end of the tax year to ensure that they are not out of pocket from being stationed in Scotland. These payments are worth between £12 and £2,200.<sup>40</sup>
- **We have cut income tax by £100 per month for workers in Scotland.** Since 2010, we have raised the threshold for the personal allowance from £6,475 to £12,500, tax cut worth £1,205 annually.

## Political point

- **The UK Government is clearing up a mess left by the SNP.** We have only had to introduce this measure because the SNP Government raised taxes and did not make any provisions for our Armed Forces, who would have been paid less than their comrades.

## Costing

- This policy cost £6 million in this year, which was paid for within the Ministry of Defence's budget. It will not require new funding to make the mitigation permanent.

<sup>39</sup> Scottish Government, *Income Tax Policy Proposal: Scottish Budget 2019-20*, 12 December 2018, [link](#).

<sup>40</sup> MoD, *News Story*, 27 March 2019, [link](#).

## Q&A

### **Q: Who has to pay the Scottish rate of income tax in the military?**

Eligibility to pay the Scottish rate of income tax is based on residency, that means military personnel, who may be based in other parts of the UK or even overseas, will have to pay higher rates of income tax if their main residence is in Scotland. If personnel have no resident address then it will be the base at which they are stationed, which would mean that they would be liable to pay higher income tax if they are stationed in Scotland.

### **Q: Why do Armed Forces personnel receive this but not doctors, nurses, policemen etc.?**

Scotland's public services are the responsibility of the Scottish Government and it is for them to set any tax mitigation measures for people working in our schools, our NHS or tackling crime on our streets. We do not believe that it is right that service personnel living in Scotland should be paid less than those living in the rest of the UK.

### **Q: What about the 3,000 personnel who have had their tax cut by the SNP?**

The SNP's lower rate of tax is a gimmick worth just 39p per week. The real issue is that over 8,000 service personnel living in Scotland would pay higher taxes than their comrades south of the Border if the UK Government had not taken action.

## Modernising business taxes

**Summary:** A Conservative majority Government will cut a range of taxes for businesses – benefitting small businesses in particular by recognising the challenges they face and taking advantage of the opportunities which come from leaving the EU.

- **Businesses are the drivers of this country’s success – creating jobs, providing for families and paying the taxes that support our public services. The Conservatives have a proud record of supporting business by reforming and cutting taxes, but there is more we can do.**
- **As we leave the EU, we will make Britain the best place in the world to start, grow and run a business by laying the groundwork for a radical reform of the tax system – including a fundamental review of business rates, raising the Employment Allowance and increasing investment allowances.**
- **These tax cuts will be a huge boost for hundreds of thousands of businesses in every part of the country, especially the small businesses our communities rely on. They will increase investment and will help businesses to expand and create more good jobs.**

### Background

- **Productivity has been weak over the last decade.** Productivity, which is the amount we produce as a country for every hour worked, has barely grown over the last decade. The reasons for this are complex and varied but we know that boosting business investment is vital to improving it.

### Our solution

- **Launching a fundamental review of business rates to reduce the overall burden on business.** We recognise that business rates are one of the top concerns of British businesses and that many businesses struggle with the current system. Whilst we have introduced a series of new reliefs, we will now conduct a fundamental review of the entire system, working with a wide array of groups to make sure we get this right. We will also commit to real reductions in the overall burden of business rates through this review.
- **Raising the Employment Allowance from £3,000 to £4,000.** Employers pay Class 1 National Insurance Contributions on their employees’ earnings. The Employment Allowance is currently claimed by over 1 million employers to reduce their employer NICs bills by up to £3,000. Increasing it to £4,000 will provide a tax cut of up to £1,000 for more than half a million businesses. This will amount to almost a half a billion-pound tax cut for small businesses.
- **Increasing the Structures and Buildings Allowance from 2 per cent to 3 per cent.** Increasing the SBA to 3 per cent will be an increase on the tax relief on the purchase, building or leasing of a structure will be a significant boost to business investment. This is a permanent increase in the relief and firms of all sizes will benefit. Industries with a faster turnover of buildings such as in agriculture will benefit in particular.
- **Increasing the R&D tax credit rate from 12 per cent to 13 per cent and review the scope of these tax credits.** It is essential that we boost private sector research and development investment in order to raise productivity over the medium and long term. Raising the relief rate from 12 per cent to 13 per cent will boost manufacturing and professional, scientific and technical services sectors in particular. As the nature of capital is changing, we will also ensure the tax system is suitable for our dynamic 21<sup>st</sup> century economy by looking at areas of investment such as cloud computing and data to investigate whether they should be included within the scope of R&D tax credits.

### Conservative achievements

- **Helping to create 1.4 million more businesses since we came to office in 2010.** There were 5.87 million businesses at the start of 2018 – an increase of 1.4 million since 2010.<sup>41</sup>
- **Supporting businesses with £13 billion worth of business rates relief, giving them more money to grow and invest.** We made 100 per cent small business rates relief permanent and doubled the threshold for small business rates relief in 2017. We have also cut the corporation tax rate from 28 per cent to 19 per cent.<sup>42</sup>
- **Committing to provide a new wave of business rates cuts to help shops, pubs, cinemas and music venues across England.** A majority Conservative government would increase the retail discount, which reduces tax for small businesses, to 50 per cent next year. This would be an effective £280 million tax cut which would help small businesses on the high street in particular. This applies to properties with a rateable value of less than £51,000.

## Political points to make

- **John McDonnell said that business is ‘the real enemy’ and said it is part of his job description to overthrow capitalism.** When he was asked whether there was a difference between transforming the economy and overthrowing capitalism, he said ‘I don’t think there is... I want a socialist society’.<sup>43</sup>
- **Labour would hike corporation tax to 26 per cent – taking taxes to their ‘highest ever peacetime level’.** Labour would raise corporation tax and have broken their promise not to raise tax for small businesses. Experts have slammed this tax rise – with the IFS indicating it would lead to ‘higher prices, lower wages or less valuable investments’.<sup>44</sup>
- **Labour would seize 10 per cent of businesses – a ‘draconian’ tax grab that would cost businesses £300 billion.** McDonnell will force firms to place 10 per cent of their shares into an ‘inclusive ownership fund’. Some dividends would go to employees and the rest would be taxed. The CBI has estimated a 10 per cent reduction in share prices as a result of this policy; the Institute for Directors called it ‘draconian’; and the British Chamber of Commerce described it as a ‘tax grab’.<sup>45</sup>
- **Labour would hike capital gains tax, harming our economy and discouraging investment.** Corbyn has committed to ‘reversing tax giveaways on Capital Gains Tax’. This would increase the higher rate of Capital Gains Tax from 28 per cent to 20 per cent and the basic rate from 18 per cent to 10 per cent. The Fraser Institute warned this would ‘lower the potential rewards and discourage entrepreneurs and investors’.<sup>46</sup>

## Q&A

### Q. Why are you cutting taxes for business when tax avoidance is still so high?

Businesses are the backbone of our economy and drivers of higher living standards. Encouraging further investment in research and development and new buildings will boost productivity making us all better off. Alongside that, we have taken significant action to crack down on aggressive tax avoidance and tax evasion.

<sup>41</sup> BEIS, *Business Population Estimates 2019*, 10 October 2019, [link](#).

<sup>42</sup> Hansard, 15 January 2019, *Col.324WH*, [link](#).

<sup>43</sup> *The Times*, 21 May 2018, [link](#); John McDonnell, *POA Conference*, 12 May 2011, [archived](#).

<sup>44</sup> *IFS*, 26 May 2017, [link](#); *Labour Press*, 11 April 2017, [link](#).

<sup>45</sup> BBC Radio 4, *Today*, 24 September 2018, [archived](#); *City Wire*, 24 September 2018, [link](#); *Reuters*, 24 September 2018, [link](#); *Financial Times*, 2 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>46</sup> *Fraser Institute*, 28 February 2017, [link](#).



# Maintaining the level of corporation tax

**Summary:** A majority Conservative government would maintain the current level of corporation tax to ensure we can continue investing in our public services like the NHS.

- **We have cut corporation tax from 28 per cent to 19 per cent, which has encouraged businesses to invest and grow in the UK.**
- **We are now committing to maintain corporation tax at the current rate, rather than proceed with further planned reductions. The money saved will go towards public priorities whilst also ensuring that the Government does not have to borrow to fund day-to-day spending.**
- **This will help to fund public services like the NHS and schools and reduce the burden on smaller businesses. We remain committed to making Britain the best place in the world to set up and run a business.**

## Background

- **We cut corporation tax from 28 per cent to 19 per cent, encouraging more firms to invest and grow in the UK.** It was originally planned that corporation tax would be cut further to 17 per cent in April 2020. This would have reduced the Government's tax revenue by £6 billion a year, thereby reducing the amount available to spend on the public's priorities.<sup>47</sup>

## Our solution

- **A Conservative majority Government will maintain the corporation tax rate at its present level of 19 per cent.** This is the lowest rate of any major advanced economy.
- **This does not lessen our commitment to making Britain the best place in the world to set up and run a business.** There are many ways in which Government can promote the interests of business. We have also announced a range of business-friendly measures, including a cut in business rates for small shops and pubs, a fundamental review of business rates and significant increases in the Employment Allowance, Structures & Buildings Allowance and the R&D tax credit. These measures will encourage investment and job creation.

## Conservative record

- **Thanks in part to our reduction in corporation tax, tax receipts from corporations have risen to a record high – meaning more money to spend on our vital public services.** Corporation tax receipts have increased from £36.6 billion in 2009-10 to £53.2 billion in the latest financial year of 2018-19, a 45 per cent increase. According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, lower rates are associated with higher investment and economic growth – thus widening the tax base and increasing revenue.<sup>48</sup>
- **Helping to create 1.4 million more businesses since we came to office in 2010.** There were 5.87 million businesses at the start of 2019 – an increase of 1.4 million since 2010.<sup>49</sup>
- **Securing over £200 billion in additional tax revenue since 2010 – making sure that businesses play by the rules.** At Budget 2018, we announced an ambitious package, with 21 measures that are estimated to raise a further £2.1 billion by 2023-24. This includes measures that protect over £20 billion of revenue which would be lost or at risk if the Government did not act.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>47</sup> HMT, *Spring Budget 2017*, 8 March 2017, [link](#).

<sup>48</sup> IFS, 10 May 2017, [link](#); HMRC, *HMRC tax receipts and National Insurance contributions for the UK*, 22 October 2019, [link](#).

<sup>49</sup> BEIS, *Business Population Estimates 2019*, 10 October 2019, [link](#).

<sup>50</sup> HMT, *Budget 2018*, 29 October 2019, [link](#).

- **Since 2010, we have invested over £2 billion in HMRC to tackle evasion, avoidance and non-compliance.** Since 2010, HMRC have introduced over 100 measures. At Autumn Budget 2017, the government announced 18 measures and additional investment in HMRC to tackle avoidance, evasion, and non-compliance. Together these are forecast to raise an additional £4.8 billion by 2022-23.<sup>51</sup>
- **Ensuring the tax gap remains low at 5.6 per cent.** HMRC figures show that the UK tax gap – the difference between the amount of tax due and the amount collected – remained at a low level in 2017-18.<sup>52</sup>

## Political points to make

- **Labour would hike corporation tax to 26 per cent – taking taxes to their ‘highest ever peacetime level’.** Labour would raise corporation tax and have broken their promise not to raise tax for small businesses. Experts have slammed this tax rise – with the IFS indicating it would lead to ‘higher prices, lower wages or less valuable investments’.<sup>53</sup>
- **John McDonnell said that business is ‘the real enemy’ and said it is part of his job description to overthrow capitalism.** When he was asked whether there was a difference between transforming the economy and overthrowing capitalism, he said ‘I don’t think there is... I want a socialist society’.<sup>54</sup>
- **Labour would seize 10 per cent of businesses – a ‘draconian’ tax grab that would cost businesses £300 billion.** McDonnell will force firms to place 10 per cent of their shares into an ‘inclusive ownership fund’. Some dividends would go to employees and the rest would be taxed. The CBI has estimated a 10 per cent reduction in share prices as a result of this policy; the Institute for Directors called it ‘draconian’; and the British Chamber of Commerce described it as a ‘tax grab’.<sup>55</sup>

## Q. You have previously claimed that cutting corporation tax rates increase revenue. Why do you now believe further cuts would reduce revenue?

Numerous studies have shown the boost to investment generated from our corporation tax cuts from 28 per cent to 19 per cent and the extra tax revenue that has generated. We are proud of cutting corporation tax so that it is the lowest of any major advanced economy. We do now believe that at 19 per cent, we have reached the point at which the indirect benefits from cutting the rate further no longer outweigh the loss in the revenue which could be used elsewhere on other tax cuts and public services.

## Q. Do you agree with Labour that businesses should be taxed more?

Labour want to tax companies more and think there are no limits to the amount of money they can raise in that way without damaging the business sector and its ability to generate the tax revenue on which our public services depend. We are keeping our corporation tax rate at the lowest rate amongst advanced, major economies whilst unveiling a range of new policies to help business. There is a world of difference between these positions.

<sup>51</sup> HMRC, *Press Release*, 20 June 2019, [link](#).

<sup>52</sup> HMT, *Press Release*, 20 June 2019, [link](#).

<sup>53</sup> IFS, 26 May 2017, [link](#); *Labour Press*, 11 April 2017, [link](#).

<sup>54</sup> *The Times*, 21 May 2018, [link](#); John McDonnell, *POA Conference*, 12 May 2011, [archived](#).

<sup>55</sup> BBC Radio 4, *Today*, 24 September 2018, [archived](#); *City Wire*, 24 September 2018, [link](#); *Reuters*, 24 September 2018, [link](#); *Financial Times*, 2 September 2019, [link](#).

# Taking back control of our borders

**Summary:** We will end freedom of movement, replacing it with an Australian-style points-based immigration system, delivering on the referendum result and taking back control of our borders.

- **For too long, politicians have been out of touch with the hardworking majority’s concerns about immigration. The vote to leave the EU was, amongst other things, a vote to take back control of our borders.**
- **That is why, with a functioning Conservative majority, we will get Brexit done and introduce a fair Australian-style points-based immigration system which lowers net migration and allows us to decide who comes to this country on the basis of the skills they have to offer – not where they come from.**
- **Only by installing proper controls and ending the preferential treatment of EEA migrants will we be able to attract the brightest and the best from around the world to come here and contribute to our public services, while relying on far fewer low-skilled migrants and getting overall migration down.**

## Background

- **Under EU law, over 500 million EEA/Swiss citizens and their families have the right to move to the UK.** They do not need to have a job or demonstrate they have skills which the UK economy needs. If an EEA/Swiss citizen moves to the UK they are also entitled to bring their family with them.<sup>56</sup>

## Our solution

- **Regardless of whether they are from Europe or another part of the world, we will welcome people who meet our criteria.** We will end the preferential treatment of EEA-migrants so that we can attract the brightest and the best from all over the world.
- **We will introduce an Australian-style points-based system under which we will decide who comes here based on what they have to offer – not where they come from.** The independent Migration Advisory Committee have been asked to consider how such a system could be introduced, and will report in January 2020. The system will be based upon the following principles: giving priority to those who can prove their knowledge of the English language; are coming to do important work, including in priority industries; are setting up businesses that would employ and invest in British people and pay taxes in the UK; have been law abiding citizens in their own countries; and have the skills the country needs.
- **The system will also mean that the vast majority will need a job offer to come to the UK to work, whether you are an EU citizen or come from outside Europe – meaning we have truly fair and global immigration system.** There will be a small number of exceptions, including high skilled scientists and those who want to come and start a business in the UK.
- **We are making an immediate in-year cash injection of £20 million to strengthen our borders and reduce illegal immigration, including new equipment to better detect illicit goods such as the firearms and drugs fuelling serious violence.** We will also develop a long-term and coherent approach to address the abhorrent exploitation and trafficking of vulnerable people by international criminal gangs.

## Conservative record

- **Protecting the rights of EU citizens who have made the UK their home.** We have guaranteed the rights of EU citizens living in the UK via the EU Settlement Scheme, which we will also put into law at the

---

<sup>56</sup> Citizens' Rights Directive (Directive 2004/38/EC), Article 6(2), [link](#).

earliest opportunity. Over 1.9 million EEA/Swiss citizens have already received settled or pre-settled status.<sup>57</sup>

- **Allowing international students to stay in the UK for two years after graduating to help them find a job.** International students who have successfully completed a degree from a trusted UK university or higher education provider will be able to stay in the UK for two years to find work.<sup>58</sup>
- **Introducing a new NHS Visa, offering fast-track entry to the UK for qualified overseas doctors and nurses under more generous terms.** It will provide a three to five-year work visa with a fast-track decision, a larger dedicated advice service for applicants, and reduced upfront fees. We have already removed doctors and nurses from the Tier 2 visa cap.<sup>59</sup>
- **Ensured that people come to the UK for the right reasons and clamped down on illegal immigration.** We have previously imposed tougher rules for sponsor international students, limited access to benefits for migrants and stopped people sending benefits home. We also introduced measures to prevent illegal immigrants from accessing public services like our NHS, as well as housing, driving licences and bank accounts. We have introduced sanctions on illegal workers and rogue employers, who often take advantage of vulnerable migrants, and made it easier and quicker to remove people with no right to be here.<sup>60</sup>

## Political points to make

- **Labour’s official policy is to maintain and extend freedom of movement – meaning uncontrolled and unlimited immigration.** Labour’s Conference voted for a motion which said Labour will include maintaining and extending freedom of movement in their next manifesto.<sup>61</sup>
- **John McDonnell has repeatedly advocated for ‘open borders’.** In 2013 he said: ‘If we’re a civilised society we should have open borders... It should be a basic human right’. In 2016 he wrote: ‘Inevitably in this century we will have open borders... borders are almost going to become irrelevant by the end of this century, so we should be preparing for that’.<sup>62</sup>
- **Labour’s plan for unlimited and uncontrolled immigration could see net migration treble to 840,000.** Extending freedom of movement to the rest of the world then it would see annual net migration soaring to 840,000 a year over the next decade.<sup>63</sup>

## Q&A

### Q: Will net migration fall or rise under the new immigration system?

Overall, we would like to see net migration fall. Under our new points-based immigration system, fewer low skilled migrants will come to the country and the British people will have control over who is coming here. We still want the best and brightest coming here and contributing to our economy – whether that’s by starting a business, studying or working in our public services.

---

<sup>57</sup> Home Office, *EU Settlement Scheme Statistics*, 14 November 2019, [link](#).

<sup>58</sup> Prime Minister’s Office, *News Story*, 11 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>59</sup> UK Visas and Immigration, *News Story*, 15 June 2018, [link](#).

<sup>60</sup> Prime Minister’s Office, *Press Release*, 29 July 2014, [link](#); HMT/DWP, *News Story*, 8 April 2014, [link](#); *Immigration Act 2014*, accessed 23 September 2018, [link](#); *Immigration Act 2016*, accessed 23 September 2018, [link](#).

<sup>61</sup> *LabourList*, 25 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>62</sup> South London Peoples Assembly, *YouTube*, 7 August 2013, [link](#); *The Telegraph*, 1 February 2016, [link](#).

<sup>63</sup> *The Sun*, 14 November 2019, [link](#); *The Telegraph*, 14 November 2019, [link](#).

# Ensuring fairness in our welfare system

**Summary:** We will equalise access to benefits for EU nationals and those migrants from the rest of the world, meaning that all non-UK benefits claimants will typically need to wait five years.

- **Leaving the European Union provides an opportunity to make sure our immigration and benefit system is simple to understand and fair for the UK taxpayer.**
- **Migrants play a hugely positive role in our society but we want to ensure people have paid into the system before they can access benefits. We will align EU migrants' access to non-contributory benefits with the rest of the world, meaning that they will be required to have settled status in the UK before claiming benefits.**
- **These changes will ensure our welfare system is fair for both the UK taxpayer and those who come to live here, as no group receives preferential treatment.**

## Background

- **Regardless of whether they are from Europe or another part of the world, we welcome immigrants and recognise the huge value that they can bring to our country.** However, we will end the preferential treatment of EEA-migrants so that we can attract the brightest and the best from all over the world.
- **Under the EU's freedom of movement rules, EEA/Swiss citizens and their families have, after only three months of residence, almost the same level of entitlement to benefits as British citizens.** They can even claim child benefit for children that are not in the UK.<sup>64</sup>
- **After Brexit we will be able to take control of our benefits system while ensuring that we protect UK pensioners abroad.** During the EU referendum, polling clearly showed that the British people had a desire for us to align EU migrants' access to benefits with that of non-EU nationals. This is a fair principle, which treats all migrants equally.<sup>65</sup>

## Our solution

- **By delivering on the result of the referendum, we can fully control where welfare is spent for the first time in a generation.** By introducing legislation, our new system will ensure that all migrants have no recourse for public funds upon arrival. This will mean that they are only entitled to access contributory benefits once they are granted settled status. This occurs typically after five years, at which point they would be able access benefits on the same basis as an UK national. This is bringing the treatment of EEA nationals in line with those from the rest of the world.
- **We will also stop child benefit being sent overseas to restore fairness in the benefit system.** It is wrong that a British taxpayer ends up paying for non-British children who don't even live in the UK.
- **Our new policies will not impact EU citizens who have received pre-settled or settled status through the EU Settlement Scheme before the end of 2020 and our new immigration system coming into place.** Those who come here in good faith prior to the European Union Settlement Scheme deadline in December 2020 won't be affected by the changes as long as they have received pre-settled or settled status beforehand. This policy will not apply retrospectively.

## Conservative record

- **Protected the rights of EU citizens who have made the UK their home.** We have made it clear that EU

<sup>64</sup> *Citizens' Rights Directive* (Directive 2004/38/EC), Article 24, [link](#); *Daily Express*, 20 October 2015, [link](#).

<sup>65</sup> Home Office, *The UK's Future Immigration System* p.96, December 2018, [link](#).

citizens resident in the EU before exit day will maintain their right to live, work and access benefits and services as they do now. We want EU citizens who came in good faith to live in the UK before Brexit to stay. That is why we have guaranteed their rights with the EU Settlement Scheme free of charge, which we will also put into law at the earliest opportunity. Over 1.9 million EEA/Swiss citizens have received settled or pre-settled status.<sup>66</sup>

- **Ensured that people are coming to the UK for the right reasons.** We imposed tougher rules on universities and colleges who sponsor international students to study in the UK. We also introduced measures to prevent illegal immigrants from accessing public services like our NHS, as well as housing, driving licences and bank accounts.<sup>67</sup>

## Political points to make

- **Labour’s official policy is to maintain and extend freedom of movement – meaning uncontrolled and unlimited immigration and an ever expanding benefits bill.** Labour’s Conference voted for a motion which said Labour will include maintaining and extending freedom of movement in their next manifesto.<sup>68</sup>
- **Labour’s plan for unlimited and uncontrolled immigration is the biggest threat to our public services, and could see net migration treble to 840,000.** Extending freedom of movement to the rest of the world then it would see annual net migration soaring to 840,000 a year over the next decade.<sup>69</sup>
- **Jeremy Corbyn and Diane Abbott have opposed making EU migrants wait to receive benefits.** In 2015, Corbyn said: ‘If somebody is working, paying taxes, doing a job just like anybody else, then surely they deserve access to exactly the same benefits as anybody else’. Last year, Abbott said: ‘Again, if workers legally here should find themselves unemployed through no fault of their own, one of the quickest ways to drive down pay and conditions for all is to deny them the subsistence levels of unemployment and other benefits’.<sup>70</sup>
- **Labour and the Liberal Democrats have previously opposed child benefit being sent overseas.** In 2015 Rachel Reeves, then Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pension said: ‘We will work with other European countries to stop child benefit and child tax credit being sent abroad’ and in 2014 Nick Clegg said sending child benefit abroad was ‘absurd’.<sup>71</sup>

## Q&A

### **Q: You have promised to deliver this for years and failed?**

That is because EU rules, created under Labour’s watch, have obliged us to send child benefit abroad. Now we are leaving the EU we can decide what benefits we send abroad. We will restrict access to child benefit to align with other countries and provide fairness to the British taxpayer.

### **Q: How this will affect EU citizens who currently live in the UK and those who arrive during the transition period?**

This policy will not affect them. Those who come here to in good faith prior to the European Union Settlement Scheme deadline in December 2020 won’t be affected by the changes.

### **Q: When will you introduce these changes?**

This policy will only take effect once we have left the transition period and once we have introduced our new points-based immigration system. This will not apply until January 2021.

---

<sup>66</sup> Home Office, *EU Settlement Scheme*, 14 October 2019, [link](#).

<sup>67</sup> Prime Minister’s Office, *Press Release*, 29 July 2014, [link](#); HMT/DWP, *News Story*, 8 April 2014, [link](#); *Immigration Act 2014*, accessed 23 September 2018, [link](#).

<sup>68</sup> *LabourList*, 25 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>69</sup> *The Sun*, 14 November 2019, [link](#); *The Telegraph*, 14 November 2019, [link](#).

<sup>70</sup> *Labour Press*, 13 September 2018, [link](#); *The Guardian*, 17 December 2015, [link](#).

<sup>71</sup> *Daily Mail*, 1 May 2015, [link](#); *Daily Mail*, 13 November 2014, [link](#).

# Increasing the NHS surcharge and tackling health tourism

**Summary:** We are increasing the health surcharge to £625 and extending it to EU migrants after Brexit.

- **UK citizens pay for the NHS throughout their working life with their taxes and it is only fair that overseas visitors and workers make a fair contribution to its long-term sustainability.**
- **That's why for overseas workers we are increasing the health surcharge for overseas workers and extending it to EU migrants after Brexit to ensure they are making a sufficient contribution towards our health service. We are also taking action to better enforce payments.**
- **Money raised will ensure we can adequately fund frontline NHS services and all have the peace of mind that the NHS will be there for our children and grandchildren.**

## Background

- **Whilst we want to attract the best and brightest to the UK, we also want to ensure domestic public services are not put under strain by people who have not contributed their fair share in taxes.**
- **Migrants who use the NHS cost an average of £625 per year but only pay £400 in an annual charge known as the Immigration Health Surcharge.** This means taxpayers are potentially subsidising the healthcare of each visitor by hundreds of pounds a year.
- **The average taxpayer pays £4,000 a year to fund the NHS.** The average English taxpayer contributes £4,685 to fund the NHS every year, over ten times the current surcharge of £400.<sup>72</sup>
- **Unpaid hospital bills for overseas visitors cost the NHS millions of pounds.** The £150 million in unpaid hospital bills is money that has been taken away from the frontline NHS.<sup>73</sup>

## Our solution

- **We will increase the surcharge to £625.** This will ensure it more accurately covers the costs of healthcare from overseas workers from the day they arrive in the UK.
- **We will also extend the health surcharge to migrants from the EU after Brexit to ensure we have a fair system.** Foreign workers from outside the EU already pay the surcharge. This policy is about making it fair, by extending it to EU workers after Brexit.
- **Through the NHS Visa scheme there will be support for NHS staff to gradually pay back the surcharge using their salary.** Where that charge is not already covered by the NHS Trust making the job offer, the option of paying the surcharge back monthly as part of automatic deductions from pay. Dependents of NHS staff will be able to use the same option to pay monthly.
- **We will also double the health tourism 'hit squad', to recover unpaid hospital bills.** We will provide an additional £850,000 funding for an expanded and strengthened NHS 'hit squad'. This will allow for more intensive audits of trusts' cost recovery practices, and more direct support for trusts who have the highest unpaid hospital bills from overseas visitors.

## Conservative record

- **Since the surcharge was introduced in 2015 the NHS has recovered over £1.3 billion** through direct charging of overseas visitors, recovering costs from EEA patients and the immigration health surcharge.

<sup>72</sup> HMRC, *Table 2.2 Number of income taxpayers by country*, 28 June 2019, [link](#); HM Treasury, *Spending Round 2019*, 4 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>73</sup> *Daily Mail*, 27 August 2019, [link](#).

- **We increased the surcharge in October 2018 from £200 to £400 per year.** This change better reflected the cost of migrants to the NHS, and we have continued to keep it under review to assess to optimal level.<sup>74</sup>
- **We also stepped up action to recover charges.** We have increased the support we offer to overseas teams in the NHS, including a dedicated NHS Improvement team (known as the ‘hit squad’), to help them be more effective in identifying patients and recovering charges. As a result, we continue to see increases in the amount of money which is recovered and goes back into frontline public services.<sup>75</sup>
- **We are providing healthcare for all patients who urgently need it, regardless of their ability to pay.** NHS rules state that trusts must never withhold treatment from patients who require urgent healthcare while they are in the UK, even if they cannot afford to pay. This means any care clinicians say should not wait until a visitor’s departure from the UK, and recovery of charges can take place after the care has been provided.<sup>76</sup>

## Political points to make

- **Labour’s official policy is to maintain and extend freedom of movement.** Labour’s Conference voted for a motion which said Labour will include maintaining and extending freedom of movement in their next manifesto.<sup>77</sup>
- **Labour’s plan for unlimited and uncontrolled immigration is the biggest threat to our public services, and could see net migration treble to 840,000.** Extending freedom of movement to the rest of the world then it would see annual net migration soaring to 840,000 a year over the next decade.<sup>78</sup>

## Q&A

### Q: Should there not be exemptions for NHS staff?

The NHS relies on qualified overseas doctors and nurses to provide high quality care. That’s why we have announced plans for a new NHS Visa which includes subsidised visa costs, equivalent to half of the current visa costs. The Visa will also allow staff to gradually pay the health surcharge using their salary where that charge is not already covered by their NHS Trust, reducing any upfront cost barrier. It is not right that non-British citizens can use our NHS without contributing anything towards it, and the surcharge is still far less than the average taxpayers contributes every year to the NHS.

### Q: Immigrants already pay tax?

British citizens pay a lifetime of tax contributions which help to fund the NHS. The health surcharge means that from the point of arrival in the UK, others can enjoy the same access to the NHS as a permanent resident. They can use the full range of NHS services without incurring treatment charges and without having made any tax or national insurance contributions in the UK previously.

<sup>74</sup> Home Office, *News Story*, 11 October 2018, [link](#).

<sup>75</sup> DHSC, *News Story*, 8 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>76</sup> DHSC, *News Story*, 8 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>77</sup> *LabourList*, 25 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>78</sup> *The Sun*, 14 November 2019, [link](#); *The Telegraph*, 14 November 2019, [link](#).



# Nature for Climate Fund

**Summary:** We will protect and enhance our countryside with a new £640 million Nature for Climate Fund for England, and work with the Devolved Administrations to triple UK tree planting rates and restore our peatland.

- **We are leading the world in our efforts to tackle climate change. Enhancing our countryside by planting more trees and restoring peatland will be crucial to hitting our science-led 2050 Net Zero target.**
- **That's why we're setting up a new Nature for Climate fund to help us increase tree planting in England and turn our degraded peatlands into crucial resources that can help to capture harmful emissions. We would also work with the Devolved Administrations to triple UK tree-planting rates to an additional 30,000 hectares every year – space for at least 30 million more trees.**
- **By getting Brexit done we can focus on people's priorities like tackling climate change and restoring nature. Our new fund will restore and protect the British countryside for future generations.**

## Background

- **We will need to plant more trees to help us meet our commitment to Net Zero emissions by 2050 – when the UK's contribution to global warming will end.** Trees provide a natural way of taking harmful carbon out the atmosphere, and, as part of the UK's commitment to achieve Net Zero emissions by 2050, we need to start planting significantly more trees.

## Our solution

- **Establishing a £640 million Nature for Climate Fund leaving our environment in a better condition for the next generation.** The Fund will be used to dramatically increase tree-planting rates in England with more research into the most appropriate species to plant across the country, a scaling up the nursery sector to grow the saplings, new partnerships with landowners, and increased planting rates on sites.
- **Planting more trees in urban areas, to help tackle poor air quality and make our towns and cities healthier places to live and raise children.** The Fund will include money for urban trees, which help boost air quality and improve the quality of life in our towns and cities.
- **Tripling tree planting rates to 30,000 hectares a year across the UK – equivalent to 46,000 football pitches.** We accept the independent Climate Change Committee's recommendation to increase tree planting across the UK to 30,000 hectares a year and will work with Devolved Administrations to achieve this goal. This will deliver new forests across the country, while expanding existing plans like the Northern Forest and Northumberland Forest.

## Conservative record

- **Planting more than 16 million trees since coming to Government in 2010.** We have also £60 million to help plant new woodlands and urban trees, including the creation of a Northern Forest and Northumberland Forest.<sup>79</sup>
- **Restoring thousands of hectares of peatland across England.** We have provided £10 million for four large-scale peatland restoration projects and will restore 6,498 hectares of degraded peatland across England.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Hansard, 31 October 2019, [link](#); *The Guardian*, 29 October 2018, [link](#); DEFRA, *News story*, 7 January 2018, [link](#).

<sup>80</sup> Hansard, 31 October 2019, [link](#).

- **Legislating to end the UK’s contribution to global warming and achieve Net Zero by 2050.** We upgraded the existing target of an 80 per cent reduction in emissions in the Climate Change Act to achieve 100 per cent, or Net Zero emissions, by 2050.<sup>81</sup>

## Political points to make

- **Labour’s climate change plans are ‘utterly unachievable’ and ‘almost certainly impossible’.** Labour plan to reduce emissions to Net Zero by 2030, but the GMB union said: ‘Net Zero carbon emissions by 2030 is utterly unachievable’, and the IFS added: ‘Aiming for zero emissions by 2030 is almost certainly impossible, hugely disruptive and risks undermining consensus’.<sup>82</sup>
- **Labour’s unrealistic plans would not allow time to plant the trees we need to suck up carbon.** Many species native to the UK can take over 15 years before they begin to sequester carbon at a significant rate – meaning Labour’s plans for Net Zero earlier than 2050 simply aren’t credible or would require punitive measures such as banning red meat and flights.<sup>83</sup>
- **The independent Committee on Climate Change warns that targeting Net Zero before 2050 would require ‘punitive’ measures, making life considerably harder for the British people.** The CCC said: ‘An earlier date would also give less time to develop currently speculative options as alternatives to make up for any shortfall from other measures. That could lead to a need for punitive policies and early capital scrappage to stay on track to the target’.<sup>84</sup>

## Q&A

### Q: Why haven’t you declared a climate change emergency?

We agree that climate change is one of the most challenging issues we face - but we’re getting on with delivering the policies to actually tackle climate change, rather than sloganeering and setting targets we can’t hit like Labour.

### Q: Why don’t you commit to Net Zero by 2030 like Labour?

Even Labour-supporting unions called their 2030 target ‘utterly unachievable’. It’s vital that we set manageable targets that will bring society with us – banning people from using their cars or taking flights is never going to be the answer.

---

<sup>81</sup> Prime Minister’s Office/BEIS, *Press Release*, 12 June 2019, [link](#).

<sup>82</sup> BBC Radio 4, *The Today Programme*, 24 September 2019, [archived](#); Paul Johnson, *Twitter*, 24 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>83</sup> Woodland Carbon Trust, *Project carbon sequestration*, accessed 14 November 2019, [link](#).

<sup>84</sup> Committee on Climate Change, *Net Zero: The UK’s contribution to stopping global warming*, May 2019, [link](#).

# Blue Planet Fund

**Summary:** Using the UK's aid budget, we will establish a new £500 million fund to support the protection and restoration of our oceans.

- **Urgent action is needed to tackle plastic pollution, overfishing and climate change, which are causing significant harm to the world's marine environments and putting certain species at risk of extinction.**
- **To combat this we will establish a significant new Blue Planet Fund to help protect our oceans, sharing our world-leading expertise to support developing countries to protect precious marine habitats and restore their potential to tackle climate change.**
- **Leaving the EU is a defining opportunity for the UK to take ambitious action at home and abroad to protect our natural environment for future generations.**

## Background

- **Oceans support the livelihoods of people around the world.** Oceans support the livelihoods of one in every 10 people, including some of the poorest and most vulnerable people worldwide. Fisheries serve as a livelihood for over 38 million people in developing countries and up to 50 million people in processing and marketing.<sup>85</sup>
- **Our oceans are under threat and urgent action is needed to protect them.** Mangroves sequester and store carbon dioxide, they protect coastal people from extreme weather, improve water quality, provide timber and fuel, and are the bedrock of highly productive fisheries. In some countries as much as 50 per cent of natural mangrove forests have already been lost. Globally, more than 35 per cent of mangroves have disappeared and they continue to be deforested quicker than any other forest type.<sup>86</sup>

## Our solution

- **Establishing a £500 million Blue Planet Fund to protect our oceans and support the people whose livelihoods rely on the seas.** The £500 million Fund will, over the next five years, be focused on:
  - **Strengthening governance to protect marine environments.** The new fund will strengthen governance, institutional capability and regulations in developing countries – improving surveillance and enforcement - to ensure protection of our most vital marine ecosystems. By using UK satellite technology to monitor marine environments and ensure that Marine Protected Areas are not subject to illegal fishing.
  - **Strengthening science, research and innovation to help other countries protect the oceans that are so vital to all of us.** We are world leaders in marine science and research integrity. The fund will help us export our expertise and establish new partnerships for research in developing countries. We will measurably improve capacity and access to relevant knowledge in developing countries to protect marine assets and livelihoods.
  - **Engaging the private sector, experts and local communities to encourage more sustainable fishing.** We will work with large companies to demonstrate the viability of sustainable production and ocean-friendly supply chains and target small to medium scale enterprises to drive innovation and empower women-owned businesses. We will support countries in implementing port state measures to prevent landing of illegally caught fish.

<sup>85</sup> DFID, *Fisheries Management Science Programme*, accessed 13 November 2019, [link](#).

<sup>86</sup> WWF, *Mangrove forests are one of the world's most threatened tropical ecosystems*, accessed 13 November 2019, [link](#).

## Conservative record

- **Leading the world in marine protection.** In May 2019, we designated 41 new Marine Conservation Zones – the most significant expansion of England’s ‘Blue Belt’ to date. The UK now has a total of 355 marine protected areas in waters around Great Britain and Northern Ireland. An independent review is currently considering whether stronger protections should be introduced.<sup>87</sup>
- **Committing £7 million to expand the Blue Belt across the UK’s overseas territories, leading by example across the world.** The Blue Belt, which are Marine Protected Areas in which key species like turtles, whales and seabirds can thrive, now covers our million square kilometres across the planet.<sup>88</sup>
- **Helping developing nations tackle the causes of climate change, cementing our position as a world leader in the fight against climate change.** We will double the UK’s International Climate Finance to more than £11 billion over five years, which supports poorer countries deal with the causes of climate change like preventing deforestation and reducing carbon emissions.<sup>89</sup>

## Political points to make

- **Labour’s reckless plans for renationalisation would block the private investment needed to develop new technologies we need to tackle climate change.** Plans for nationalising energy networks would put at risk the UK’s efforts to tackle dangerous climate change, leading to a delay in meeting the Government’s own legally binding commitment for Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050, according to research conducted by Frontier Economics.<sup>90</sup>
- **Labour want to remain in the EU – meaning they could not seize many of the environmental opportunities presented by leaving.** They are backing a second referendum on any deal and would campaign to remain.<sup>91</sup>
- **Labour MEPs ignored the interests of British fishermen and supported a bid to keep Britain inside the Common Fisheries Policy.** In June 2018, MEPs from Labour and the SNP endorsed a report suggesting the UK continue to apply the policy after Brexit.<sup>92</sup>

## Q&A

### Q: Is this what the aid budget should be used for?

The purpose of the aid budget is to prevent and eradicate extreme poverty in the developing world. There are over 38 million people worldwide are employed in fisheries and aquaculture, 95 per cent of whom are in developing countries, with approximately another 50 million employed in related industries – such as processing and marketing. By some estimates, fish forms the main source of protein to roughly 1 billion people around the world. So protecting fish stocks and restoring our oceans is an essential part of eradicating extreme poverty.<sup>93</sup>

### Q: If this funding is coming from the aid budget can it be spent in UK waters?

The UK already has a Blue Belt of protected areas twice the size of England. This will be money spent outside of UK waters on protecting some of the most important marine environments on the planet; from mangroves to coral reefs.

<sup>87</sup> DEFRA, *Press Release*, 31 May 2019, [link](#).

<sup>88</sup> FCO, *Press Release*, 26 August 2019, [link](#).

<sup>89</sup> DFID/BEIS/Prime Minister’s Office, *Press Release*, 23 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>90</sup> Energy Networks Association, *Nationalisation risks UK missing its Net Zero Target*, September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>91</sup> *Express*, 7 June 2018, [link](#).

<sup>92</sup> *Express*, 7 June 2018, [link](#).

<sup>93</sup> DFID, *Fisheries Management Science Programme*, accessed 13 November 2019, [link](#).

# Cutting business rates on the high street

**Summary:** A Conservative majority Government will cut business rates for small retailers and introduce new rates relief for pubs, cinemas and music venues.

- **Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, creating jobs and spreading prosperity in every corner of our country. However, we know that many small businesses, especially on the high street, struggle with the costs of business rates.**
- **A Conservative majority Government will introduce a new wave of business rates cuts for small businesses. We will expand the retail discount to 50 per cent, we will extend the retail discount to cinemas and music venues and we will introduce a new £1,000 relief to support pubs.**
- **These tax cuts will help cut costs for small businesses such as pubs, cafes and hairdressers to boost wages and investment and come alongside previous measures we have taken to support the high street.**

## Background

- **Small businesses are the drivers of growth and prosperity across our country.** They employ millions of people and create the goods and services we all want. However, business rates have consistently been one of the biggest issues for small business.
- **We are bringing forward the Business Rates Revaluation to enable businesses to benefit from more accurate bills.** The 2018 Spring Statement announced that the next revaluation will be brought forward a year to 2021.<sup>94</sup>

## Our solution

- **We will increase the business rates retail discount, which reduces tax for small businesses, to 50 per cent next year.** This will increase the retail discount from 33 per cent to 50 per cent in 2020-21. This would be an effective £280 million tax cut which would help small businesses on the high street in particular. This applies to properties with a rateable value of less than £51,000.
- **We will extend the retail discount to all cinemas and music venues.** Hundreds of small music venues and cinemas which currently pay business rates will now qualify for the retail discount, helping to cut their costs and making it easier for them to do business.
- **We will introduce a new business rates relief for pubs, on top of the extended retail relief.** Together, the two reliefs will cut business rates for the average pub in England by £9,750. Pubs are at the centre of local communities across our nation and we are determined to back them by cutting their costs. This is on top of the steps we have taken to date to cut beer duty.
- **Up to half a million businesses will benefit, with the average corner shop saving £1,400.** The average corner shop will get a £1,400 cut in their business rates from the extension in the retail discount.

## Conservative record

- **Since 2016, we have provided around £13 billion worth of business rates relief.** Cutting costs for businesses has boosted their funds available for investment, expansion, new jobs and higher wages. Over a third of the smallest properties already pay no business rates because of small business rates relief.

---

<sup>94</sup> HMT, *Spring Statement 2018*, 13 March 2018, [link](#).

- **We have taken 600,000 businesses out of paying business rates altogether, helping our high streets to thrive.** In April 2017, we permanently doubled the rate of small business rate relief and increased the threshold for eligibility, meaning that 600,000 small businesses now pay no business rates at all.<sup>95</sup>
- **We have cut business rates for small retailers by a third for two years – saving 90 per cent of all shops, pubs and restaurants up to £8,000.**<sup>96</sup>
- **We have created a £1 billion Future High Streets Funds and a new High Streets Taskforce.** This will support councils to implement plans for the transformation of their high streets. We will also relax town planning rules to support new mixed-use businesses on the high street and the conversion of under-used retail units into offices and homes.<sup>97</sup>
- **We have launched a £3.6 billion Towns Fund which will help improve local transport links and boost broadband connectivity in towns across England.** The funding will support an initial 100 towns by improving both transport and digital infrastructure.<sup>98</sup>

## Political points to make

- **Labour have pledged to raise corporation tax by seven percentage points, costing 160,000 jobs.** Labour’s manifesto states that it would raise ‘the headline rate to... 26 per cent from 2020-21’. Increasing the headline rate of corporation tax consistently to reach 26 per cent by 2022-23 would reduce employment by approximately 160,000, other things being equal, over the next four years.<sup>99</sup>
- **Labour would also raise corporation tax for 1 million small businesses, despite Corbyn promising not to.** Labour’s manifesto contained a pledge to hike the small profits rate to 21 per cent, despite Jeremy Corbyn saying in April 2017 ‘we will not raise the small business corporation tax rate’.<sup>100</sup>

## Q&A

### Q: Will this make a difference?

Business rates are a real concern for small businesses and extending relief has cut costs for hundreds of thousands of business. These new business rates cuts will directly cut costs for businesses even further which will give them the freedom to invest that money elsewhere.

### Q: Business rates are the top concern of businesses, why aren’t you going further?

This is a significant package worth more than a quarter billion pounds worth of tax cuts for disproportionately smaller businesses. We are keen to keep taxes as low as possible and this measure goes a long way in cutting costs for many businesses.

<sup>95</sup> Hansard, 14 September 2017, *Vol.628 Col.27WS*, [link](#).

<sup>96</sup> HMT, *Budget 2018*, 20 October 2018, [link](#).

<sup>97</sup> HMT, *Budget 2018*, 29 October 2018, [link](#); MHCLG, *Press Release*, 26 August 2019, [link](#).

<sup>98</sup> Prime Minister’s Office, *Speech at Manchester Science and Industry Museum*, 27 July 2019, [link](#).

<sup>99</sup> Labour Party, *Funding Britain’s Future*, May 2017, p.6, [link](#); *CRD Economic Analysis*, 17 May 2017.

<sup>100</sup> Jeremy Corbyn, *Speech to FSB*, 11 April, 2017, [archived](#); *Labour Press*, 10 May 2017, [link](#).

## Community ownership fund

**Summary:** We will enable communities to buy and run pubs, post offices and other community assets threatened with closure, improving their bidding rights and provide funding to help them pay for it.

- **Institutions that anchor communities are in decline – for instance, a quarter of all pubs have closed since 1990 and almost half of town centre shops in some communities are vacant.**
- **To reverse this trend, we will give community groups a form of preferred-bidder status on certain ‘assets of community value’ when they come up for sale and enable community groups to acquire them, beefing up their rights and offering support via a £150 million Community Ownership Fund.**
- **By handing power, control and ownership of prized assets local back to local people, we can ensure communities don’t lose the places that are part of their local identity, protecting them for future generations.**

### Background

- **We introduced the Localism Act in 2011 to halt the decline in pubs, village shops, sports grounds and other facilities by allowing them to be nominated as ‘assets of community value’.** This gave community groups the ability to pause the sale of an asset of community value for six months if it went on the market. This was intended to give the community group time to prepare their own bid.
- **While well-intentioned, only a small number of the assets of community value registered have ended up in community hands.** An asset of community value’s owner can in practice sell it to whoever they want, whenever they want, including by making agreements with a non-community buyer before the moratorium is up. The only effect is that a sale to a non-community buyer agreed during the moratorium period cannot be completed until afterwards.

### Our solution

- **We will beef up the 2011 Act rights and close the ‘going concern’ loophole.** We will make the process simpler for community groups to engage with and increase the moratorium period to nine months – giving communities more time to prepare a bid and raise funds. We will also end the ‘going concern’ loophole where an asset of community value is sold to a new owner who swiftly takes it out of community use.
- **We will provide support to community groups minded to make a bid for an asset.** A £150 million fund will help groups with the cost of preparing a bid, whether legal, commercial or planning related, and co-fund the most deserving purchases. Other forms of financial support could include the Lottery Community Fund, charitable and local government grants.
- **We will prevent owners from making agreements to sell to anyone other than a community group before the moratorium is up.** This would be a form of preferred-bidder status for communities, though they could still be outbid at the end of the period if someone else came up with a higher offer.
- **This fund will be open to all community groups and we expect councils to facilitate bids.** The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government will be the sponsoring department and we will consult on the design of the fund in the New Year.

### Conservative record

- **We have backed community leaders with £1 billion of funding to help modernise their high streets and town centres.** The Prime Minister recently expanded the Future High Streets Fund, confirming that

another 50 towns in England will be given a share of £1 billion to redevelop their high streets, taking the total receiving support to 100 places.<sup>101</sup>

- **We have relaxed planning rules to support new community hubs on our high streets.** There are currently over 27,000 premises lying vacant in England's town centres, and the Open Doors project that will see empty shops being opened up to community groups offering services to the most vulnerable and helping ensure our towns remain vibrant places people want to visit.<sup>102</sup>
- **Our £3.6 billion Towns Fund will help improve local transport links and boost broadband connectivity in 100 towns.** The funding will support an initial 100 towns by improving, among other things, their transport and digital infrastructure – driving growth and making them more prosperous. We have provided funding to the local authorities in the shortlisted towns to start preparing bids that best reflect the individual needs and circumstances of their area.<sup>103</sup>

## Political points to make

- **The last Labour government increased costs for community organisations by stealth, making it harder for them to survive.** Under Labour the average business rates bill in England rose from £6,796 a year in 1997-98 to £12,145 in 2009-10. In real terms, this represented a rise from £9,196 to £12,145 a year – despite the fact that business rates are supposed to be pegged to RPI inflation.<sup>104</sup>
- **John McDonnell would raise corporation tax on 1 million small businesses, despite Corbyn promising not to.** Labour's manifesto contained a pledge to hike the small profits rate to 21 per cent, despite Jeremy Corbyn saying in April 2017 'we will not raise the small business corporation tax rate'.<sup>105</sup>
- **Labour's manifesto pledged to raise corporation tax by seven per cent, costing over 100,000 jobs.** Labour's manifesto states that it would raise 'the headline rate to... 26 per cent from 2020-21'. Increasing the headline rate of corporation tax will have a significant impact on jobs. Independent experts have estimated that if the rate rises to 24 per cent, this would cost 100,000 jobs.<sup>106</sup>

## Q&A

### **Q: Can community ownership really help tackle the problems our pubs and shops are facing?**

Not entirely, but it can mitigate them. Costs of community-owned businesses can be lower, customer offer more responsive, customer loyalty greater. Money is ploughed back into the local area, sustaining nearby commercial businesses.

### **Q: Where will this money come from?**

This funding is part of the £3.6 billion Towns Fund, which will be allocated to 100 towns to help them improve and prosper.

---

<sup>101</sup> MHCLG, *Press Release*, 26 August 2019, [link](#).

<sup>102</sup> MHCLG, *Press Release*, 7 November 2018, [link](#).

<sup>103</sup> Prime Minister's Office, *Speech at Manchester Science and Industry Museum*, 27 July 2019, [link](#).

<sup>104</sup> Conservative Party, *Campaign Guide 2010*, p.310.

<sup>105</sup> Jeremy Corbyn, *Speech to FSB*, 11 April, 2017, [archived](#); *Labour Press*, 10 May 2017, [link](#).

<sup>106</sup> Labour Party, *Funding Britain's Future*, May 2017, p.6, [link](#); *CPS*, 8 February 2015, [link](#).



# Connecting more towns to the rail network

**Summary:** We will reverse many of the Beeching rail cuts of the 1960s, reconnecting towns that have suffered since their railways were removed.

- **We know that too many communities can feel disconnected and left behind as a result of poor transport infrastructure. The Beeching cuts to the railway in the 1960s exacerbated many of these problems, widening the divides between London and regions and between cities and towns.**
- **We are announcing £500 million for a Beeching Reversal Fund, to rejoin many of the towns cut off by Beeching, transforming their prospects with a train service that allows people to travel for work, college and nights out, and which encourages commuters to move in.**
- **We are levelling up opportunities across the whole country, renewing the ties that bind our communities together to unleash Britain's potential.**

## Background

- **During the 1960s, Dr Richard Beeching recommended thousands of train stations and thousands of miles of track be closed, leaving many communities feeling disconnected and left behind.** The nationalised rail system lacked investment and Beeching thought rail use would decline and so recommended a contraction of the rail network. As a result, the network shrank by 30 per cent during Harold Wilson's Government.
- **Despite this, passenger journeys have almost doubled since the 1960s.** In 1963, when Beeching's first report was published, there were 938 million passenger journeys. By 2018-19, this had almost doubled to 1.8 million.<sup>107</sup>

## Our solution

- **Establishing a Beeching Reversal Fund of £500 million, to rejoin many of the towns cut off by Beeching to the network, helping to spread prosperity across the country.**
- **Reconnecting towns to the railway will transform their prospects by ensuring decent, reliable transport links.** As part of the Beeching Reversal Fund, we would consider reconnecting:
  - **Ashington, Seaton Delaval and Blyth**, with a combined population of 100,000, served by an active freight line. Some 42 per cent of households in Ashington Central do not own a car. Northumberland County Council seeks £99 million to reinstate stations and bring these towns within 35 minutes of Newcastle.
  - **Skelmersdale**, whose population of 38,000 is served only by infrequent buses, despite 35 per cent of households not owning cars. An active rail line runs less than two miles away; extending it to the town would bring it within 30 minutes of Liverpool and 60 minutes of Manchester.
  - **Thornton-Cleveleys and Fleetwood**, served by a disused freight line, with a combined population of 57,000.
  - **Willenhall and Darlaston**, with a population of 60,000. £18 million is needed for reopening stations; a further £10 million has already been provided by the Government.
  - **We will work with other communities on other lines which could be reopened.**

---

<sup>107</sup> ORR, *Passenger journeys*, accessed 12 November 2019, [link](#).

## Conservative record

- **Embarking on the biggest rail modernisation programme since Victorian times to deliver better, quicker journeys for passengers.** We will spend £48 billion on improving our railways, delivering major projects, rolling out new trains and upgrading and electrifying hundreds of miles of track.<sup>108</sup>
- **Delivering a new Manchester to Leeds rail route to unlock growth across the North of England.** We will deliver a new Trans-Pennine route – the first stage of Northern Powerhouse Rail.<sup>109</sup>
- **Helping people with rail fares, making it cheaper for young people to get to school, university and work.** We have introduced new 26-30 and 16-17 year olds' railcards to help young people who use trains regularly.<sup>110</sup>
- **Launching a review to transform Britain's railways to improve services and provide better value for money for passengers.** The Williams review will end the flawed franchising system, delivering better services and value for money for passengers.<sup>111</sup>

## Political points to make

- **Labour wants to renationalise our railways, meaning less investment and poorer services for passengers.** Since privatisation, investment in our railways has substantially increased. In 2017-18, private companies invested £1.3 billion in our rail network, the highest figure since records began in 2006-07.<sup>112</sup>

## Q&A

### **Q: How will you decide which lines to reopen?**

Our initial focus will be on lines serving communities where there is substantial demand and need for better services, many of them disadvantaged industrial towns. We will also consider the case for new strategic links for passengers and freight.

### **Q: When will these lines be opened?**

It is hoped that the first of them, where non-passenger track is already in place, could be opened within three years.

### **Q: How many are we committing to re-open compared to the total that were closed?**

We expect to fund a mixture of smaller and larger schemes - and we will encourage co-funding from other sources, including other government pots, local authorities and business, though this will not be a condition of funding any individual scheme. Depending which schemes we choose, and the amount of co-funding received, it could pay for between 10 and 30 new schemes serving dozens of communities.

---

<sup>108</sup> DfT, *News Story*, 15 May 2019, [link](#).

<sup>109</sup> Prime Minister's Office, *Press Release*, 27 July 2019, [link](#).

<sup>110</sup> DfT, *News Story*, 14 August 2019, [link](#).

<sup>111</sup> DfT, *News Story*, 20 September 2018, [link](#).

<sup>112</sup> ORR, *Private investment in the rail industry*, accessed 12 November 2019, [link](#).

# Cycling and walking investment

**Summary:** We will dramatically increase investment in cycling and walking, creating a new £350 million cycling infrastructure fund and tough new design standards which must be followed to receive any money. We will join with the NHS to promote cycling.

- **Encouraging walking and cycling is key to improving public health and improving air quality in our towns and cities.**
- **We will boost our investment in walking and cycling to make it easier for people to get around, and work with the NHS to encourage people to become more active.**
- **Our plans will improve the quality of life for many people, improving our health and ensuring our infrastructure is fit for the future.**

## Background

- We have a growing public health crisis, and a growing traffic congestion problem in our cities. These things can be tackled together by encouraging more people to walk and cycle.
- We know that millions more people want to cycle, and would do so if it felt safer. Installing safe bike facilities causes dramatic increases in cycling, which in turn brings improved physical and mental health, cleaner and quieter cities, better air, and stronger local economies.

## Our solution

- **We will invest in new cycling and walking infrastructure, including joining up cycling with the NHS:**
  - Low-traffic ‘healthy neighbourhoods’ – working with local councils to reduce the impact of rat-running cars and lorries, making side streets nicer to live in and safer to walk, cycle and play in while maintaining the access people need.
  - Segregated ‘health lanes’ on main roads will turn several cities and towns into giant, open-air gyms, letting thousands exercise safely as part of their normal daily commute and reducing harms from motorised travel. Pedestrian space and pavements will be increased and improved. This will be piloted in Blackpool in partnership with the NHS.
  - In these areas, GPs will be incentivised to prescribe bicycles or bike hire to patients in need.
  - We will raise cycling funding elsewhere in the country and make it conditional on adherence to strict new quality standards, similar to the London Cycling Design Standards introduced under Boris Johnson's mayoralty. Too much cycling infrastructure is substandard, providing little protection from motorised traffic and giving up at the very places where it is most needed.
  - We will double bikeability training, so all children across the country can get it.
  - We will create a long-term cycling programme and budget like the roads programme and budget, though of course smaller, with a new infrastructure fund to build better schemes.

## Conservative record

- **We are committed to doubling cycling by 2025.** Our vision is that cycling, alongside walking, becomes the natural choice for shorter journeys, regardless of age, gender, fitness or income, beginning with encouraging children to walk or cycle to school where possible.<sup>113</sup>
- **We previously published a £1.2 billion long-term plan to increase cycling and walking.** We want cycling and walking to become the norm by 2040 and are targeting funding at innovative ways to encourage people onto a bike or to use their own two feet for shorter journeys. Plans include our aim to double cycling, reduce cycling accidents and increase the proportion of 5 to 10 year-olds walking to school to 55 per cent by 2025.<sup>114</sup>

## Political points to make

- **Labour would put punitive taxes on motorists and fail to invest in our roads:**
  - **Labour are plotting to introduce taxes to force two thirds of cars off the roads.** A barrage of punitive anti-car measures planned by the Labour Party will force almost two-thirds of all car journeys off the roads. Measures being considered by Corbyn’s Labour include fuel duty hikes, road pricing, workplace parking charges, reducing motorway speed limits and cancelling new road schemes.<sup>115</sup>
  - **Shadow Transport Secretary Andy McDonald described the Government’s decision to launch the biggest ever cash injection for roads as ‘the wrong decision’.** He said: ‘Ramping up spending on major roads is the wrong decision’.<sup>116</sup>
  - **Labour voted against freezing fuel duty.** They voted against the Finance Act 2011, which scrapped the fuel duty escalator. This will have saved the average driver £850 by April 2019.<sup>117</sup>

## Q&A

### Q: Will this only benefit cities?

No. We will continue to invest in extending and improving the National Cycle Network of cross-country routes, and improve provision in towns.

### Q: Will this only benefit the minority of people who cycle?

Cycling benefits everyone, even if they never get on a bike – by cutting pollution, noise and motor vehicle danger, making streets nicer places to be and to walk, and by reducing crowding on public transport. That is one reason why cycling improvements often gain wide public support.

<sup>113</sup> DfT, *News Story*, 16 October 2014, [link](#).

<sup>114</sup> DfT, *News Story*, 21 April 2017, [link](#).

<sup>115</sup> *Express*, 13 November 2019, [link](#).

<sup>116</sup> *ITV News*, 27 October 2018, [link](#).

<sup>117</sup> Hansard, *Finance Bill (No 3) Bill: Third Reading, Division 317*, 5 July 2011, [link](#); *The Independent*, 11 September 2018, [link](#).

# Taking back control of our borders

**Summary:** We will end freedom of movement, replacing it with an Australian-style points-based immigration system, delivering on the referendum result and taking back control of our borders.

- **For too long, politicians have been out of touch with the hardworking majority's concerns about immigration. The vote to leave the EU was, amongst other things, a vote to take back control of our borders.**
- **That is why, with a functioning Conservative majority, we will get Brexit done and introduce a fair Australian-style points-based immigration system which lowers net migration and allows us to decide who comes to this country on the basis of the skills they have to offer – not where they come from.**
- **Only by installing proper controls and ending the preferential treatment of EEA migrants will we be able to attract the brightest and the best from around the world to come here and contribute to our public services, while relying on far fewer low-skilled migrants and getting overall migration down.**

## Background

- **Under EU law, over 500 million EEA/Swiss citizens and their families have the right to move to the UK.** They do not need to have a job or demonstrate they have skills which the UK economy needs. If an EEA/Swiss citizen moves to the UK they are also entitled to bring their family with them.<sup>118</sup>

## Our solution

- **Regardless of whether they are from Europe or another part of the world, we will welcome people who meet our criteria.** We will end the preferential treatment of EEA-migrants so that we can attract the brightest and the best from all over the world.
- **We will introduce an Australian-style points-based system under which we will decide who comes here based on what they have to offer – not where they come from.** The system will be based upon the following principles – giving priority to those who:
  - Can prove their knowledge of the English language;
  - Are coming to do important work, including in priority industries;
  - Are setting up businesses that would employ and invest in British people and pay taxes in the UK;
  - Have been law abiding citizens in their own countries; and
  - Have the skills the country needs.
- **We have commissioned the independent Migration Advisory Committee to consider how an Australian-style points-based system could be introduced in the UK.** The Migration Advisory Committee has also been commissioned to review the salary thresholds for the future immigration system. It will report to the government by January 2020 on both and we will consider its advice.

## Conservative record

- **Protected the rights of EU citizens who have made the UK their home.** We have guaranteed the rights of EU citizens living in the UK via the EU Settlement Scheme, which we will also put into law at the earliest opportunity. Over 2.2 million EEA/Swiss citizens have already received settled or pre-settled status.<sup>119</sup>

---

<sup>118</sup> *Citizens' Rights Directive* (Directive 2004/38/EC), Article 6(2), [link](#).

<sup>119</sup> Hansard, *EU Settlement Scheme*, Volume 667, 28 October 2019, [link](#).

- **Allowing international students to stay in the UK for two years after graduating to help them find a job.** International students who have successfully completed a degree from a trusted UK university or higher education provider will be able to stay in the UK for two years to find work.<sup>120</sup>
- **Introducing a new NHS Visa, offering fast-track entry to the UK for qualified overseas doctors and nurses under more generous terms.** It will provide a three to five-year work visa with a fast-track decision, a larger dedicated advice service for applicants, and reduced upfront fees. We have already removed doctors and nurses from the Tier 2 visa cap.<sup>121</sup>
- **Ensured that people are coming to the UK for the right reasons.** We imposed tougher rules on universities and colleges who sponsor international students to study in the UK, limited access to benefits for migrants and stopped people sending benefits home. We also introduced measures to prevent illegal immigrants from accessing public services like our NHS, as well as housing, driving licences and bank accounts.<sup>122</sup>
- **Clamped down on illegal immigration and protecting migrants from abuse.** We have introduced sanctions on illegal workers and rogue employers, who often take advantage of vulnerable migrants, and made it easier and quicker to remove people with no right to be here.<sup>123</sup>

## Political points to make

- **Labour’s official policy is to maintain and extend freedom of movement – meaning uncontrolled and unlimited immigration from the EU.** Labour’s Conference voted for a motion which said Labour will include maintaining and extending freedom of movement in their next manifesto.<sup>124</sup>
- **Jeremy Corbyn has admitted he has no interest in ending free movement.** He said: ‘I am not against the free movement of people... I think I’ve made it pretty clear the need for workers to go both ways’.<sup>125</sup>
- **John McDonnell has repeatedly advocated for ‘open borders’.** In 2013 he said: ‘If we’re a civilised society we should have open borders... It should be a basic human right’. In 2016 he wrote: ‘Inevitably in this century we will have open borders... borders are almost going to become irrelevant by the end of this century, so we should be preparing for that’.<sup>126</sup>
- **Labour’s plan for unlimited and uncontrolled immigration is the biggest threat to our public services, and could see net migration treble to 840,000.** Extending freedom of movement to the rest of the world then it would see annual net migration soaring to 840,000 a year over the next decade.<sup>127</sup>

## Q&A

### Q: Will net migration fall or rise under the new immigration system?

We want the best and brightest coming here and to our economy – whether that’s by starting a business, studying or working in our public services. Especially when it comes to our NHS. But under our new points-based system fewer low skilled migrants will come to the country and the British people will have control over who is coming here. Overall, we would like to see net migration fall.

<sup>120</sup> Prime Minister’s Office, *News Story*, 11 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>121</sup> UK Visas and Immigration, *News Story*, 15 June 2018, [link](#).

<sup>122</sup> Prime Minister’s Office, *Press Release*, 29 July 2014, [link](#); HMT/DWP, *News Story*, 8 April 2014, [link](#); *Immigration Act 2014*, accessed 23 September 2018, [link](#).

<sup>123</sup> *Immigration Act 2016*, accessed 23 September 2018, [link](#).

<sup>124</sup> *LabourList*, 25 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>125</sup> BBC One, *The Andrew Marr Show*, 13 January 2018, [archived](#).

<sup>126</sup> South London Peoples Assembly, *YouTube*, 7 August 2013, [link](#); *The Telegraph*, 1 February 2016, [link](#).

<sup>127</sup> *The Sun*, 14 November 2019, [link](#); *The Telegraph*, 14 November 2019, [link](#).

# Launching a green revolution

**Summary:** We will upgrade our rapid electric vehicle charging infrastructure and support new clean industries across the country.

- **The UK is a global leader in tackling climate change and encouraging more people to make the switch to electric vehicles will be crucial for achieving our Net Zero emissions target by 2050.**
- **We will ensure that everyone in England and Wales is within 30 miles of an electric vehicle chargepoint, so that people don't need to worry about running out of charge. We will also increase our commitment to offshore wind, invest in new carbon capture technologies and help energy-intensive industries to decarbonise.**
- **By getting Brexit done, we can focus on people's priorities like tackling climate change, listening to the science in order to leave our environment in a better state for next generation.**

## Background

- **We have set a legally binding target to end our contribution to global warming by 2050, ensuring we protect the planet for future generations.** We were the first major economy in the world to introduce a Net Zero target for emissions, meaning that our contribution to global warming will end by 2050.<sup>128</sup>
- **The transport sector is currently the highest emitting sector, which we must decarbonise if we are to achieve Net Zero by 2050.** Electric vehicles are cleaner, cheaper to run and longer-lasting than petrol and diesel equivalents, so we want to make it even easier to own one. We have said that we will end the sale of new conventional petrol and diesel cars as soon as possible, leaving cleaner air for the next generation.
- **The UK is already a world-leader in offshore wind.** We currently have more installed capacity in offshore wind than any other country, and our Sector Deal aims to triple the number of jobs in the industry by 2030.

## Our solution

- **Investing an additional half a billion pounds to expand the electric vehicle charging network, ensuring no community is left behind as we accelerate the electrification of transport.** We will invest £500 million to complete a fast-charging network for electric vehicles, ensuring that everyone is always within 30 miles of a chargepoint. This comes on top of the £400 million we have recently announced to expand the network. This funding will also be spent on the Plug-in Van Grant Scheme and research and development into low and zero emission technology. We will also consult on bringing forward the ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2040 to the earliest possible date.
- **Increasing the amount of electricity we get from offshore wind by 2030, creating more jobs and cementing the UK's position as a global leader in the industry.** Our Offshore Wind Sector Deal aims to increase offshore wind capacity to 30GW by 2030, but as the cost of providing offshore wind has fallen, the industry believes it can go further. So we will increase offshore wind capacity to 40GW by 2030, creating 9,000 more jobs by working with our partners in the private sector to remove barriers and put additional support in place to deliver the target. We will also explore the possibilities around floating wind turbines.
- **Investing £800 million in the infrastructure needed to establish Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) clusters, leaving our environment in a better state for the next generation.** We will fund the core

---

<sup>128</sup> BEIS, *News Story*, 27 June 2019, [link](#).

transport and storage infrastructure needed for CCS clusters to be established in the 2020s. We want to have the first CCS plant operational by the mid-2020s – creating thousands of jobs in the coming decades.

- **Helping energy-intensive industries decarbonise in order to meet our world-leading Net Zero by 2050 target.** We will invest half a billion pounds to support our high-energy intensive industry to go low carbon – investing in new technologies like Electric Arc Furnaces to replace older, polluting furnaces.

## Conservative record

- **Reducing greenhouse gases by a quarter under the Conservatives.** We have reduced greenhouse gases by 25 per cent since 2010, whilst decarbonising faster than any other G20 nation since 2000.<sup>129</sup>
- **Generating record levels of clean energy by supporting renewable technologies.** In 2018, renewables generated 33 per cent of the UK’s electricity, up from 6.9 per cent in 2010. Offshore wind generation has increased by over 500 per cent under the Conservatives, and 99 per cent of all solar power deployment has taken place under the Conservatives.<sup>130</sup>
- **Creating millions of low carbon jobs, growing our economy while reducing emissions.** Our investment has meant there are almost 400,000 people working in low carbon businesses and their supply chains across the country already, and we will create two million low carbon jobs by 2030.<sup>131</sup>

## Political points to make

- **Labour’s nationalisation plans would disrupt our efforts to tackle climate change.** The Energy Networks Association found that a nationalised system would be poorly placed to invest in new technology needed to decarbonise, as it would have to compete with other government spending priorities.<sup>132</sup>
- **The CBI said that Labour’s plans to renationalise the energy network is already threatening our efforts to tackle climate change.** ‘Much-needed investment is drying up under Labour’s threats, which seriously risks hampering efforts to tackle climate change, and puts in doubt the innovation that will deliver a net-zero carbon economy’.<sup>133</sup>
- **The IFS described Labour’s 2030 target as ‘almost certainly impossible’.** Paul Johnson said: ‘We need zero emissions. Getting there by 2050 is tough and expensive but feasible and consistent with avoiding most damaging climate change. Aiming for zero emissions by 2030 is almost certainly impossible, hugely disruptive and risks undermining consensus’.<sup>134</sup>

## Q&A

### Q: Are we on track to hit our climate change targets?

The UK is a world leader in tackling climate change – we were the first major economy to set a Net Zero target and have reduced our carbon emissions by 43 per cent since 1990; while growing our economy by two-thirds. The UK has a good track record, having met the first two of our carbon budgets and being on track to meet the next, third, carbon budget. Labour’s reckless plans for renationalisation would put future progress at risk.

<sup>129</sup> BEIS, *2018 UK greenhouse gas emissions: provisional figures*, 28 March 2019, [link](#); PwC, *Low Carbon Economy Index 2019*, accessed 7 October 2019, [link](#).

<sup>130</sup> BEIS, *Renewable electricity capacity and generation*, 26 September 2019, [link](#); *Hansard*, 21 May 2019, [link](#).

<sup>131</sup> BEIS, *Authored article*, 20 February 2018, [link](#); BEIS, *News Story*, 27 June 2019, [link](#).

<sup>132</sup> *Current News*, 26 September 2018, [link](#); *Hansard*, 23 February 2018, [link](#).

<sup>133</sup> *Press Association*, 16 May 2019, [archived](#).

<sup>134</sup> Paul Johnson, *Twitter*, 24 September 2019, [link](#).



# Investing in research and development

**Summary:** We are setting out plans for the fastest ever increase in domestic public R&D spending.

- **Investment in research and development is a key driver of innovation and productivity growth. We are boosting funding to create the conditions for a new wave of economic growth and prosperity across our country.**
- **A Conservative majority Government will introduce the fastest ever increase in domestic public R&D spending so that public spending on R&D rises above the OECD average and reaches £18 billion by 2024.**
- **This investment, which includes a guarantee to match EU R&D funding, a new national Space Strategy and investment in a range of technologies, could help to address some of the greatest challenges for modern society.**

## Background

- **We have committed to reach the target of 2.4 per cent of GDP being invested in R&D.** The target is for combined public and private sector spend.

## Our solution

- **We will launch the fastest ever increase in domestic public research and development spending in British history.** This will increase spending so that it reaches £18 billion in 2024-25. This will be a doubling of public R&D spending compared to 2017 and will be approximately 0.62 per cent of GDP, higher than the OECD average of 0.6 per cent and up from 0.43 per cent currently.
- **This huge investment will fund a range of transformative technologies.** This will include funding for advanced maths research, a national Space Strategy, support for nuclear fusion and investment in the National Institute for Health Research to invest in translational health, social care and mental health research. Investment in R&D will also help us develop the innovations we need to tackle climate change and meet our Net Zero target.
- **We will set up a British Advanced Research Projects Agency.** We will invest £800 million over five years for a new research institution in the style of the US ARPA, which funds high-risk, high-reward research that might not otherwise be pursued, to support blue skies research and investment in UK leadership in artificial intelligence and data.
- **This huge investment will replace EU funding.** EU R&D programmes are currently paid for through the UK's taxpayer-funded EU budget contributions. This £18 billion package will guarantee that all EU R&D funding will be replaced post-Brexit, including funding for universities.
- **We will incentivise a step change in private sector R&D investment.** Even with this huge public investment in R&D, we will need to incentivise much greater private R&D in order to meet the 2.4 per cent target. So we will introduce a new Challenge Led Innovation Procurement fund which will provide innovative firms with capital and launch an extension of the innovation loans pilot which helps improve access to finance for small businesses.

## Conservative record

- **Spending £37 billion to give business the best transport and digital infrastructure that it needs to thrive right across the country.** Through the National Productivity Investment Fund we are investing in areas like roads and digital infrastructure that are crucial for growth. We are spending at the highest

consistent sustained level in 40 years, and is £22 billion more a year in real terms than under the last Labour Government.<sup>135</sup>

- **Investing an additional £7 billion in R&D, helping businesses to develop new technologies and create high-skilled, high-paid jobs.** Since 2016, we have invested an additional £7 billion in R&D – the largest increase for 40 years – with a target to spend 2.4 per cent of GDP on R&D by 2027.<sup>136</sup>
- **Keeping the UK at the cutting edge of innovation and technology by providing R&D tax credits.** The total amount of R&D support claimed rose to almost £3.5 billion in 2016-17, up over 20 per cent from the previous year, supporting £24.9 billion of R&D expenditure<sup>137</sup>.
- **Improving the infrastructure that businesses need to grow and get products around the country.** We have announced a £3.6 billion Towns Fund to improve transport and broadband connectivity, alongside £300 million of new funding for Growth Deals across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.<sup>138</sup>
- **Creating 11 sector deals in key industries, supporting the creation of thousands of jobs around the country.** We have created sector deals for the aerospace, AI, automotive, construction, creative, life sciences, nuclear, offshore wind, rail and tourism industries, as well as two local industrial strategies to support new the development of new technologies in the West Midlands and Greater Manchester.<sup>139</sup>
- **Supporting free enterprise and cutting taxes.** We have helped create the conditions for more than a million new businesses to start up and encouraged them to invest and expand. We have cut corporation tax from 28 per cent to 19 per cent, encouraging more firms to grow in the UK, and we are supporting businesses with £13 billion worth of business rates relief.<sup>140</sup>

## Political points to make

- **Labour's corporation tax hikes would hit business investment into R&D.** The Institute for Fiscal Studies: 'it would reduce incentives for companies to invest in the UK'.<sup>141</sup>
- **Labour would confiscate 10 per cent of businesses' profits, costing businesses £300 million, meaning companies would be less likely to invest in the UK.** Large companies would be forced to put 10 per cent of their equity into 'Inclusive Ownership Funds', with a large proportion of the money going straight to government, in yet another Labour tax on business.<sup>142</sup>

## Q&A

### Q: Will we reach the target of 2.4 per cent of GDP by 2027?

We are absolutely determined to reach the target of 2.4 per cent by 2027 which is why we are launching this unprecedented increase in public R&D spending. However we must ensure the private sector increases R&D investment too. We will make more progress on that in the coming months and years.

<sup>135</sup> HMT, *Budget 2018*, 29 October 2018, [link](#).

<sup>136</sup> HMT, *Budget 2018*, 29 October 2018, [link](#); BEIS, *Forging our Future*, 6 December 2018, [link](#).

<sup>137</sup> HMRC, *Research and Development Tax Credits Statistics*, September 2018, [link](#).

<sup>138</sup> Prime Minister's Office, *Press Release*, 28 July 2019, [link](#).

<sup>139</sup> BEIS, *Introduction to Sector Deals*, 28 June 2019, [link](#); BEIS, *West Midlands Local Industrial Strategy*, 16 May 2019, [link](#); BEIS, *Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy*, 13 June 2019, [link](#).

<sup>140</sup> HMT, *Spring Budget 2017*, 8 March 2017, [link](#); Hansard, 15 January 2019, *Col. 324 WH*, [link](#).

<sup>141</sup> BBC Radio4, *The Today Programme*, 10 May 2017, [archived](#).

<sup>142</sup> Bloomberg, 23 September 2018, [link](#); *Financial Times*, 2 September 2019, [link](#).

# Transforming further education

**Summary:** A majority Conservative government will transform the further education system, levelling up across the entire country with a huge new rebuilding programme worth £1.8 billion.

- **For too long, the further education sector has lagged behind the higher education sector in terms of funding and status. Yet the need to equip our young people with the skills of the future is greater than ever.**
- **A Conservative majority Government will end that unfairness and build a world class further education sector, by launching a huge new rebuilding programme which will ensure we are able to prepare young people for their futures.**
- **This investment programme, will level up the system across the country, giving further education colleges the stable basis on which to provide brilliant training and education to transform the lives of millions of young people.**

## Background

- **The further education college estate has a clear need of investment.** A quarter of the entire estate requires imminent significant repair, is inoperable or is at serious risk of breakdown. However, there is currently no dedicated fund for this.
- **There is no dedicated further education capital investment programme with the only funding source being from local LEPs and small pots of private finance.** Additional private investment has been severely limited by the poor financial health of the sector with many banks refusing to lend. This lack of targeted investment has resulted in poor and deteriorating buildings across the Further Education college estate.

## Our solution

- **We will launch a huge further education college rebuilding programme.** We will invest £1.8 billion to make sure the entire further education college estate to good condition.
- **This huge investment programme will – over a five-year period – make sure the entire further education college estate is at least Category B (‘Good’) condition by refurbishing and redeveloping existing facilities and purchasing industry standard equipment.** We will match this with 21 per cent more from providers themselves. FE colleges will have to work up robust plans to make sure the money is spent wisely.
- **This investment will improve student attainment.** Not only will it mean a safe and secure learning environment for all students but also more access to modern equipment to support the learning of engineering, robotics, healthcare and so much more.
- **Rebuilding the estate in this way will help to bring parity of esteem with the rest of the education system.** Better colleges will boost recruitment into the sector and retention of existing staff and a renewed focus and long-term commitment to capital investment will enhance the other activities of colleges.
- **This investment will drive further reform of the sector.** We will commit to producing an ambitious reform plan soon after the election, backed by this investment to improve student outcomes and boost social mobility. This will consider further structural reform of the sector, devolution and boosting recruitment and retention.

## Conservative record

- **Revolutionising technical education with £500 million for T Levels, so that our young people have access to world-class technical education.** From September 2020 T Levels will become one of the three main choices for students after GCSEs, suited to those who know what occupation they want to pursue, want to earn a wage and learn at the same time and are ready to enter the workforce.<sup>143</sup>
- **Launching 20 Institutes of Technology, boosting young people’s skills and setting them on a path to a high skilled, high wage career.** These Institutes will be backed by £290 million, and offer young people across England a vocational alternative to universities with a focus on STEM subjects.<sup>144</sup>
- **Delivering over 3.8 million apprenticeship starts since 2010, giving people the skills they need for the workplace.** We created 2.4 million apprenticeships in the last Parliament – surpassing our target of 2 million apprenticeships by 2015. Since 2015 there have been almost 1.4 million apprenticeship starts.<sup>145</sup>
- **Investing £400 million in education for 16-19-year-olds to ensure they get the skills they need.** This is the single biggest annual increase for the sector since 2010, and will go towards improving access to courses, delivering expensive subjects such as engineering and recruiting and retaining the best staff for T Levels and FE.<sup>146</sup>
- **Creating a £500 million Youth Investment Fund, to support young people across the whole of the UK.** This investment will help build 60 new youth centres across the country, refurbish around 360 existing youth facilities, and provide over 100 mobile facilities for harder to reach areas. It will also support investment in the youth workforce.<sup>147</sup>

## Political points to make

- **Under the last Labour government, at least 350,000 young people were let down by courses which had ‘little or no labour market value’.** The independent Wolf Review found that some courses ‘fail to promote progression into either stable, paid employment or higher-level education and training in a consistent or an effective way’.<sup>148</sup>
- **Youth unemployment rose by 40 per cent under Labour – meaning young people were not getting the skills they need to get on in life.** In May 1997 there were 664,000 unemployed 16 to 24 year olds. By May 2010 this had risen to 927,000, an increase of 263,000.<sup>149</sup>
- **The number of young people not in education, employment or training rose by a quarter of million under Labour.** In November 2001 when NEET records began, there were 833,000 16-24 year olds who were not in education, employment or training. When Labour left office in May 2010, this had risen to 1.1 million, an increase of 241,000.<sup>150</sup>

## Q&A

### **Q: You have neglected FE for a decade in office, why should we believe you now?**

For too long the further education sector has played second fiddle to schools and universities. This Prime Minister, Chancellor and Education Secretary are absolutely determined to see that reversed and to build a world class FE sector. At the Autumn Spending Round, the Chancellor already invested £400 million into FE and this investment comes on top of that.

<sup>143</sup> DfE, *Introduction of T Levels*, 20 August 2019, [link](#).

<sup>144</sup> DfE, *Press Release*, 10 April 2019, [link](#); DfE, *Press Release*, 1 October 2019, [link](#).

<sup>145</sup> House of Commons Library, *Apprenticeship Statistics for England*, 11 February 2019, [link](#).

<sup>146</sup> DfE, *Press Release*, 31 August 2019, [link](#).

<sup>147</sup> HM Treasury, *Press Release*, 30 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>148</sup> DfE, *Review of Vocational Education – The Wolf Report*, 3 March 2011, [link](#); *Hansard*, 5 March 2014, Vol. 576 Col.893, [link](#).

<sup>149</sup> ONS, *LFS: Unemployment Rate: UK: All: Aged 16-24: %: SA*, 10 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>150</sup> ONS, *Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)*, 22 August 2019, [link](#).

# Infrastructure apprentices

**Summary:** We will require all major new infrastructure projects to use apprentices, levelling up skills across the country.

- **Reliable infrastructure is vital - not just to boost economic growth, but to make areas more attractive places to live and to start a business.**
- **That is why we are investing in the UK's future, and unleashing its potential with a £100 billion National Infrastructure Strategy, levelling up opportunity and prosperity in every region.**
- **We want to seize the opportunity this presents for the next generation to learn new skills. We will require apprenticeships for all major new infrastructure projects- hospitals, schools, transport and even the restoration and refurbishment of the Houses of Parliament.**

## Background

- **We are investing in infrastructure across the country, but to truly level up all areas we need to ensure long term training and employment is tied to these infrastructure projects.** We are delivering a transformational infrastructure programme across the country – but for it to have a truly long lasting impact we need to train up apprentices with these projects.

## Our solution

- **All government contracts for major new infrastructure projects will specify that UK apprentices must be used in the delivery of those projects.** We will use our National Infrastructure Strategy to reinvigorate our workforce, helping more people learn skilled trades and crafts.
- **We will consult with employers and further education colleges about the best way to draw up our new requirement.** This will take care to ensure that the ability of SMEs to bid for infrastructure contracts is not harmed.

## Conservative record

- **We have delivered over 3.8 million apprenticeship starts since 2010, giving people the skills they need.** We created 2.4 million apprenticeships between 2010 and 2015 – surpassing our target of 2 million apprenticeships by 2015. Since 2015 there have been almost 1.4 million apprenticeship starts.<sup>151</sup>
- **We are also investing £400 million in education for 16-19-year-olds to ensure they get the skills they need.** This is the single biggest annual increase for the sector since 2010, and will go towards improving access to courses, delivering expensive subjects such as engineering and recruiting and retaining the best staff for T Levels and further education.<sup>152</sup>
- **We are creating a £500 million Youth Investment Fund, to support young people across the whole of the UK.** This investment will help build 60 new youth centres across the country, refurbish around 360 existing youth facilities, and provide over 100 mobile facilities for harder to reach areas. It will also support investment in the youth workforce.<sup>153</sup>
- **We have cut youth unemployment in half, meaning more young people are getting on in life.** In May 2010 there were 927,000 unemployed 16-24 year olds, now there are just 488,000, a lower number than anytime under the last Labour government.<sup>154</sup>

<sup>151</sup> House of Commons Library, *Apprenticeship Statistics for England*, 11 February 2019, [link](#).

<sup>152</sup> DfE, *Press Release*, 31 August 2019, [link](#).

<sup>153</sup> HM Treasury, *Press Release*, 30 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>154</sup> ONS, *LFS: Unemployment Rate: UK: All: Aged 16-24: %: SA*, 10 September 2019, [link](#).

## Political points to make

- **Youth unemployment rose by 40 per cent under Labour – meaning young people were not getting the skills they need to get on in life.** In May 1997 there were 664,000 unemployed 16 to 24 year olds. By May 2010 this had risen to 927,000, an increase of 263,000.<sup>155</sup>
- **The number of young people not in education, employment or training rose by a quarter of million under Labour.** In November 2001 when NEET records began, there were 833,000 16-24 year olds who were not in education, employment or training. When Labour left office in May 2010, this had risen to 1.1 million, an increase of 241,000.<sup>156</sup>

### *Corbyn's Labour would destroy the economy – reducing opportunities across the country*

- **Labour would ‘automatically’ support all strikes, no matter the harmful impact they have on hardworking families.** John McDonnell said: ‘The view now is straightforward and I tell you this: If there is industrial action taking place then we should automatically now, automatically come alongside our brothers and sisters in the trade unions and support them’.<sup>157</sup>
- **Labour have committed to spending £1.2 trillion over the next five years.** Of this total, Labour have made £651 billion worth of spending commitments that are considered day-to-day spending and therefore cannot be borrowed for.<sup>158</sup>
- **Labour's day-to-day black hole means that each individual taxpayer in the UK could see their income tax rise by £2,400 a year – meaning workers would lose a month's wages in higher taxes to pay for Corbyn's reckless spending plans.** Corbyn's Labour would open up a huge black hole in the nation's finances and hard-working people will be the ones that suffer. In order to pay for his policies, he will not only have to massively increase borrowing and debt, he will also need to hike up taxes by £2,400 per person – this is equivalent to an entire month's pay for the average earner.<sup>159</sup>

## Q&A

### **Q: Will this drive up the cost of infrastructure projects?**

We do not anticipate this will create any additional cost. Renegotiating government infrastructure contracts would insert the requirement for apprentices without changing the original price.

### **Q: Is it fair to force employers to take on apprentices?**

A high skilled work force benefits employers. No part of this country and no business should be held back because of poor infrastructure. By levelling up opportunity and renewing the ties that bind our communities together we can build a brighter future for our country.

---

<sup>155</sup> ONS, *LFS: Unemployment Rate: UK: All: Aged 16-24: %: SA*, 10 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>156</sup> ONS, *Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)*, 22 August 2019, [link](#).

<sup>157</sup> *Politics.co.uk*, 29 September 2015, [link](#).

<sup>158</sup> *The Telegraph*, 10 November 2019, [link](#).

<sup>159</sup> *The Sun*, 11 November 2019, [link](#).

## A new UK Shared Prosperity Fund to boost skills

**Summary:** We are announcing that we will deliver a new skills programme through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, to replace the ineffective and bureaucratic European Social Fund.

- **We want to ensure that we are not just tackling inequality between communities through investments in infrastructure and business but that we are also empowering individuals to give them the skills they need to succeed.**
- **That is why we will use the opportunity of Brexit to replace the ineffective and bureaucratic European Social Funds with a tailored, individual-centred skills programme through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.**
- **Only Boris Johnson and the Conservatives will get Brexit done, take back control of our money from the EU and invest it into helping disadvantaged people to turn their life around.**

### Background

- **After Brexit we will have the opportunity to replace the bureaucratic EU Structural Funds with an alternative that better suits the United Kingdom.** EU Structural Funds are not tailored to our economy, they follow a one-size-fits-all approach and are allocated on a regional rather than a local basis. The majority of the UK are net contributors to EU Structural Funds; after Brexit we want to ensure that more parts of our country benefit from transformative funding. Our new fund will be better able to address the individual barriers people face, regardless of where they live in the UK.

### Our solution

- **Introducing the UK Shared Prosperity Fund from April 2021.** We will introduce the UK Shared Prosperity Fund when EU Structural Funds start to taper off from 2020-21. This will be our replacement for the bureaucratic EU system – it will ensure this funding continues to be spent on skills, but will be simpler to access and targeted at those who need it most to ensure that it works for this country.
- **The UK Shared Prosperity Fund will be designed to make sure that it helps the most vulnerable.** Targeted support will mean that disadvantaged individuals, such as a young person struggling with their mental health or an ex-offender released into the community, can have access to services that fill gaps in normal statutory provision to help them into work. This funding will allow organisations such as charities and other third-party bodies to deliver a wide range of support for people across the UK. This will be delivered on in conjunction and on top of existing skills programmes.

### Conservative record

- **Guaranteeing structural funding for current projects.** In July 2018, we guaranteed all funding through EU programmes into the 2020s, so that recipients have certainty as we leave the EU.<sup>160</sup>
- **We have helped on average over 1,000 people into work every day since 2010 – meaning 3,700,000 more people have the security of a regular pay packet.** In the three months to April 2010, there were 29.05 million people in employment. In the three months to September 2019 there were 32.8 million people in work.<sup>161</sup>
- **Investing £3.6 billion in 100 Town Deals to level up opportunity throughout England.** This will see communities, business and local partners draw up ambitious plans for their community to receive up to £25 million of government investment. This will focus on town renewal, transport, broadband and skills

<sup>160</sup> HMT, *News Story*, 24 July 2018, [link](#).

<sup>161</sup> ONS, *Labour Market Overview*, 12 November 2019, [link](#).

to increase economic opportunity and prosperity.<sup>162</sup>

- **Delivering over 3.8 million apprenticeship starts since 2010, giving people the skills, they need for the workplace.** We created 2.4 million apprenticeships between 2010 and 2015 – surpassing our target of 2 million apprenticeships by 2015. Since 2015 there have been almost 1.4 million apprenticeship starts.<sup>163</sup>
- **Creating a £500 million Youth Investment Fund, to support young people across the whole of the UK.** This investment will help build 60 new youth centres across the country, refurbish around 360 existing youth facilities, and provide over 100 mobile facilities for harder to reach areas. It will also support investment in the youth workforce.<sup>164</sup>
- **Investing £400 million in education for 16-19-year-olds to ensure they get the skills they need.** This is the single biggest annual increase for the sector since 2010, and will go towards improving access to courses, and delivering expensive subjects such as engineering and recruiting and retaining the best staff.<sup>165</sup>

## Political points to make

- **Every Labour government has ever left office with unemployment higher than when it started, meaning more people were denied the security of a regular wage.** From May to July 1997 to March to May 2010, the unemployment level increased from 2.1 million to 2.5 million.<sup>166</sup>
- **Youth unemployment rose by 45 per cent under Labour – meaning young people were not getting the skills they need to get on in life.** In February to April 1997 there were 652,000 unemployed 16 to 24 year olds. By February to April 2010, this had risen by 287,000 to 939,000.<sup>167</sup>
- **Labour ignored jobs in the Midlands and the North.** For every ten private sector jobs created in the London and the South between 1998 and 2008, only one was created in the Midlands and the North.<sup>168</sup>

## Q&A

**Q: On average each constituency receives just over £7million from the European Union. How can you guarantee that no constituency will be worse off?**

A UK Shared Prosperity Fund will repatriate billions of pounds a year from the European Union to support left behind communities and level up inclusive growth, employment and productivity across the UK supported to date. We will not be straightjacketed by the EU and will be free to spend the money in a way that better supports our communities and the UK as a whole.

---

<sup>162</sup> MHCLG, *Press Release*, 6 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>163</sup> House of Commons Library, *Apprenticeship Statistics for England*, 11 February 2019, [link](#).

<sup>164</sup> HM Treasury, *Press Release*, 30 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>165</sup> DFE, *Press Release*, 31 August 2019, [link](#).

<sup>166</sup> IFS, 26 May 2017, [link](#).

<sup>167</sup> ONS, *Labour Market Statistics*, 18 March 2015, [link](#).

<sup>168</sup> Centre for Cities, *Private sector cities: A new geography of opportunity*, 6 June 2010, [link](#).



# Free wraparound childcare for the Armed Forces

**Summary:** We are launching Ministry of Defence funding for breakfast and after school clubs for working couples or single serving parents.

- **We want to help make life easier for service personnel and their families who are often deployed at short notice and can find accessing appropriate childcare difficult.**
- **We will provide breakfast and after school clubs for the children of service personnel – ‘wraparound’ childcare to enable families to cope with the demands of serving in the Armed Forces.**
- **The Conservatives are unwavering in our commitment to the Armed Forces and will continue doing all we can to support the brave men and women who serve our country.**

## Background

- **We are working to attract more people to join the Armed Forces and improving our childcare offering could attract more recruits.** We are doing all we can to make managing family life easier for service personnel.
- **Our service men and women sacrifice a lot to serve our country.** They are the most important part of our forces and we want to recognise that by helping them ease the pressure that having children and juggling jobs can create. Two recent reports have identified childcare is a problem for forces families.

## Our solution

- **We will provide Ministry of Defence funded ‘wraparound’ childcare.** We will fund breakfast clubs and after school clubs to cover early starts and late finishes for working parents of children aged 4-11. This will help make working for the Armed Forces more family friendly and, based on international evidence, may mean more women are recruited and retained in service.

## Conservative record

*We are committed to making the Armed Forces an attractive place to work...*

- **Modernising living and working arrangements for our Armed Forces so their circumstances reflect the world around them.** We are introducing new measures, including new flexible working arrangements, expanded accommodation options and new co-habitation rules.<sup>169</sup>
- **Extending Help to Buy until the end of 2022 – giving our Armed Forces the chance to get a foot on the housing ladder.** The scheme allows military personnel to borrow a deposit of up to half of their annual salary, interest free, to contribute towards buying a home, moving house, or building an extension.<sup>170</sup>
- **Recognising the Armed Forces Covenant in law.** We legislated to give the Armed Forces Covenant a statutory foundation, introducing a requirement for the Secretary of State for Defence to report annually to Parliament on progress in delivering Covenant commitments.<sup>171</sup>

*The Conservatives are improving access to childcare for everyone...*

---

<sup>169</sup> MoD, *News Story*, 1 April 2019, [link](#).

<sup>170</sup> MoD, *News Story*, 22 October 2019, [link](#).

<sup>171</sup> MoD, *News Story*, 3 November 2011, [link](#); MOD, *News Story*, 18 April 2019, [link](#).

- **Offering free childcare for every 3 and 4 year old, ensuring no child is left behind.** We are offering a free universal 15 hours per week of childcare, with a free additional 15 hours for 3 and 4 year olds whose parents are in work.<sup>172</sup>
- **Providing free childcare for 850,000 further 2-year-olds, giving the most disadvantaged the best start in life.** Over 850,000 disadvantaged 2-year olds have benefited from 15 hours of free childcare a week since we introduced it in 2014.<sup>173</sup>

## Political points to make

### *Corbyn's Labour would not support our Armed Forces...*

- **Jeremy Corbyn thinks Britain doesn't need an army.** 'Wouldn't it be wonderful if every politician around the world instead of taking pride in the size of their armed forces did what the people of Costa Rica have done and abolished their army and took pride in the fact they don't have an army'.<sup>174</sup>
- **Corbyn's Labour would cut defence spending.** Corbyn has said: 'I would like us to live in a world where we spend a lot less on defence, and that we would hope to be able to reduce it in the long-term. I recognise that there are defence needs, and there needs to be a level of spending, but I would hope in the long-run to reduce it'.<sup>175</sup>
- **Labour would create a Minister for Peace and Disarmament.** Corbyn appointed a Shadow Minister in 2016, after calling for a 'change in attitude' to foreign policy. He said: 'Let's have a Minister for Disarmament and a Minister for Peace as well who is pursuing those things around the world and looking to enforce the non-proliferation treaty rather than pretending it's an obstacle to re-armament'.<sup>176</sup>

## Q&A

### **Q: How will you pay for this?**

The Ministry of Defence will meet the costs of this policy. We are one of only a small number of NATO countries to meet the target to spend 2 per cent of GDP on defence, and recently announced an extra £2.2 billion for defence in the Spending Review.

### **Q: Will this policy help retention?**

Anecdotal evidence again shows that it would. Women are also underrepresented in the Armed Forces and tend to be the primary carers of children so this may increase recruitment and retention. In France where childcare and nannies are provided on bases there, far more women are recruited and retained in service.

### **Q: Why are you only providing care for 4-11 year olds?**

Because the 'wraparound' care needed for school age children has been identified as a particular concern by both the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force.

<sup>172</sup> DfE, *Press Release*, 31 August 2017, [link](#).

<sup>173</sup> DfE, *Education Provision*, 27 June 2019, [link](#).

<sup>174</sup> *Mirror*, 14 September 2015, [link](#).

<sup>175</sup> Jeremy Corbyn, *Labour Leadership Hustings Gateshead*, 11 August 2016, [link](#).

<sup>176</sup> *The Times*, 8 November 2016, [link](#).

# Guaranteed interview scheme for veterans

**Summary:** We will ensure all veterans are offered an interview by public sector bodies if they meet the essential job requirements.

- **We want to remove the barriers that veterans face to employment after they have left military service and support their successful transition back into civilian life.**
- **We are ensuring that veterans are given a guaranteed interview with publicly funded bodies providing they meet the essential requirements of the job.**
- **This will transform the prospects for ex-servicemen and women, opening up opportunity for them and providing the public sector with access to untapped talent.**

## Background

- **Research shows that veterans are discriminated against once they have left the Armed Forces.** SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, recently published a survey indicating that 31 per cent of recruiters would feel reluctant to hire someone who had previously served in the Armed Forces. The research also indicated that there was a perception that veterans were aggressive or short-tempered.<sup>177</sup>
- **Veterans have valuable transferable skills that are untapped by employers.** Many skills veterans possess are in areas where employers have gaps. Deloitte research found that a third of medium and large organisations surveyed have skills gaps in strategic management, managing and motivating staff, team-working, positive attitude and listening skills.<sup>178</sup>
- **Military personnel are trained and qualified at public expense.** This scheme provides a great return for tax payers in developing the talent and skills already funded by the public purse to keep working for the public's benefit.

## Our solution

- **We are tackling the myths and stereotypes that might hold servicemen and women back from employment by ensuring they have an opportunity to talk directly to an employer.** Following the Armed Forces Covenant to support veterans, the public sector will take a lead in opening up work opportunities. Research shows that a clear majority (72 per cent) of organisations with veterans' recruitment programmes would recommend employing veterans.<sup>179</sup>
- **We will roll out a scheme that has been successful in local government.** This includes Rochdale and West Sussex Council. We aim to build upon this success and have similar schemes implemented across the UK. We will consult on the specific criteria and the operation of the policy with armed forces charities, unions and expert bodies.<sup>180</sup>

## Conservative record

- **We have supporting our veterans by establishing up the first ever Office for Veterans' Affairs.** This is the first time that veterans' affairs will have to support of dedicated ministers in both the Cabinet Office and the Ministry of Defense, ensuring the whole of government pulls together to deliver the life-long support our veterans deserve.<sup>181</sup>

---

<sup>177</sup> SSAFA, *The Armed Services Charity*, 21 October 2019, [link](#).

<sup>178</sup> Deloitte, *Veterans work: Recognising the potential of ex-service personnel*, 2016, [link](#).

<sup>179</sup> Deloitte, *Veterans work: Recognising the potential of ex-service personnel*, 2016, [link](#).

<sup>180</sup> Rochdale Borough Council, 8 November 2019; [link](#); West Sussex County Council, 8 November 2019, [link](#).

<sup>181</sup> MoD, *Press Release*, 29 July 2019, [link](#).

- **We introduced the first ever UK-wide Veterans’ Strategy to give them the support they deserve.** This will support initiatives such as the first ever UK-wide Veterans’ Strategy so we can give our brave veterans the support they need.<sup>182</sup>
- **We also introduced Veterans’ ID cards to ensure they can easily access the support and services they need.** The initiative will provide veterans easier access to public and charitable support including healthcare and housing. Veterans’ ID cards will also help GP ensure they can receive appropriate support.<sup>183</sup>
- **Under the Conservatives the Armed Forces Covenant was enshrined in law to highlight our commitment to our Armed Forces.** The principles of the Covenant are now part of the law of our land and the value we place on our Armed Forces is clear for all to see.<sup>184</sup>

## Political points to make

### *Corbyn’s Labour would not support our veterans...*

- **Jeremy Corbyn thinks Britain doesn’t need an army.** ‘Wouldn’t it be wonderful if every politician around the world instead of taking pride in the size of their armed forces did what the people of Costa Rica have done and abolished their army and took pride in the fact the fact they don’t have an army’.<sup>185</sup>
- **Corbyn’s Labour would cut defence spending.** Corbyn has said: ‘I would like us to live in a world where we spend a lot less on defence, and that we would hope to be able to reduce it in the long-term. I recognise that there are defence needs, and there needs to be a level of spending, but I would hope in the long-run to reduce it’.<sup>186</sup>
- **Labour would create a Minister for Peace and Disarmament.** Corbyn appointed a Shadow Minister in 2016, after calling for a ‘change in attitude’ to foreign policy. He said: ‘Let’s have a Minister for Disarmament and a Minister for Peace as well who is pursuing those things around the world and looking to enforce the non-proliferation treaty rather than pretending it’s an obstacle to re-armament’.<sup>187</sup>
- **Corbyn prefers to condemn the British Army than the IRA.** *Studio:* ‘The question is do you condemn what the IRA did?’ *Corbyn:* ‘Look, I condemn what was done by the British Army as well as the other sides as well. What happened in Derry in 1972 was pretty devastating as well’.<sup>188</sup>

## Q&A

### **Q: How will this policy work in practice?**

When a veteran applies for a job they will have the option to indicate their veteran status. Providing they meet the essential job criteria and have served in the Armed Forces in line with specific criteria, they will be offered a guaranteed job interview. We will consult on the specific criteria and the operation of the policy with armed forces charities, unions and expert bodies.

### **Q: Will the Conservative Party be adopting this policy?**

Yes. The Conservative Party will be adopting this ourselves.

<sup>182</sup> MoD, *News Story*, 14 November 2018, [link](#).

<sup>183</sup> MoD, *News Story*, 18 February 2019, [link](#).

<sup>184</sup> MoD, *News Story*, 3 November 2011, [link](#).

<sup>185</sup> *Mirror*, 14 September 2015, [link](#).

<sup>186</sup> Jeremy Corbyn, *Labour Leadership Hustings Gateshead*, 11 August 2016, [link](#).

<sup>187</sup> *The Times*, 8 November 2016, [link](#).

<sup>188</sup> *BBC Radio Ulster*, 6 August 2015, [archived](#).

# Cutting the jobs tax for veterans

**Summary:** The Chancellor will cut the jobs tax for veterans in the first Budget of a Conservative majority government, creating new jobs and opportunities for those who have already given so much to our country.

- **Our veterans are the best among us and make a brilliant contribution in so many walks of life after they leave service. However, many veterans face unique challenges after they leave service and too many are still locked out of the jobs market.**
- **A Conservative majority government will take action in the first Budget after the election to back our veterans by scrapping employer National Insurance contributions for a full year for every new employee who has left the armed forces over the last year.**
- **This tax cut for employers will reduce unemployment, boost the pay and opportunities of those who have already given so much to our country and help to unleash the huge economic potential of service leavers. This compares to Jeremy Corbyn who has repeatedly failed to stand up for our veterans.**

## Background

- **Members of the Armed Forces will often leave the services at any early age, so finding another job after service is imperative for many.** While the majority of veterans go on to have successful careers after leaving service, this is not the case for all. The British Legion's Household Survey of the ex-service community found that working age veterans are nearly twice as likely to be unemployed as their equivalents in the UK general population.<sup>189</sup>
- **Research by Barclays has found that the UK economy could suffer losses of up to £1.5 billion in five years if veterans aren't able to find employment or are under-employed upon leaving the Armed Forces.** It also estimates that approximately a fifth of service leavers will face some employment challenges. Unemployment amongst BAME service leavers is disproportionately high.<sup>190</sup>
- **Whilst we have introduced a package of measures to support veterans with housing and health problems, there is still more to do.** We have only ever consulted businesses and provided links between businesses and veterans, rather than incentivising them to employ veterans through the tax system.

## Our solution

- **We will use the tax system to incentivise businesses to hire veterans – who face real challenges after leaving service but who have so much to offer in the labour market.** This will be a one-year employers' National Insurance contribution holiday for all employers in the UK that hire service leavers in the first year since they have left service.
- **This will reduce the cost to employers of hiring veterans which will help to boost the numbers of service leavers moving into good jobs.** There are many complex barriers facing service leavers but cutting this tax will help to make a difference and send a wider message across the economy that veterans are a huge source of economic potential.

## Conservative record

- **We have supporting our veterans by establishing up the first ever Office for Veterans' Affairs.** This is the first time that veterans' affairs will have to support of dedicated ministers in both the Cabinet Office

---

<sup>189</sup> *British Legion*, accessed 1 March 2019, [link](#).

<sup>190</sup> *Small Business*, 19 July 2017, [link](#).

and the Ministry of Defense, ensuring the whole of government pulls together to deliver the life-long support our veterans deserve.<sup>191</sup>

- **We introduced the first ever UK-wide veterans' strategy to deliver them the support they deserve.** This will support initiatives such as the first ever UK-wide Veterans Strategy so we can give our brave veterans the support they need.<sup>192</sup>
- **We introduced veterans ID cards to ensure they can easily access the support and services they need.** The initiative will provide veterans easier access to public and charitable support including healthcare and housing. Veterans cards will also help GP ensure they can receive appropriate support.<sup>193</sup>
- **Under the Conservatives the Armed Forces Covenant was enshrined in law to highlight our commitment to our Armed Forces.** The principles of the Covenant are now part of the law of our land and the value we place on our Armed Forces is clear for all to see.<sup>194</sup>

## Political points to make

### *Corbyn's Labour would not support our veterans...*

- **Jeremy Corbyn thinks Britain doesn't need an army.** 'Wouldn't it be wonderful if every politician around the world instead of taking pride in the size of their armed forces did what the people of Costa Rica have done and abolished their army and took pride in the fact the fact they don't have an army'.<sup>195</sup>
- **Jeremy Corbyn would cut defence spending.** 'I would like us to live in a world where we spend a lot less on defence, and that we would hope to be able to reduce it in the long-term. I recognise that there are defence needs, and there needs to be a level of spending, but I would hope in the long-run to reduce it'.<sup>196</sup>
- **Labour would create a Minister for Peace and Disarmament.** Corbyn appointed a Shadow Minister in 2016, after calling for a 'change in attitude' to foreign policy. He said: 'Let's have a Minister for Disarmament and a Minister for Peace as well who is pursuing those things around the world and looking to enforce the non-proliferation treaty rather than pretending it's an obstacle to re-armament'.<sup>197</sup>
- **Corbyn prefers to condemn the British Army than the IRA.** *Studio:* 'The question is do you condemn what the IRA did?' *Corbyn:* 'Look, I condemn what was done by the British Army as well as the other sides as well. What happened in Derry in 1972 was pretty devastating as well'.<sup>198</sup>

## Q&A

### **Q: How many veterans will be employed as a result of this tax cut?**

All employers that hire people who have left the services within the last year will be able to benefit from this measure. In the last year, around 13,000 people left the Armed Forces. Many employers would hire veterans without this tax cut anyway but we celebrate the fact that they would benefit from it too.

---

<sup>191</sup> MoD, *Press Release*, 29 July 2019, [link](#).

<sup>192</sup> MoD, *News Story*, 14 November 2018, [link](#).

<sup>193</sup> MoD, *News Story*, 18 February 2019, [link](#).

<sup>194</sup> MoD, *News Story*, 3 November 2011, [link](#).

<sup>195</sup> *Mirror*, 14 September 2015, [link](#).

<sup>196</sup> Jeremy Corbyn, *Labour Leadership Hustings Gateshead*, 11 August 2016, [link](#).

<sup>197</sup> *The Times*, 8 November 2016, [link](#).

<sup>198</sup> *BBC Radio Ulster*, 6 August 2015, [archived](#).

# Protecting Armed Forces personnel from litigation

**Summary:** We will ensure that British troops on military operations will in future operate under the primacy of the Law of Armed Conflict, to protect them from vexatious legal claims.

- **We believe that British troops must know that they have our support when they serve our nation, so we must tackle the vexatious legal claims that have recently undermined our Armed Forces and hindered our ability to fight wars.**
- **We will introduce legislation to ensure that the Law of Armed Conflict has primacy and that laws which are intended to govern our peacetime affairs are not applied to our service personnel on military operations.**
- **Our military commanders must have freedom of action on military operations and our veterans must be assured that their service is validated, recognised and honoured by the nation.**

## Background

- **The Law of Armed Conflict has lost its primacy in recent years and UK Armed Forces have been subject to rulings by British courts which have led to the law being weaponised against our Armed Forces.** It is illogical to apply improper extensions of human rights law when, like other Western nations, the Law of Armed Conflict is the appropriate and specific choice for military operations.
- **We have been clear that we need to end the unfair trials of people who served their country** when no new evidence has been produced and when the accusations have already been exhaustively questioned in court.

## Our solution

- **We will amend the Human Rights Act 1998 to specify that it doesn't apply to issues – including any death in the Northern Ireland Troubles – that took place before the Act came into force in October 2000.** This restores the intended scope of the Act.
- **This will not affect ongoing prosecutions in court in Northern Ireland and is part of a wider series of action to achieve the finality of resolution.** We are considering establishing a 'Legacy Commission' as part of these initiatives, one of whose responsibilities will be to ensure that ongoing prosecutions remain consistent with our obligations under the HRA, especially Article 2.
- **We will further amend the Human Rights Act 1988 to limit its extra-territorial reach.** The Act should only apply within the territory of the UK.
- **We will enact legislation requiring derogation from the European Convention on Human Rights in relation to future military operations.**
- **We will consider legislation that draws a clear line under the past,** preventing new vexatious investigations, inquests and prosecutions from the Northern Ireland Troubles.
- **We will consider enacting a statute of limitations, preventing investigation or prosecution of allegations** unless the court is satisfied that there is significant fresh evidence and that such a prosecution would be in the interests of justice.
- **Our commitment to our veterans is behind this manifesto promise.** We said we would take action on this issue and a Conservative majority will allow us to do so. This is overdue and we intend to put it right.

## Conservative record

- **We have undertaken reviews of the processes relating to Northern Ireland Troubles related cases as well as historical investigations relating to recent operations such as Iraq and Afghanistan.** Both have now concluded and we are developing responses to the findings which will form part of the overall package on Historical Investigations.
- **We have recognised the Armed Forces Covenant in law.** We legislated to give the Armed Forces Covenant a statutory foundation, introducing a requirement for the Secretary of State for Defence to report annually to Parliament on progress in delivering Covenant commitments.<sup>199</sup>
- **We are investing £10 million annually in the Covenant Fund.** This supports Armed Forces communities in four areas: removing barriers to family life; extra support after service for those that need help; measures to integrate military and civilian communities; and non-core healthcare services for veterans.<sup>200</sup>
- **We have also signed up to the Covenant as a Party.** In signing the Armed Forces Covenant we have committed – among other things – to striving to support the employment of Service spouses and partners; seeking to support employees who choose to be members of the Reserve forces, including by accommodating their training and deployment; and pro-actively marketing all vacancies to the veteran community. We will also offer serving and retired military personnel a discounted rate for Party Conference.

## Political points to make

*Corbyn's Labour would not support our veterans or keep our country safe...*

- **Corbyn prefers to condemn the British Army than the IRA.** *Studio:* 'The question is do you condemn what the IRA did?' *Corbyn:* 'Look, I condemn what was done by the British Army as well as the other sides as well. What happened in Derry in 1972 was pretty devastating as well'.<sup>201</sup>
- **Jeremy Corbyn thinks Britain doesn't need an army.** 'Wouldn't it be wonderful if every politician around the world instead of taking pride in the size of their armed forces did what the people of Costa Rica have done and abolished their army and took pride in the fact the fact they don't have an army'.<sup>202</sup>
- **Jeremy Corbyn would cut defence spending.** 'I would like us to live in a world where we spend a lot less on defence, and that we would hope to be able to reduce it in the long-term. I recognise that there are defence needs, and there needs to be a level of spending, but I would hope in the long-run to reduce it'.<sup>203</sup>
- **Jeremy Corbyn wants to scrap Trident and suggested Labour would keep nuclear submarines without warheads.** 'They don't have to have nuclear warheads on them. There are options there'.<sup>204</sup>
- **Jeremy Corbyn would rather not be in NATO.** 'I'd rather we weren't in it'.<sup>205</sup>

## Q&A

### **Q: For legacy prosecutions in NI, will existing cases in the system be affected?**

No, that is not our intent. We will consult widely on the timing and terms of the amendment. It is our intention that these proposals dovetail with our wider policy for the resolution of legacy case within a new Legacy Commission (currently under development) and apply where, within its processes, finality is desirable in the interests of peace and reconciliation. Existing investigations will not be affected.

<sup>199</sup> MoD, *News Story*, 3 November 2011, [link](#); MOD, *News Story*, 18 April 2019, [link](#).

<sup>200</sup> Hansard, 4 June 2019, WA257677, [link](#).

<sup>201</sup> *BBC Radio Ulster*, 6 August 2015, [archived](#).

<sup>202</sup> *Mirror*, 14 September 2015, [link](#).

<sup>203</sup> Jeremy Corbyn, *Labour Leadership Hustings Gateshead*, 11 August 2016, [link](#).

<sup>204</sup> *The Guardian*, 26 May 2017, [link](#); *The Telegraph*, 17 January 2016, [link](#).

<sup>205</sup> *New Statesman*, 29 July 2015, [link](#).



# Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme

**Summary:** We will increase the annual quota for the pilot Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme from 2,500 to 10,000.

- **We are committed to supporting the agricultural sector across the UK, and last year announced a pilot to ensure the sector has the workers it needs.**
- **We are now extending the pilot Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme to quadruple the number of non-EU seasonal workers who can come to the UK to deliver the workers that our farms need, while ensuring robust immigration controls.**
- **Only Boris Johnson and the Conservatives can ensure that we will finally get Brexit done, allowing us to create a new points-based immigration system that delivers the skills we need for our economy.**

## Background

- **In 2018 we announced a pilot Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme to bring 2,500 non-EU agricultural workers to the UK.** This pilot scheme is running in 2019 and 2020 and means that fruit and vegetable farmers are able to employ non-EU migrant workers for up to six months. This is helping to relieve labour shortages during periods of peak production and continue growth in the British horticultural sector.<sup>206</sup>

## Our solution

- **We are continuing to listen to the asks of our farming sector, which is why we are quadrupling the quota for next year to 10,000.** The SAW Scheme is due to run for another year. For the final year of the pilot we will quadruple the quota from 2,500 to 10,000.

## Conservative record

- **After Brexit, we will introduce an Australian-style points-based immigration system.** In his first speech in Parliament, the Prime Minister announced: ‘For years, politicians have promised the public an Australian-style points-based system, and today I will actually deliver on those promises: I will... conduct a review of that system as the first step in a radical rewriting of our immigration system, and I am convinced that we can produce a system that the British people can have confidence in’.<sup>207</sup>

## Political points to make

- **This makes Labour’s plan to ‘reinstate the scheme’ irrelevant for meeting the sector’s demands.** Their 2017 Manifesto said we will ‘reinstate the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme’.<sup>208</sup>
- **The SNP want to devolve immigration, but the National Farmers’ Union Scotland have said that a separate immigration system for Scotland would lead to a ‘checkpoint at Berwick’.** Jonnie Hall said: ‘I don’t want to see some sort of checkpoint near Berwick... I fail to see how that can work in practice, how Scotland can have a different approach, how it can have free movement of people into Scotland. What happens to those folk when they are in Scotland?’<sup>209</sup>

*Labour would not even attempt to control immigration*

<sup>206</sup> DEFRA, *News Story*, 6 September 2018, [link](#).

<sup>207</sup> Hansard, 25 July 2019, *Vol.663 Col.1460*, [link](#).

<sup>208</sup> *Labour Manifesto 2017*, p89, [link](#).

<sup>209</sup> *The Times*, 3 October 2017, [link](#).

- **Labour’s official policy is to maintain and extend freedom of movement.** Labour’s Conference voted for a motion which said Labour will include maintaining and extending freedom of movement in their next manifesto.<sup>210</sup>
- **Jeremy Corbyn has admitted he has no interest in ending free movement.** He said: ‘I am not against the free movement of people... I think I’ve made it pretty clear the need for workers to go both ways’.<sup>211</sup>
- **John McDonnell has repeatedly advocated for ‘open borders’.** In 2013 he said: ‘If we’re a civilised society we should have open borders. We should be allowed to travel right the way across the globe wherever we want. It should be a basic human right’. In 2016 he wrote: ‘Inevitably in this century we will have open borders. We’re seeing it in Europe already. The movement of peoples across the globe will mean that borders are almost going to become irrelevant by the end of this century, so we should be preparing for that’.<sup>212</sup>

## Q&A

### **Q: How will you ensure that people leave the UK when their visa comes to an end?**

All organisations who wish to participate in the scheme will need to meet mandatory requirements set by the Home Office. The Government will assess the capability of the organisation to deliver, whether they believe the organisation is able to meet satisfactorily meet the immigration control criteria and whether the organisation is able to meet the additional criteria on providing effective service to the sector.

### **Q: Is this a gimmick as it only lasts for one year?**

This is hardly a gimmick, it is going to provide thousands of workers to farms that need them next year. It will also allow us to assess the demand for seasonal agricultural workers to inform our future immigration system.

### **Q: How will you change the policy in time for next year?**

We are only increasing the quota rather than making changes to the Scheme, we are confident that the visas will be available for when farmers need them.

### **Q: How will the future immigration system tackle labour shortages in farming?**

Our new points-based immigration system will ensure that our economy has the skills it needs to thrive and grow. This will be informed by our experiences with the pilot SAW Scheme.

### **Q: Isn’t the reason that farms cannot get the labour they need because of Brexit?**

You cannot blame Brexit for a reduction in labour for UK farms. This is a process that has been going on for many years as a result of the economies of Eastern Europe developing and many, especially younger people, in those countries having already migrated to other parts of the EU.

### **Q: Is the visa cost too high?**

The SAW Scheme is one of the cheapest visas available to migrant workers. The fact that the 2,500 quota for last year was all but used up shows that the cost of the visas was not a barrier to the use of the Scheme.

<sup>210</sup> *LabourList*, 25 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>211</sup> BBC One, *The Andrew Marr Show*, 13 January 2018, [archived](#).

<sup>212</sup> South London Peoples Assembly, *YouTube*, 7 August 2013, [link](#); *The Telegraph*, 1 February 2016, [link](#).

# HM Veterans' Railcard

**Summary:** We will introduce a Veterans' Railcard allowing Armed Forces veterans one-third off the cost of train travel.

- **We believe that service in the Armed Forces should be recognised and continue to be rewarded long after you have left.**
- **Building upon our previous commitments to support veterans, we are establishing a new HM Veterans' railcard to ensure our veterans are able to access discounted travel – recognising their service to this country.**
- **Overseen by the Office for Veterans Affairs, this universal benefit for everyone who has served will save many veterans hundreds of pounds a year. Only the Conservatives are committed to supporting our Armed Forces.**

## Background

- **The vast majority of the country's 2.3 million veterans already qualify for existing elderly or disabled people's railcards.** However, up to 700,000 do not.
- **The existing HM Forces Railcard covers regular forces, volunteer reservists, war widows or widowers and the spouses and dependent children of each of these groups.** It costs £21 a year and gives a third off all tickets. There is a minimum fare of £12 before 10am on weekdays.

## Our solution

- **We will extend the eligibility of this railcard to all those who have served in the Armed Forces.** Overseen by the cross-government Office for Veterans Affairs, eligibility would be determined by the new Veterans' ID Card being rolled out from this year. Spouses and dependent children will be able to travel at a discount with the railcard holder. It will save users substantial sums e.g. nearly £38 on an off-peak return from Leeds to London.<sup>213</sup>

## Conservative record

- **We are supporting our veterans by setting up the first ever Office for Veterans' Affairs.** This is the first time that veterans' affairs are being overseen by dedicated ministers in the Cabinet Office to ensure the whole of government pulls together to deliver the life-long support our veterans deserve – this Railcard is a demonstration of this cross-government working delivering for veterans.<sup>214</sup>
- **We have launched the first ever UK wide Veterans Strategy.** The Strategy outlines a new vision and principles to support those who served, in areas including community and relationships, employment and skills, health and wellbeing, finance and debt, housing, and contact with the law.<sup>215</sup>
- **Awarding new ID cards to all veterans to mark their time in the armed forces.** A new ID card for armed forces veterans makes it easier for them to verify their service and access specialist help and support.<sup>216</sup>

---

<sup>213</sup> MoD, *News Story*, 18 February 2019, [link](#).

<sup>214</sup> MoD, *Press Release*, 29 July 2019, [link](#).

<sup>215</sup> MoD, *News Story*, 14 November 2018, [link](#).

<sup>216</sup> MOD, *News Story*, 18 February 2019, [link](#).

- **Recognising the Armed Forces Covenant in law.** We legislated to give the Armed Forces Covenant a statutory foundation, introducing a requirement for the Secretary of State for Defence to report annually to Parliament on progress in delivering Covenant commitments.<sup>217</sup>
- **Investing £10 million annually in the Covenant Fund.** This supports Armed Forces communities under four broad funding themes: removing barriers to family life; extra support after service for those that need help; measures to integrate military and civilian communities; non-core healthcare services for veterans.<sup>218</sup>
- **Signing up to the Covenant as a Party. In signing the Armed Forces Covenant we have committed – among other things – to** striving to support the employment of Service spouses and partners; seeking to support employees who choose to be members of the Reserve forces, including by accommodating their training and deployment; and pro-actively marketing all vacancies to the veteran community. We will also offer serving and retired military personnel a discounted rate for Party Conference.

## Political points to make

- **Jeremy Corbyn thinks Britain doesn't need an army.** 'Wouldn't it be wonderful if every politician around the world instead of taking pride in the size of their armed forces did what the people of Costa Rica have done and abolished their army and took pride in the fact the fact they don't have an army'.<sup>219</sup>
- **Jeremy Corbyn would cut defence spending.** 'I would like us to live in a world where we spend a lot less on defence, and that we would hope to be able to reduce it in the long-term. I recognise that there are defence needs, and there needs to be a level of spending, but I would hope in the long-run to reduce it'.<sup>220</sup>
- **Labour would create a Minister for Peace and Disarmament.** Corbyn appointed a Shadow Minister in 2016, after calling for a 'change in attitude' to foreign policy. He said: 'Let's have a Minister for Disarmament and a Minister for Peace as well who is pursuing those things around the world and looking to enforce the non-proliferation treaty rather than pretending it's an obstacle to re-armament'.<sup>221</sup>

## Q&A

### Q: No repeat of problems with 26-30 railcard?

When the 16-17 railcard was launched, the website struggled to cope with demand. 4.5 million people were eligible, and this goes to show how popular it was. We only expect around 700,000 people to access this railcard, so do not anticipate any similar problems.

<sup>217</sup> MoD, *News Story*, 3 November 2011, [link](#); MOD, *News Story*, 18 April 2019, [link](#).

<sup>218</sup> *Hansard*, WA, 4 June 2019, [link](#).

<sup>219</sup> *Mirror*, 14 September 2015, [link](#).

<sup>220</sup> Jeremy Corbyn, *Labour Leadership Hustings Gateshead*, 11 August 2016, [link](#).

<sup>221</sup> *The Times*, 8 November 2016, [link](#).

## 50 million more appointments in GP surgeries

**Summary:** We'll create 50 million more appointments in GP surgeries and have 6,000 more doctors and 6,000 extra pharmacist, physios and other primary care staff by 2024-25.

- **Once you're receiving care in the NHS, it is world-class and GPs and other NHS staff work incredibly hard to deliver high quality care. But for too many people it is still too hard to get seen at a GP surgery and often difficult to book an appointment.**
- **That's why we're creating 50 million extra appointments in GP surgeries every year – delivered by 6,000 more GPs and 6,000 more primary care staff by 2024-25 to ensure patients can be seen by the right person, when it's most convenient for them.**
- **Only the Conservatives will get Brexit done so we can move on to the real issues that make a difference to voters' lives – like being able to get a GP appointment.**

### Background

- **An ageing population and a rise in complex care needs means we have seen a big increase in demand for GP appointments.** We've also seen a change in the way people want to engage with their GP surgeries, with many wanting online or video appointments at times convenient to them. Currently it can take too long to get a GP appointment and it can be frustrating to book one.

### Our solution

- **We will deliver 50 million more appointments at GP surgeries by 2024-25, making it easier for patients to have check-ups and get vaccinations for their children, and allowing surgeries to offer more support for those with long-term conditions.** To achieve this, we will:
  - **Train an extra 500 GPs every year from 2021-22.** By 2024-25 we project there will be almost 3,000 additional doctors working and training in General Practice from this expansion.
  - **Improve recruitment and retention of GP staff.** We will work with the NHS to help improve the retention of talented staff, and work on a number of initiatives to improve international recruitment. We expect these initiatives to deliver 3,000 more GPs who otherwise would not be working in the NHS.
  - **Recruit more pharmacists, physios and other GP staff.** We will commit £300 million every year for an extra 6,000 non-GP workforce like nurses, physios and pharmacists.
  - **Ensure patients can benefit from digital booking and consultations offered by phone, Skype or online if they want them.** In addition, changes will enable remote working for GPs, enabling them to work in more modern and flexible ways, which should increase access for patients.
  - **Support practices to reduce waiting times through modernising systems and adopting best practice.** A range of support will be available to practices, as we will work with the NHS and the profession to improve waiting times and experience for patients as well as offering public health support.
  - **Make reforms to fix problems with doctors' pensions, which causes many staff to turn down extra shifts for fear of high tax bills.** We have listened to doctors', senior nurses' and hospital leaders' concerns and will work with the BMA and others to make reforms.

### Conservative record

- **We are investing an additional £4.5 billion in primary and community health services as part of our £33.9 billion long-term plan for the NHS.** This is the first time in the history of the NHS that real terms funding for primary and community health services will grow faster than the NHS budget overall.<sup>222</sup>
- **We have agreed a new GP contract, which will reduce working pressures on GPs.** The new contract will implement some of the biggest changes in over a decade and be essential to deliver the ambitions set out in our long-term plan for the NHS through strong general practice services.<sup>223</sup>
- **We are already recruiting 20,000 support staff to work in general practice.** We are recruiting 20,000 physios, therapists and other health experts to offer patient more access to specialist care in GP teams, enabling GPs to free up more time for patients.<sup>224</sup>
- **There are a record number of GPs in training.** 3,538 trainees have accepted, beating the annual target of 3,250 for the second year in succession.<sup>225</sup>

## Political points to make

- **The Labour run Welsh NHS scrapped their GP waiting time target to avoid scrutiny.** This ‘formal’ target was removed from April 2011.<sup>226</sup>
- **The last Labour Government agreed a GP contract which disincentivised GPs from offering out of hours services and was widely condemned.** The 2004 contract made providing out of hours services optional and many GPs chose to opt-out.<sup>227</sup>
- **Labour would raise taxes on everyone earning over £80,000 a year – including GPs.** GPs earn an average salary of £94,800. Labour have said they would raise income taxes for those earning above £80,000 – meaning GPs would pay more under Labour.<sup>228</sup>

## Q&A

### Q: What about your pledge to deliver 5,000 GPs by 2020?

There have been a number of reasons why GPs have left the profession or reduced their working hours, but it is good news there are now a record number of GPs in training. Our new plans will be supported by a £100 million retention package to support and retain some of our most experienced and knowledgeable GPs. We are also recruiting a total of 26,000 new primary care staff to further support GPs.

### Q: What about Labour’s pledge to provide GP appointments within 48 hours?

More targets are not the solution – the RCGP have warned against such ‘vote winning gimmicks’. Instead, we are focusing on the reasons why GPs may be leaving the profession and working to attract trainee doctors to work in general practice. The last Labour Government’s target prevented patients making appointments more than 48 hours in advance, and left patients dissatisfied with the system.<sup>229</sup>

### Q: Are the 6,000 additional non-GP staff on top of the 20,000 already committed in?

Yes, they are on top of 20,000 in our long-term plan. These will be trained and recruited both domestically and internationally. The NHS Visa that we announced on 8 November will assist in recruiting these staff more easily.

<sup>222</sup> NHS England, *NHS Long Term Plan*, 7 January 2019, [link](#).

<sup>223</sup> NHS England, *GP Contract*, accessed 4 November May 2019, [link](#).

<sup>224</sup> *The Guardian*, 31 January 2019, [link](#); *The Guardian*, 8 May 2019, [link](#).

<sup>225</sup> *HEE*, October 2019, [link](#).

<sup>226</sup> Welsh Assembly, *General practice in Wales - frequently asked questions*, 19 May 2016, [link](#).

<sup>227</sup> Health Select Committee, *GP Out of Hours Services*, 6 August 2004, [link](#).

<sup>228</sup> NHS Digital, *GP Earnings and Expenses Estimates 2017-18*, 29 August 2019, [link](#).

<sup>229</sup> *An evaluation of Advanced Access in general practice*, February 2007, [link](#).

# New fast-track NHS Visa

**Summary:** We will introduce a new NHS Visa, offering a fast-track entry to the UK for qualified overseas doctors and nurses under more generous terms.

- **We want to ensure that after Brexit the hardworking doctors and nurses which the NHS relies on are able to come here easily to work and provide high-quality care.**
- **A new NHS Visa will provide a 3-5 year work visa with a fast-track decision, a larger dedicated advice service for applicants, and reduced upfront fees.**
- **This visa will form part of our new Australia-style points-based immigration system, as we take back control of our borders after leaving the EU. In contrast, Labour would allow uncontrolled and unlimited immigration.**

## Background

- **Rising demand on the NHS and a shortfall of key clinical staff can only be addressed with a sensible work visa system that prioritises migrants with the skills that the UK needs.** Last year we had 2,021 EEA and 5,270 Rest of World (RoW) doctors, and 968 EEA and 6,157 RoW nurses joining the health system. We are keen that we continue to attract such talent.<sup>230</sup>
- **The NHS already plans to expand its international recruitment efforts over the next five years to meet growing gaps, as set out in its Interim People Plan.** Our new immigration system must therefore continue to attract nurses, doctors and allied health professionals to enter the UK to work in our NHS.<sup>231</sup>

## Our solution

- **As part of wider changes to introduce an Australian-style points-based immigration system, we will reform the work visa route and create a dedicated NHS Visa exclusively for skilled staff applying to work in the NHS in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland.** Three main roles will be included: qualified doctors, nurses and allied health professionals. This new visa will make it easier for the majority of doctors and nurses to come to work in our NHS.
- **Our new NHS Visa will be a permanent feature of the new points-based immigration system.** Extra points will be awarded if you come to the UK to work in the NHS, in recognition of the special contribution that such employees make. The visa will be tied to NHS employment and geared around filling acute job shortages in the NHS.
- **We will launch the NHS Visa before the new immigration system comes into operation in 2021.** Pending expert advice, we intend to ensure salary limits will allow all NHS Visa applicants, including junior nurses and allied health professionals, to migrate here.
- **There will be no cap on the number of qualified applicants who can migrate to the UK via the NHS Visa route, and the visa can be valid for up to five years.** Those who are accepted would have to remain in NHS employment. Other features of this new NHS Visa will include reduced fees, a dedicated advice service and faster decisions, and Immigration Health Surcharge payment support.

## Conservative record

---

<sup>230</sup> GMC, *The state of medical education and practice in the UK*, December 2019, [link](#); NMC, *The NMC Register*, 31 March 2019, [link](#).

<sup>231</sup> NHS Improvement, *Interim NHS People Plan*, 3 June 2019, [link](#).

- **We have already removed doctors and nurses from the cap on skilled worker visas.** There is now no restriction on the numbers of doctors and nurses who can be employed through the Tier 2 visa route – allowing us to recruit more international NHS staff to provide outstanding patient care when required.<sup>232</sup>
- **Since we removed the cap, the number of skilled health care workers applying to work in the UK has increased by 54 per cent.** In 2018 there was a 54 per cent increase in applications in the Human Health and Social Work activities sector, which is likely due to the removal of doctors and nurses from the Tier 2 cap.<sup>233</sup>
- **We are developing a fast-track visa route for scientists to attract elite researchers and specialists in science, engineering and technology.** The new immigration route will ensure the UK is the most attractive country to live in and develop new ideas.<sup>234</sup>
- **We are allowing international graduates to stay in the UK for two years after graduating to help them find a job.** International students who have successfully completed a degree from a trusted UK university or higher education provider will be able to stay in the UK for two years to find work.<sup>235</sup>

## Political points to make

*Labour would have uncontrolled and unlimited immigration – whereas we have a plan for controlled, high skilled immigration that would work for the whole of the UK*

- **Labour’s official policy is to maintain and extend freedom of movement.** Labour’s Conference voted for a motion which said Labour will include maintaining and extending freedom of movement in their next manifesto.<sup>236</sup>
- **Jeremy Corbyn has admitted he has no interest in ending free movement.** He said: ‘I am not against the free movement of people... I think I’ve made it pretty clear the need for workers to go both ways’.<sup>237</sup>
- **John McDonnell has repeatedly advocated for ‘open borders’.** In 2013 he said: ‘If we’re a civilised society we should have open borders’. In 2016 he wrote: ‘Inevitably in this century we will have open borders’.<sup>238</sup>

## Q&A

### **Q: Why aren’t we training more nurses here?**

Since its founding, the NHS has always relied on overseas workers and it is vital to continue to recruit talent from abroad. However, we are also investing in training British workers for key healthcare roles.

### **Q: What about social care?**

There are wider complexities around the labour gap in the social care sector which will be addressed as part of our plans to introduce the future immigration system.

### **Q: Are you abandoning the salary floor so you can hire more nurses from abroad on lower wages?**

Nursing roles are already on the shortage occupation list until 2021, meaning there is currently no salary floor. We will look into extending this as we develop our Australian-style points system. Pending expert advice, we intend to ensure any salary limits applying in the future system will continue to allow all NHS Visa applicants, including newly-qualified nurses, to migrate here.

<sup>232</sup> Home Office, *News Story*, 15 June 2018, [link](#).

<sup>233</sup> Home Office, *Why do people come to the UK? To work*, 28 February 2019, [link](#).

<sup>234</sup> Prime Minister’s Office, *Press Release*, 8 August 2019, [link](#).

<sup>235</sup> Prime Minister’s Office, *News Story*, 11 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>236</sup> *LabourList*, 25 September 2019, [link](#).

<sup>237</sup> BBC One, *The Andrew Marr Show*, 13 January 2018, [archived](#).

<sup>238</sup> *South London Peoples Assembly*, YouTube, 7 August 2013, [link](#); *The Telegraph*, 1 February 2016, [link](#).



# New fiscal rules for a new economic era

**Summary:** The Chancellor has set out new fiscal rules that a Conservative majority Government will follow to make sure we can invest in Britain's future while keeping debt and borrowing under control, meaning debt will be lower at the end of the next Parliament than at the start of it.

- **The hard work of the British people has helped to fix the economy and bring the deficit down by four fifths. We will never squander that hard work. As we now look ahead to a new economic era, we need new rules to keep borrowing and debt under control whilst investing in Britain's future.**
- **A functioning Conservative majority government will introduce three new fiscal rules, meaning day to day spending cannot exceed what we bring in through taxes, we are able to take advantage of low interest rates to invest in infrastructure, and we are prepared for if interest rates rise.**
- **These new rules will guide the Government's economic policy over the next five years and will mean that debt will be lower by the end of the Parliament. This contrasts to Labour, who would have no control or limit over borrowing.**

## Background

- The fiscal rules were last set in 2016, but they now need to be changed in order to accommodate our strong current fiscal position and to take advantage of record low borrowing costs to invest in the country's future, including levelling up through a step change in infrastructure investment.

## Our solution

- **Our three new rules mean debt will never be allowed to get out of control, that we can keep taxes low for working families and continue to help people with the cost of living.** It also means that under our new economic plan set out in the forthcoming Manifesto and Budget, debt will be lower at the end of next Parliament than at the start of it.
- **The rules will guide a Conservative Government's economic policy over the next five years.** A balanced current budget rule will keep borrowing under control, a debt rule will keep debt under control and a debt services cost rule, in case debt interest costs rise significantly:
  - **A balanced current budget rule.** We will target current budget balance over three years. This means day-to-day spending will be fully funded by taxes and we won't borrow for today's consumption. It will also give us flexibility in the short term to plan to get to balance over three years.
  - **A debt sustainability rule.** This means we can take advantage of record low borrowing costs to invest in infrastructure projects such as roads, railways, broadband or to upgrade hospitals or schools – but within a certain limit in order to keep debt in check. Public sector net investment won't exceed 3 per cent of GDP on average over the five year forecast period.
  - **A debt interest rule.** This means that should the cost of debt ever rise significantly, the Government would be required to reassess its borrowing plans to ensure debt to GDP is stable or falling. This rule is triggered if the debt service ratio to revenue exceeds 6 per cent – above the historical average for a sustained period.

## Conservative record

- **The economy has grown 18.9 per cent since 2010.** The latest forecasts show that the UK will grow as fast as France, and faster than Germany, Italy and Japan in 2019 – and faster than all four in 2020.

- **Borrowing has been cut by over four fifths as a share of GDP since 2010**, from a post-war high of 10.2 per cent in 2009-10 to 1.9 per cent in 2018-19 (the lowest level since 2001-02).
- **There are 3.6 million more people in work, and the employment rate is at a near record high.** Unemployment has fallen by 1.2 million. The unemployment rate is near its lowest level for over four decades and the proportion of low paid jobs is at its lowest in over 20 years.

## Political points to make

- **Labour left us unprepared for the financial crisis and the deficit soared to a post-war record.** In 1997-98 the deficit stood at £13.1 billion but by 2009-10 this had risen to £153.1 billion. In 2010, Labour admitted there was ‘no money’ left and the UK was borrowing £1 for every £4 we spent, compared with £1 for every £20 spent in 2018-19.<sup>239</sup>
- **Labour have admitted they are prepared for capital flight or a run on the pound if they won an election.** John McDonnell confirmed Labour had to ‘scenario plan’ for a ‘run on the pound’. Jeremy Corbyn also told the BBC that Labour was right to look at various scenarios.<sup>240</sup>
- **Labour’s spending plans are out of control, and they have admitted ‘the people will pay’ for it.** Labour’s ideological plans to renationalise swathes of the economy would cost £196 billion and damage public services, while their benefits splurge would cost £520 billion a year.<sup>241</sup>
- **Labour could only deliver their spending plans within their fiscal rules by putting huge tax hikes on families and business.** Labour’s fiscal rules require them to achieve a current balance after five years and with debt lower at the end of the Parliament. However, they have made so many spending commitments since the election, that it would be impossible to achieve current balance without raising taxes significantly.
- **Labour would put up taxes to the highest level in peacetime history and have consistently opposed our measures to help people with the cost of living, which will save people £7,800.** The IFS have warned Labour would raise taxes to ‘their highest level in peacetime history’. Labour have voted against our tax cuts, which will have saved the ordinary basic rate taxpayer £7,800 by 2020.<sup>242</sup>

## Q&A

### Q: How much extra borrowing does this mean under your plans?

We will be able to invest more than £100 billion more for long term investment over the next 10 years. We can afford to do this because rates are at historic lows and our current budget balance rule means we will not be borrowing for day to day spending.

### Q: Will debt keep falling every year?

Debt will be lower at the end of the next Parliament than at the start of it.

Debt will fall because we’re talking about the debt to GDP ratio, which puts debt in the context of the overall size of the economy and is the accepted measure.

### Q: How is this different to Labour’s rule?

Each of our three rules is stricter than Labour’s. John McDonnell has confirmed that Labour has ditched all controls on overall debt, which means that under their spending plans, debt would be rising uncontrollably over the next Parliament.

<sup>239</sup> OBR, *Public finances databank*, 9 January 2019; *The Guardian*, 22 December 2009.

<sup>240</sup> *Financial Times*, 26 September 2017, [link](#).

<sup>241</sup> *MailOnline*, 14 October 2019, [link](#); *The Daily Express*, 23 September 2019, [link](#); *LBC*, 7 November 2019, [archived](#).

<sup>242</sup> *IFS*, 26 May 2017, [link](#); *HMT, Autumn Budget 2018*, [link](#); *The Sun*, 20 October 2018, [link](#).

# Alcohol duty review

**Summary:** We will review alcohol duty rates to ensure that our tax system supports domestic drink producers, like Scotch whisky distilleries.

- **Scotch whisky is a national export that supports 42,000 jobs across the UK. Yet we tax each bottle of Scotch sold in this country almost three quarters of its price.**
- **That is why over the past two years we have frozen the duty on spirits, cutting the price of a bottle of Scotch by 30p. Yet we want to do more for Scotland's national drink, which is why we will review alcohol duty to ensure that our tax system is supporting British drink producers.**
- **Nicola Sturgeon and the SNP are obsessed with achieving a second independence referendum. Scottish Conservative MPs will work with the UK Government to get Brexit sorted and deliver for the Scottish economy.**

## Background

- **The Scotch whisky sector supports 42,000 jobs in the UK, including employing 7,000 directly in rural communities.** There are 128 distilleries in Scotland, a post-war record high. Scotland also produced 70 per cent of the gin produced in the UK.<sup>243</sup>
- **Almost £3 in every £4 of the price of a bottle of Scotch whisky is made up in taxation.** Between VAT and alcohol duty, the tax rate on a bottle of Scotch whisky is currently 72 per cent.<sup>244</sup>

## Our solution

- **Supporting our domestic producers by carrying out a review of alcohol duty rates.** The tax on a bottle of spirits is 28.7p per unit, against rate of 24.8p per unit on wine, 19.1p on beer and 6.7p on cider. We want to support domestically produced drinks and so will commission a review to ensure that our duty system delivers a competitive tax system for British drink producers, including Scotch whisky distilleries.
- **Delivering a multi-year plan for the future of alcohol duty, to give the drinks sector certainty as we leave the EU.** Our review will not just look to create a fairer duty system but will also look to establish a long-term plan for the future of alcohol duty, ending the annual negotiations around rates. This certainty will encourage further business investment in Scotland, building on the recent developments that have been helped by our decision to freeze spirit duty over the past two years. The review will report at the 2020 Spending Review.
- **Continuing to press for the removal of US tariffs and opening up new markets for whisky exports.** In addition to supporting domestic sales, we will continue to lobby the EU and the US to remove tariffs on Scotch whisky. We will also seize the opportunity of Brexit to negotiate new trade deals around the world, opening up new markets for Scotch whisky and other great British drinks.

## Conservative record

- **Over the past two Budgets we have frozen the rate of tax on spirits, supporting Scotland's national export.** The 2017 and 2018 budgets froze the tax on spirits, with last year's measure saving consumers 30p on the average price of a bottle of Scotch. The 2017 and 2018 budgets both froze the duty on cider and beer, with the former also freezing the rate on wine.<sup>245</sup>

<sup>243</sup> SWA, *Press Release*, 8 September 2018, [link](#); BBC, 28 May 2019, [link](#).

<sup>244</sup> SWA, *Budget Submission*, 16 October 2019, [link](#).

<sup>245</sup> HMT, *Budget 2018*, November 2018, p36, [link](#); HMT, *Budget 2017*, p38, [link](#).

- **Despite cutting tax, revenue from alcohol duty is due to increase above inflation.** Revenue from alcohol duty is forecast to increase from £11.6 billion to £14.5 billion from 2017-18 to 2023-24, an above inflation increase. This shows that further tax cuts do not necessarily lead to less revenue.<sup>246</sup>

## Political points to make

- **The 2015 and 2017 SNP manifestos promised to secure a review of alcohol duty, the Scottish Conservatives are now delivering it.** The 2015 Manifesto said: ‘Given that our whisky industry is a key national and export industry, we remain committed to a Treasury review of alcohol taxation to better reflect alcohol content’. The 2017 Manifesto had nearly the exact same text: ‘Given the Scotch Whisky industry is a key sector of Scotland’s economy, SNP MPs will continue to advocate a review of alcohol taxation to better reflect alcohol content’.<sup>247</sup>
- **The last Labour Government introduced a duty escalator in 2008, which damaged the drinks industry.** Labour’s duty escalator saw a one-off increase of 6 per cent in the first year followed by 2 per cent increases in subsequent years. The escalator was ended in 2014.<sup>248</sup>
- **Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell voted for the duty escalator to be introduced in 2008 and voted against its removal in 2014.** The duty escalator was introduced in the 2008 Finance Act and removed in the 2014 Finance Act.<sup>249</sup>
- **Jeremy Corbyn and Diane Abbott called for the duty escalator to be retained and expressed ‘alarm’ at alcohol duty cuts.** In February 2015 they signed a EDM which stated: ‘That this House notes the estimate made by HM Treasury that the abolition of the Alcohol Duty Escalator in 2014 will cost the Exchequer over £1.2 billion over the next four years... views with alarm calls for further cuts in alcohol duty which will reduce prices, increase alcohol consumption and impose greater pressures on the NHS’.<sup>250</sup>
- **The Scotch Whisky Association have called for this review.** ‘In addition to freezing duty, the Chancellor should begin a process of reform of tax structures for alcohol. The Scotch whisky industry is a proud taxpayer, but the duty system should be fair and consistent for all alcohol categories’.<sup>251</sup>

## Q&A

### Q: Are you going to increase the tax on beer/cider/wine?

We are not going to prejudge the outcome of this review before it has even started however we note that tax cuts in the past have not come at the expense of revenue raised from alcohol duty. We want our British drinks sector to thrive as we leave the EU and continue to be an exporting success and the best way to achieve that is with a competitive tax system that delivers for domestic producers. There are many great beer, cider and wine producers in this country and we want to back them too.

### Q: Why isn’t the Government doing more to remove the US tariff on Scotch whisky?

This Government is continually lobbying to get the US and the EU to remove the tariffs, not just on Scotch whisky, but on all the goods affected by the Boeing/Airbus dispute. However, we should be realistic – this is a dispute between the EU and the US and it will ultimately be for them to resolve it. That does not mean that we will stop pressing both sides to lower tariffs.

<sup>246</sup> OBR, *Economic and fiscal outlook*, March 2019, p76, [link](#).

<sup>247</sup> *SNP Manifesto 2015*, p33, [link](#); *SNP Manifesto 2017*, p23, [link](#).

<sup>248</sup> House of Commons Library, *Alcohol taxation and the pub trade*, 13 February 2019, [link](#).

<sup>249</sup> Hansard, 2 July 2008, *Division 249*, [link](#); Hansard, 2 July 2014, *Division 32*, [link](#).

<sup>250</sup> House of Commons, *EDM 783 2014-15 Session*, 10 February 2015, [link](#).

<sup>251</sup> *SWA Budget Submission*, 16 October 2019, [link](#).