

**INVITATION TO  
JOIN THE GOVERNMENT OF  
THE UNITED KINGDOM**



**CONSERVATIVES AND UNIONISTS MANIFESTO 2010**



David Cameron | Leader of the Conservative Party



Sir Reg Empey | Leader of the Ulster Unionist Party

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## INVITATION TO JOIN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

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A country is at its best when the bonds between people are strong and when the sense of national purpose is clear. Today the challenges facing the United Kingdom are immense. Our economy is overwhelmed by debt, our social fabric is frayed and our political system has betrayed the people. But these problems can be overcome if we pull together and work together. If we remember that we are all in this together.

Some politicians say: 'give us your vote and we will sort out all your problems'. We say: real change comes not from government alone. Real change comes when the people are inspired and mobilised, when millions of us are fired up to play a part in the nation's future.

Yes this is ambitious. Yes it is optimistic. But in the end all the Acts of Parliament, all the new measures, all the new policy initiatives, are just politicians' words without you and your involvement.

How will we deal with the debt crisis unless we understand that we are all in this together? How will we raise responsible children unless every adult plays their part? How will we revitalise communities unless people stop asking 'who will fix this?' and start asking 'what can I do?' The United Kingdom will change for the better when we all elect to take part, to take responsibility – if we all come together. Collective strength will overpower our problems.

Only together can we get rid of this government and, eventually, its debt. Only together can we get the economy moving. Only together can we mend our broken society. Together we can even make politics and politicians work better. And if we can do that, we can do anything. Yes, together we can do anything.

So our invitation today is this: join us, to form a new kind of government for the United Kingdom.



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## FOREWORD

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The UK needs change: few can doubt that. Our national finances are mired in massive debt. Millions are living the misery of unemployment. Communities are shattered by crime and abuse. People in the public services are trapped in a web of rules and regulations. People have lost faith that politics can fix our problems, or that politicians can lead us into a better future. There is a feeling of helplessness. Once again, there is a mood afoot that the decline of the UK is inevitable.

But there is no law that says we must accept decline. We have the energy, the ideas and the ambition to get the UK back on track. And that includes everyone in the UK, wherever they live and whatever their circumstances. If we join together, if we act decisively, and move forward with optimism, we can start to fix the economic, social and political problems that threaten the nation. We can bring about the change the UK needs.

What is that change? Some promise solutions from on high – but real change comes from collective endeavour. So we offer a new approach: a change not just from one set of politicians to another; from one set of policies to another. It is a change from one political philosophy to another. From the idea that the role of the state is to direct society and micro-manage public services, to the idea that the role of the state is to strengthen society and make public services serve the people who use them. In a simple phrase, the change we offer is from big government to Big Society.

This manifesto is the most important stage so far of a journey that in Northern Ireland began just under two years ago when the Conservative Party and the Ulster Unionist Party came together to offer the people of Northern Ireland the opportunity to participate in mainstream UK politics. Even as we have done so, the problems confronting the UK have escalated, and escalated fast. So our ideas are ambitious and radical as well as modern. They match the scale of the UK's problems and are in tune with a world that is changing before our eyes. But our core values as Conservatives and Unionists have not altered and our core beliefs remain consistent.

We believe in responsibility: government responsibility with public finances, personal responsibility for our actions, and social responsibility towards each other. We believe in enterprise and aspiration. We believe there is such a thing as society, it's just not the same thing as the state. Our fundamental tenet is that power should be devolved from politicians to people, from the central to the local. Personal ambition should be set as high as is humanly possible, with no barriers put in its way by the state. Perhaps most importantly, we believe that we are all in this together.

Everything you will find in this manifesto is built on these beliefs. They are the building blocks of the change we want to see in every home, every street, every community, every business.

Our belief in responsibility with public finances is the starting point of our **plan for economic recovery and growth**. We want your consent for a programme of public spending control that will

## FOREWORD

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deal with Labour's debt crisis and stop the Labour jobs tax that would kill our economic recovery. The programme set out in this manifesto is fully costed and fully funded. Some of our proposals – such as raising standards of behaviour in schools – cost nothing, but require energy and leadership. Others – like stopping Labour's jobs tax – will require money, and we will make savings in other areas to pay for them. The debt crisis is the terrible legacy that Gordon Brown is bequeathing to our country. But fiscal responsibility needs a social conscience or it is not responsible at all: so we will not allow the poorest people in the UK to pay an unfair price for the mistakes of some of the richest.

Nor will we allow irresponsibility in the private sector to continue unchecked. We will bring law and order to our financial markets as a necessary step to restoring confidence. But the real prize for the UK is to create a new economic model, one founded on investment and savings not borrowing and debt. This economic vision reflects our belief in enterprise and aspiration. It is a vision of a truly modern economy: one that is greener and more local. An economy where the UK leads in science, technology and innovation. But it is founded on a determination that wealth and opportunity must be more fairly distributed. We want to see an economy where not just our standard of living, but everyone's quality of life, rises steadily and sustainably.

But a nation is only really successful if it is built on a **strong society**. We will never deal with our debts and build a new economy unless we solve the social problems that cost so much and hold so many people back. Labour's big government approach is making our social problems worse, not better – inequality and poverty on the rise; social mobility stalled; family breakdown a fact of life for too many children. So we need fundamental change: from big government that presumes to know best, to the Big Society that trusts in the people for ideas and innovation.

We will move from state action to social action, encouraging social responsibility in all its forms and across all the country – whether curbing incivility on our streets or supporting social enterprises with the power to transform neighbourhoods. Mending the UK's broken society will be a central aim of the next Conservative and Unionist Government.

That is why in this manifesto we set ourselves an ambitious goal: to make the UK the most family-friendly country in Europe. That is why we back the NHS. That is why we will reform schools to raise standards and improve discipline. It is why we will get people off benefits and into work; and why we are committed to a greener future.

But we will not succeed in building the Big Society, or in building a new economic model, unless we stop government trying to direct everything from the centre. We will get nowhere with yet more top-down state control. So, after thirteen years of Labour, we need **radical political reform**. We need to change the whole way this country is run. As Conservatives and Unionists, we trust people.



## FOREWORD

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We believe that if people are given more responsibility, they will behave more responsibly. We believe that if you decentralise power, you get better results and better value for money. So the plans set out in this manifesto represent an unprecedented redistribution of power and control from the central to the local, from politicians and the bureaucracy to individuals, families and neighbourhoods.

We will give people much more say over the things that affect their daily lives. We will make government, politics and public services much more open and transparent. And we will give the people who work in our public services much greater responsibility. But in return, they will have to answer to the people. All these measures will help restore trust in our broken political system.

We know that this is an ambitious vision. A profoundly optimistic vision. It is also an authentically Conservative and Unionist vision: sound money, backing enterprise, trusting people. The journey we have embarked on is all about applying this Conservative and Unionist approach to the progressive challenges of our age: making opportunity more equal; fighting poverty and inequality; improving the environment and general well-being. So our creed today is progressive Conservatism and Unionism; and this is an unashamedly progressive Conservative and Unionist manifesto.

We believe passionately in the Union. Conservatives and Unionists will never be neutral in expressing our support for it. While many key issues like health and education are rightly decided at Stormont, the decisions taken at Westminster remain vitally important to Northern Ireland. This manifesto sets out our policies both on UK-wide issues and in some of the key devolved areas. We want to end Northern Ireland's semi-detached political status and bring it back into the mainstream of United Kingdom politics. Only the Conservatives and Unionists offer that choice to the people of Northern Ireland at this election

Now we ask you to join us for the next and most important stage of the journey: changing the UK so we can offer a better life to all our citizens and play a proud and leading role in the world.

Each of the three programmes of reform outlined in this manifesto – our plans to build a new economic model; to build the Big Society; to build a political system where people have more power and control over their lives – is a massive undertaking in its own right. Yet we are proposing to carry out these changes all at once, because that is the only way to put the UK on the right path for a successful future.

The UK faces huge problems that demand radical change; and it cannot come soon enough. We are impatient to get on with this work. We are determined to make a difference. We have the policies to make that difference. And most importantly, we have faith in the people of the UK, because we know that if we all pull together, stick together, then this country can change its future.



Victoria Square,  
Belfast

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# Change the economy

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**LET'S  
GET  
BRITAIN  
MOVING**

## Get the economy moving

*Gordon Brown's debt, waste and taxes have wrecked the economy and threaten to kill the recovery. A Conservative and Unionist Government will take action now to cut the deficit, stop Labour's jobs tax, help keep mortgage rates low and get the economy moving. We will create a new economic model built on investment and savings, not borrowing and debt.*

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Where is the growth going to come from? Who will provide jobs for the millions out of work? How will families be able to aspire to a better future? These are the questions being asked about the UK, at home and abroad.

One thing is clear. We can't go on with the old model of an economy built on debt. Irresponsible public spending, an overblown banking sector, and unsustainable consumer borrowing on the back of a housing bubble were the features of an age of irresponsibility that left the UK badly exposed to the economic crisis. Now, with the national debt already doubled and in danger of doubling again, it is this debt – together with the jobs tax that Labour will introduce to help pay for it – that threatens to kill the recovery.

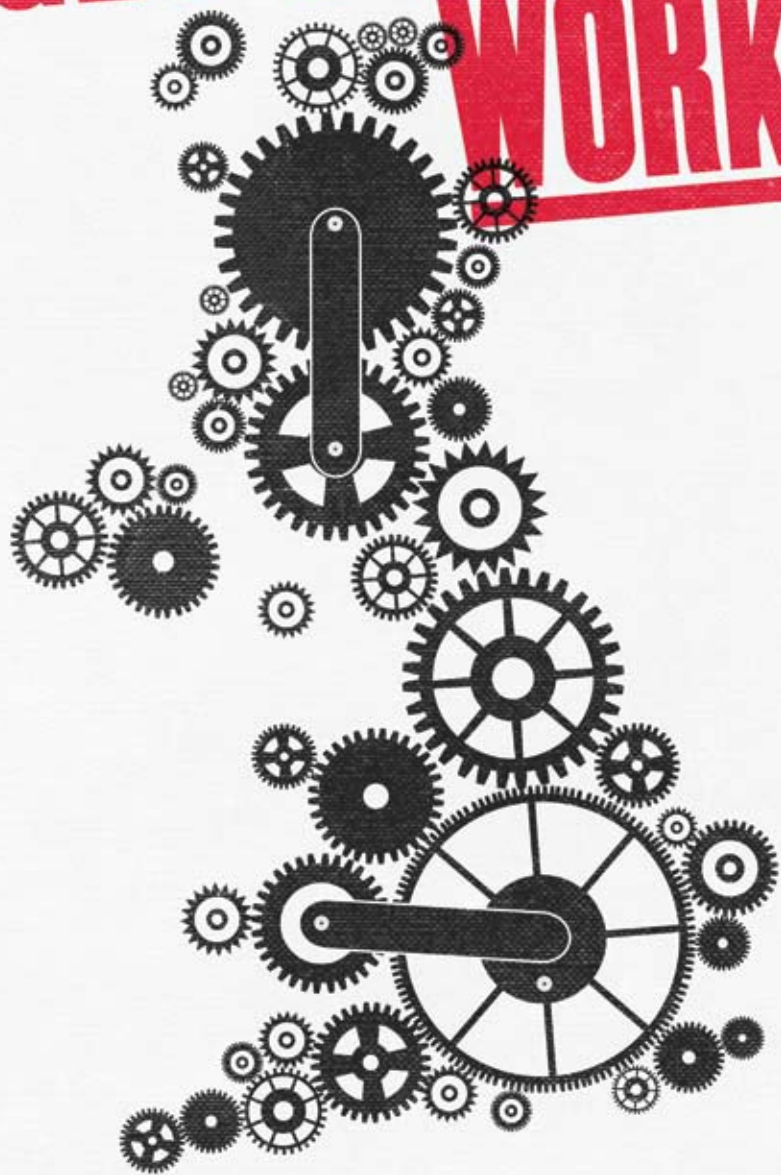
The UK needs a new economic model. Saving and business investment must replace reckless borrowing as the foundation of growth. We need to boost enterprise and develop a low carbon, hi-tech economy. Our exports must grow. We need to get the UK working by creating jobs in the private sector, and we must get better value for money from the public sector.

With the next Conservative and Unionist Government, our tax system, education and national infrastructure will help UK firms out-compete their global rivals, not hold them back. We will build a more balanced economy that does not depend so heavily on the success of financial services, and where all parts of the country share in the gains. The bedrock of this new economic model will be the stability and low interest rates that come from a credible plan to reduce our record budget deficit, protect the UK's credit rating and give taxpayers value for their money.

Building this new economic model requires a national effort. We can reverse the UK's economic decline – but only if we accept that we are all in this together. No government, even a strong and united one, can create a better country alone. It needs individuals, families and businesses pulling alongside. We want to unite everyone in our country behind this bold vision of a new UK economic model.



**GET BRITAIN  
WORKING**





## Benchmarks for the United Kingdom

*For the first time, the people of the United Kingdom will have eight clear and transparent benchmarks against which they can judge the economic success or failure of the next government. We will be accountable and open. These are the eight Benchmarks for the UK. Achieving them over the next Parliament will mean we have put the UK back on its feet and are building a new UK economic model, very different from the debt-driven economy of recent years.*

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1. **Ensure macroeconomic stability:** We will safeguard the United Kingdom's credit rating with a credible plan to eliminate the bulk of the structural deficit over a Parliament. Our fiscal policy will seek to help keep interest rates lower for longer. The independent Bank of England will continue to target 2 per cent Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation, and will use its new role in prudential supervision to preserve financial stability.
  2. **Create a more balanced economy:** We will create the conditions for higher exports, business investment and saving as a share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
  3. **Get the United Kingdom working again:** We will reduce youth unemployment and reduce the number of children in workless households as part of our strategy for tackling poverty and inequality.
  4. **Encourage enterprise:** We will improve the United Kingdom's international rankings for tax competitiveness and business regulation.
  5. **Ensure the whole country shares in rising prosperity:** We will increase the private sector's share of the economy in all regions of the country, especially outside London and the South East.
  6. **Reform public services to deliver better value for money:** We will raise productivity growth in the public sector in order to deliver better public services.
  7. **Create a safer banking system that serves the needs of the economy:** We will reform the regulation and structure of the banking system to ensure lower levels of leverage, less dependence on unstable wholesale funding, and greater availability of credit for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
  8. **Build a greener economy:** We will reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions and increase our share of global markets for low carbon technologies.
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## Ensure macroeconomic stability

*We will safeguard the United Kingdom's credit rating with a credible plan to eliminate the bulk of the structural deficit over a Parliament. Our fiscal policy will help keep interest rates lower for longer. The independent Bank of England will continue to target 2 per cent CPI inflation, and will use its new role in prudential supervision to preserve financial stability.*

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After a decade of mismanagement, the UK entered the recession in poor shape, with the second biggest budget deficit in the developed world. We have been honest about the scale of the problem, and the actions we will need to take to deal with it. This will not be easy, but we can overcome our problems if we all pull together.

The absence of a credible plan to deal with our record budget deficit, the largest of any major economy, is creating uncertainty over the United Kingdom's credit rating and interest rates. This instability undermines confidence and jeopardises investment. It could tip the United Kingdom back into recession. This is Gordon Brown's legacy – and why the greatest risk to our economic recovery is five more years of Gordon Brown.

### Urgent action to reduce debt

Urgent action is needed if we are to avoid the higher borrowing costs that would inevitably follow from a credit rating downgrade. So we will cut wasteful government spending

to bring the deficit down and restore stability.

We will increase spending on health in real terms every year and honour our commitments on international aid, but our plan to get a grip on the deficit will include cuts to wasteful spending in many other departmental budgets. That will enable the independent Bank of England to keep interest rates as low as possible for as long as possible.

To ensure that no Labour government can ever attempt to bankrupt our public finances again, we will set up an independent Office for Budget Responsibility to restore trust in the government's ability to manage the public finances.

We will provide an emergency Budget within 50 days of taking office to set out a credible plan for eliminating the bulk of the structural current budget deficit over a Parliament. The case for starting early to re-establish our economic credibility is overwhelming, and is backed by economists and business leaders.

We will start by cutting a net £6 billion of wasteful departmental spending in the financial year 2010/11. In addition, we will make the following savings:

- freeze public sector pay for one year in 2011, excluding the one million lowest paid workers;
- hold a review to bring forward the date at which the state pension age starts to rise to 66, although it will not be sooner than 2016 for men and 2020 for women;
- stop paying tax credits to better-off families with incomes over £50,000;
- cut government contributions to Child Trust Funds for all but the poorest third of families and families with disabled children;
- cap public sector pensions above £50,000;
- cut Ministers' pay by 5 per cent, followed by a five year freeze; and,
- reduce the number of MPs by 10 per cent.

Over the course of a Parliament, we will cut Whitehall policy, funding and regulation costs by a third, saving £2 billion a year, and save a further £1 billion a year from quango bureaucracy.

## Cut government waste to stop Labour's jobs tax

Labour are planning to increase National Insurance in 2011. Anyone earning over £20,000 will pay more tax, and employers will pay more tax on all jobs paid over £5,700. This jobs tax, which will hit small businesses especially hard, will kill off the recovery. Experts predict it will cost 57,000 jobs in small and medium-sized businesses alone.

At the same time, Labour will not take action to cut waste in government. They have identified £11 billion pounds of waste, but they do not plan to start dealing with it until April 2011. So Labour will continue wasting money while putting up taxes on working people.

We will act immediately to cut government waste so we can stop the most damaging part of the National Insurance rise for employers and for anyone earning under £35,000.

We will make the following changes in April 2011, relative to Labour's plans:

- raise the primary threshold for National Insurance by £24 a week and raise the Upper Earnings Limit by £29 a week; and,
- raise the secondary threshold at which employers start paying National Insurance by £21 a week.

Seven out of ten working people – those earning between £7,100 and £45,400 – and almost every employer will save up to £150 a year per person compared to under Labour. Lower earners will get the greatest benefit as a percentage of their earnings. Nobody will be worse off as a result of these changes.

Our plans are backed by many of the United Kingdom's top business leaders, who between them employ more than half a million people, as well as by the United Kingdom's leading business organisations.

To pay for this we will take immediate action to cut a net £6 billion of wasteful departmental spending in the financial year 2010/11, with further savings in future years. This is in addition to the savings made by cutting tax credits and Child Trust Funds for better-off families.

These actions will allow us to reduce the deficit more quickly than Labour year-on-year while avoiding the most damaging part of their jobs tax. It will also lower the proportion of the reduction of the structural deficit that is accounted for by tax increases, from about one third towards one fifth. This is in line with international best practice, as well as the Treasury's own internal analysis.

Former government advisers Sir Peter Gershon and Dr Martin Read have advised us that savings of £12 billion across all departmental

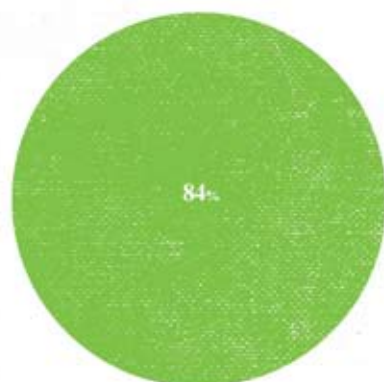
spending are possible in-year without affecting the quality of frontline services. These are over and above any savings already planned by Labour. We will achieve this through:

- a freeze on major new Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) spending;
- immediate negotiations to achieve cost reductions from major suppliers;
- tighter control of public sector recruitment;
- reductions in discretionary spending, including travel, expenses, advertising, consultancy and office supplies; and,
- reductions in public sector property costs.

We will match Labour's spending plans for 2010/11 in health and overseas aid. Given our commitment to carry out a Strategic Defence and Security Review, it would also not be appropriate to make in-year reductions to the existing defence budget in 2010/11. Savings in these protected areas will be channelled back into frontline services. The net £6 billion of savings will be made from the remaining departmental budgets.



## Growth in key UK economic sectors, 1997-2009



**Financial services**



**Housing property**



**Manufacturing**

Source: Office for National Statistics



## Create a more balanced economy

*We will create the conditions for higher exports, business investment and saving as a share of GDP.*

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For the last decade, growth has been too dependent on government spending and debt-fuelled consumption. More than half of the new jobs created were driven by public spending. Household savings collapsed, and the UK has the lowest investment as a share of GDP of any G7 country. Our share of world exports has fallen by almost a third. A sustainable recovery must be driven by growth in exports and business investment, and through a better environment for wealth creation.

## Make the United Kingdom the leading hi-tech exporter in Europe

We will implement key recommendations from Sir James Dyson's Review into how to achieve our goal of making the United Kingdom Europe's leading hi-tech exporter, including:

- encouraging the establishment of joint university-business research and development institutes;
- initiating a multi-year Science and Research Budget to provide a stable investment climate for Research Councils;

- creating a better focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects in schools; and,
- establishing a new prize for engineering.

Research and development tax credits will be improved and refocused on hi-tech companies, small businesses and new start-ups. At the same time, we will give strong backing to the growth industries that generate high-quality jobs around the country.

We will improve the performance of UK Trade and Investment with a renewed focus on high priority sectors and markets where the return on taxpayers' money is highest. We will regularly compare government support for exporters and inward investment against the services provided by our competitors. We will work for the successful conclusion of the Doha trade round and support bilateral free trade negotiations between the European Union (EU) and other countries.

## Encourage saving and investment

Only by saving more can we finance investment for the future without being dependent on unsustainable inflows of capital from abroad. We will help stop the spread of means-testing by restoring the link between the basic state pension and average earnings, making it worthwhile for people to save. Other measures we will take to encourage saving include:

- reinvigorating occupational pensions and working with employers and industry to support auto-enrolment into pensions;
- working with the trade unions, businesses and others to address the growing disparity between public sector pensions and private sector pensions, while protecting accrued rights; and,
- when resources allow, starting to reverse the effects of the abolition of the dividend tax credit for pension funds.

We will reward those who have saved for their retirement by ending the effective obligation to buy an annuity at age 75. And we will raise the inheritance tax threshold to £1 million to help millions of people who aspire to pass something on to their children, paid for by a simple flat-rate levy on all non-domiciled individuals.

We must not let the mis-selling of financial products put people off saving. We will implement the Ombudsman's recommendation to make fair and transparent payments to Equitable Life policy holders, through an independent payment scheme, for their relative loss as a consequence of regulatory failure.

## Help households manage their debts

Going into the recession, the United Kingdom's consumer debt was the highest in the G7. A Conservative and Unionist Government will promote responsible consumer finance by creating a powerful Consumer Protection Agency (CPA) to take over the Financial Services Authority's consumer protection role. In addition, we will:

- give the CPA new powers to define and ban excessive borrowing rates on store cards;
- launch the United Kingdom's first free national financial advice service, funded in full through a new social responsibility levy on the financial services sector;
- introduce a seven-day cooling off period for store cards;
- require credit card companies to provide clear information; and,
- ensure that no-one is forced to sell their home to pay unsecured debts of less than £25,000.



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*“Getting people back into work  
is an essential part of ensuring  
that everyone benefits  
from economic growth”*

## Get the United Kingdom working again

*We will reduce youth unemployment and reduce the number of children in workless households as part of our strategy for tackling poverty and inequality.*

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Under Labour, youth unemployment has reached over 900,000, with one in five young people unable to find a job. We are at risk of creating a lost generation of young people without the skills to participate in the workforce, without hope for the future. At the same time, economic inactivity is rising, and more than five million people are out of work and on benefits.

This tidal wave of worklessness is making it hard for many families to make ends meet. In recent years, the number of people living in severe poverty has risen. One in six children in the UK now lives in a workless household – the highest proportion of any country in Europe – and child poverty has gone up in recent years. Getting people back into work is an essential part of realising the goal of eliminating child poverty by 2020, and ensuring that everyone benefits from economic growth.

### Reduce welfare dependency

We will scrap Labour's failing employment schemes and create a single Work Programme for everyone who is unemployed, including the 2.6 million people claiming Incapacity

Benefit who do not get enough help from existing programmes. We will reassess all current claimants of Incapacity Benefit. Those found fit for work will be transferred onto Jobseeker's Allowance. Recipients of Incapacity Benefit who are genuinely disabled will continue to receive the financial support to which they are entitled. Our Work Programme will:

- offer people targeted, personalised help sooner – straight away for those with serious barriers to work and at six months for those aged under 25;
- be delivered through private and voluntary sector providers, which will be rewarded on a payment by results basis for getting people into sustainable work; and,
- draw on a range of Service Academies to offer pre-employment training for unemployed people – our first Service Academy, for hospitality and leisure, will provide up to 50,000 training places and work placements.

We will work with the Northern Ireland Executive to consider how those measures

which are the responsibility of devolved ministers might apply in Northern Ireland.

Our plans will give unemployed people a hand up, not a hand out. Unemployed people must be prepared to take up job offers. So, with the Conservatives and Unionists, long-term benefit claimants who fail to find work will be required to ‘work for the dole’ on community work programmes. Anyone on Jobseeker’s Allowance who refuses to join the Work Programme will lose the right to claim out-of-work benefits until they do, while people who refuse to accept reasonable job offers could forfeit their benefits for up to three years. This will create a welfare system that is fair but firm.

## Boost small business

In the end, it is not the state that creates sustainable employment – it is business people. And small businesses are especially important to the UK’s economic recovery and to tackling unemployment. Government can help boost enterprise by lowering tax rates, reducing regulation and improving workers’ skills.

As well as stopping Labour’s jobs tax, for the first two years of a Conservative and Unionist Government any new business will pay no Employers National Insurance on the first ten employees it hires during its first year.

To support small businesses further, we will aim to deliver 25 per cent of government research and procurement contracts through SMEs by cutting the administrative costs of bidding.

We will support would-be entrepreneurs through a new programme – Work for Yourself – which will give unemployed people direct access to business mentors and substantial loans. We need to make work pay, so we will keep the minimum wage and work to reduce the very high marginal tax rates faced by many people on low incomes who want to return to work or increase their earnings. We will look at how to abolish the default retirement age, as many older people want to carry on working. And we will force equal pay audits on any company found to be discriminating on the basis of gender.







## Silicon Valley

Despite having a population twenty times smaller than the UK, Silicon Valley is a global beacon for innovation and enterprise, attracting more venture capital investment than the whole of the UK. Having led the internet revolution, Silicon Valley is now becoming a world leader in green technology development. These successes are thanks to the highly skilled workforce and world-class universities, the ease of starting a business, and the availability of credit and investment. In addition, companies in Silicon Valley have been able to attract employees in a highly competitive labour market by introducing measures to improve the general well-being of their staff, including flexible working and childcare facilities.

## Encourage enterprise

*We will improve the United Kingdom's international rankings for tax competitiveness and business regulation.*

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Thirteen years ago, the United Kingdom's tax system was one of the most competitive in the developed world. Over the last decade, other countries have cut their tax rates while our tax system has become one of the most complex in the world. Our competitiveness rating has fallen, while the burden of regulation and the impact of taxation have risen. We can only make a sustainable economic recovery if we send a clear signal that the United Kingdom is open for business again. That means stopping Labour's jobs tax, lowering corporate tax rates, reducing the regulatory burden, and supporting innovation and sustainable development – changes that will benefit businesses of all sizes and boost employment.

## Cut and simplify business taxes

Conservatives and Unionists believe in lower and simpler taxation. That is why we will ensure that by far the largest part of the burden of dealing with the deficit falls on lower spending rather than higher taxes. Cutting the deficit is the most urgent task we need to undertake if we are to get the economy moving, but it is not enough. So, initially, we will cut the headline rate of corporation tax to 25p and the small companies' rate to 20p, funded by

reducing complex reliefs and allowances.

Over time, we hope to reduce these rates further. Our ambition is to create the most competitive tax system in the G20 within five years.

We will restore the tax system's reputation for simplicity, stability and predictability. In our first Budget, we will set out a five year road map for the direction of corporate tax reform, providing greater certainty and stability to businesses. We will create an independent Office of Tax Simplification to suggest reforms to the tax system.

We will take a series of measures to encourage Foreign Direct Investment into the UK, including:

- making the UK a more attractive location for multinationals by simplifying the complex Controlled Foreign Companies rules;
- consulting on moving towards a territorial corporate tax system that only taxes profits generated in the UK; and,
- creating an attractive tax environment for intellectual property.

## Reduce regulation

Increasing amounts of red tape and complex regulation have eroded the United Kingdom's reputation as a good place to invest, create jobs or start a business. A Conservative and Unionist Government will introduce regulatory budgets: forcing any government body wanting to introduce a new regulation to reduce regulation elsewhere by a greater amount. And we will give the public the opportunity to force the worst regulations to be repealed.

To encourage new businesses to start up, we will reduce the number of forms needed to register a new business – moving towards a 'one-click' registration model – to make the United Kingdom the fastest place in the world to start a business, and end the restrictions on social tenants starting a business from their homes.

We are proud of the last Conservative Government's industrial relations reforms, which helped bring about our economic revival in the 1980s, and we will always be prepared to build on them if necessary.

## Support innovation and sustainable development

Government procurement is a £200 billion a year market that can be used much better to stimulate enterprise and innovation. We will take steps to open up government procurement to small and innovative businesses by:

- publishing online all government tender documents for contracts worth over £10,000 via the Supply2Gov website;
- creating a level playing field for open source ICT in government procurement;
- opening up contracts to SMEs by breaking up large ICT projects into smaller components; and,
- working with our Ulster Unionist colleagues in the Assembly to ensure procurement is opened up to SMEs in Northern Ireland.

The United Kingdom's complex and unwieldy planning system has long been cited as a significant barrier to growth and wealth creation. We will create a presumption in favour of sustainable development in the planning system. We will abolish the unelected Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) and replace it with an efficient and democratically-accountable system that provides a fast-track process for major infrastructure projects. We will:

- use private or hybrid Bills to promote major projects, such as our plans for a national high speed rail network;
- ensure that all other major infrastructure projects are considered at planning inquiries which have binding timetables and which focus on planning issues – with final permission given by a Minister;

- provide transitional arrangements for projects already before the IPC to ensure that these projects are not disrupted or delayed; and,
- work with our Ulster Unionist colleagues in the Assembly to create a planning system in Northern Ireland that is fit for the 21st century. Reform has been slow and disappointing. In order to boost economic growth Northern Ireland needs an efficient and effective planning system that is democratically-accountable but which gives greater certainty to business and enterprise.

## Attract the brightest and best to our country

Immigration has enriched our nation over the years and we want to attract the brightest and the best people who can make a real difference to our economic growth. But immigration today is too high and needs to be reduced. We do not need to attract people to do jobs that could be carried out by UK citizens, given the right training and support. So we will take steps to take net migration back to the levels of the 1990s – tens of thousands a year, not hundreds of thousands.

To help achieve this goal, we will introduce a number of measures, such as:

- setting an annual limit on the number of non-EU economic migrants admitted into the UK to live and work;
- limiting access only to those who will bring the most value to the UK economy; and,

- applying transitional controls as a matter of course in the future for all new EU Member States.

In addition, we will promote integration into UK society, as we believe that everyone coming to this country must be ready to embrace our core values and become a part of their local community. So there will be an English language test for anyone coming here to get married.

We want to encourage students to come to our universities and colleges, but our student visa system has become the biggest weakness in our border controls. A Conservative and Unionist Government will strengthen the system of granting student visas so that it is less open to abuse. We want to make it easier for reputable universities and colleges to accept applications, while putting extra scrutiny on new institutions looking to accept foreign students or existing institutions not registered with Companies House. In addition, we will:

- insist foreign students at new or unregistered institutions pay a bond in order to study in this country, to be repaid after the student has left the country at the end of their studies;
- ensure foreign students can prove that they have the financial means to support themselves in the UK; and,
- require that students must usually leave the country and reapply if they want to switch to another course or apply for a work permit.

## Country or region size by share of UK economy



Source: Office for National Statistics, 2008



## Ensure the whole country shares in rising prosperity

*We will increase the private sector's share of the economy in all regions of the country, especially outside London and the South East.*

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Too many areas of the UK lack a vibrant private sector and are too dependent on public spending. These regional imbalances have got worse over the last decade, despite billions of pounds spent by the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs). Our aim is to increase the private sector's share of the economy in every part of the country by boosting enterprise and creating a better business environment. We will work closely with local government, and with the Northern Ireland Assembly, Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly to achieve this goal.

### Turning Northern Ireland into an Enterprise Zone

In Northern Ireland over two-thirds of economic activity is directly or indirectly dependent on government spending. We can't go on like this. We need a long-term programme to rebalance the Northern Ireland economy and boost the private sector. In the 19th century, Ulster was renowned for enterprise and innovation. There is no reason why, against a backdrop of peace and political stability, Northern Ireland cannot once again become an economic powerhouse.

Conservative and Unionist economic policy for the United Kingdom as a whole will benefit Northern Ireland. But Northern Ireland faces two challenges that are unique within the United Kingdom. First, there is the legacy of forty years of terrorism. Second, Northern Ireland is the only part of the United Kingdom that shares a land border with a country that has a significantly lower rate of corporation tax, putting it at a significant competitive disadvantage.

Conservatives and Unionists will therefore look at turning Northern Ireland into an economic enterprise zone. A Conservative and Unionist Government will produce a government paper examining the mechanism for changing the corporation tax rate in Northern Ireland, in order to attract significant new investment.

### Create a modern transport network

A rebalanced economy requires an extensive and reliable infrastructure. But transport has been a low priority for Labour, and the hassle of getting around is bad for business, bad for families and bad for everyone's quality of life.

A Conservative and Unionist Government will begin work immediately to create a high speed rail line connecting London and Heathrow with Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds. This is the first step towards achieving our vision of creating a national high speed rail network to join up major cities across England, Scotland and Wales. Stage two will deliver two new lines bringing the North East, Scotland and Wales into the high speed rail network.

Because travel abroad is so important for our economy and for family holidays, we need to improve our airports and reduce the environmental impact of flying. Our goal is to make Heathrow airport better, not bigger. We will stop the third runway and instead link Heathrow directly to our high speed rail network, providing an alternative to thousands of flights. In addition, we will:

- block plans for second runways at Stansted and Gatwick;
- reform Air Passenger Duty to encourage a switch to fuller and cleaner planes; and,
- examine the case for devolving powers to enable the Northern Ireland Assembly to devise a regional aviation strategy in order to facilitate a more competitive and sustainable transport network for Northern Ireland.

We will consult on the introduction of a 'Fair Fuel Stabiliser'. This would cut fuel duty when oil prices rise, and vice versa. It would ensure families, businesses and the whole UK economy are less exposed to volatile oil markets, and that there is a more stable environment for low carbon investment.

## Spread prosperity

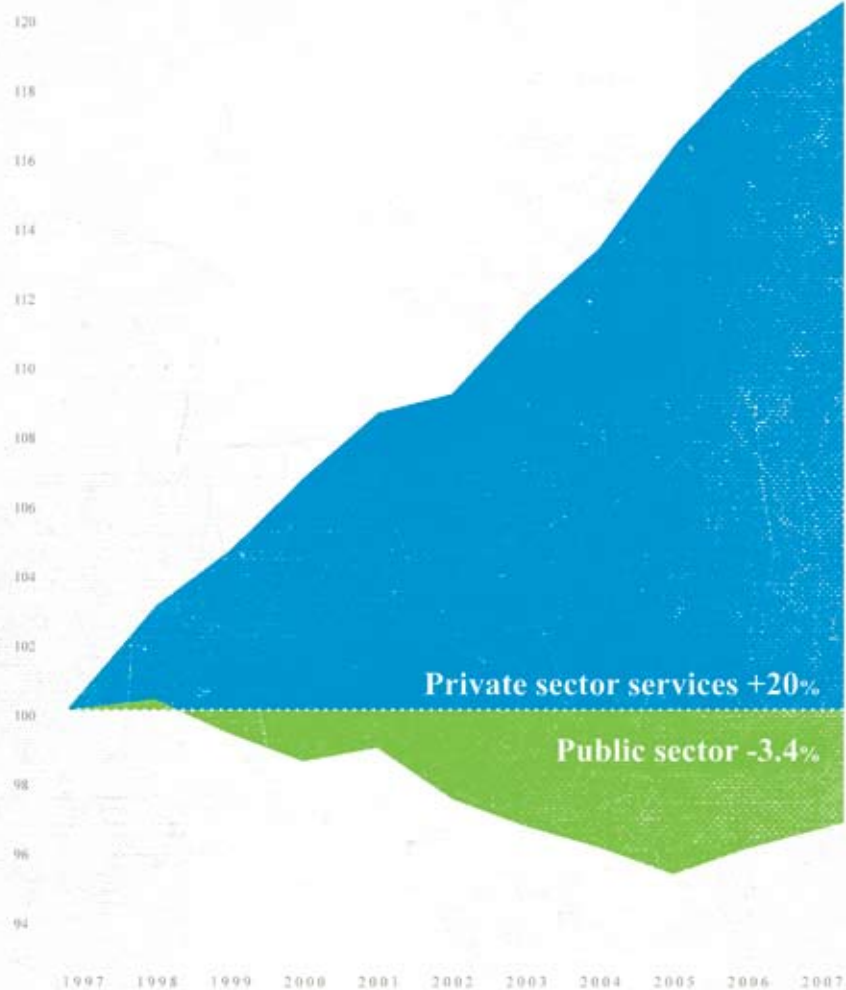
We want the United Kingdom to become a European hub for hi-tech, digital and creative industries – but this can only happen if we have the right infrastructure in place. Establishing a super-fast broadband network throughout the UK could generate 600,000 additional jobs and add £18 billion to the United Kingdom's GDP.

In Northern Ireland we recognise the potential of Project Kelvin and we will work with our Ulster Unionist colleagues to ensure that the project's economic potential is maximised.

We will scrap Labour's phone tax and instead require BT and other infrastructure providers to allow the use of their assets to deliver super-fast broadband across the country. If necessary, we will consider using the part of the licence fee that is supporting the digital switchover to fund broadband in areas that the market alone will not reach.



## UK productivity, 1997-2007



Source: Office for National Statistics

## Reform public services to deliver better value for money

*We will raise productivity growth in the public sector in order to deliver better public services.*

Public sector productivity has fallen under Labour, acting as a drag on growth and reducing the quality of our public services. If productivity in the public sector had grown at the same rate as in private sector services, we could now have the same quality of public services for £60 billion less each year. So, by improving public sector productivity while getting a grip on the debt, we will still be able to deliver better public services. That is why good government costs less with the Conservatives and Unionists.

employment contracts. In addition, we will:

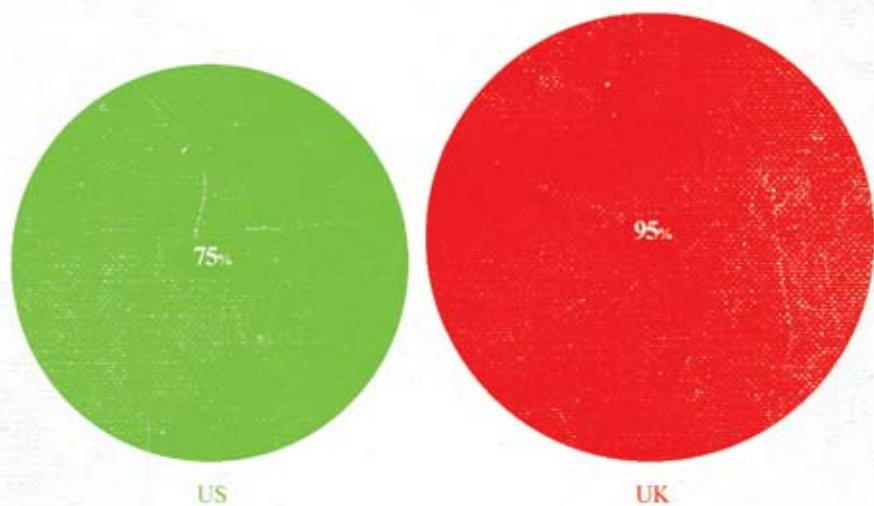
- introduce and publish a standard set of cost measures that capture the key drivers of departmental spending;
- help departmental Finance Directors to manage resources more efficiently;
- implement clear financial performance targets for senior civil servants; and,
- create a focus on delivering strong financial management across government.

## Decentralisation, accountability and transparency

We value the work of those employed in our public services, and a Conservative and Unionist Government will work with them to deliver higher productivity and better value for money for taxpayers.

Transparency is crucial to creating a value for money culture. We will publish all items of spending over £25,000 online, and the salaries of senior civil servants in central government will also be published. We will create strong financial discipline at all levels of government and place an obligation to manage taxpayers' money wisely at the heart of civil service

## Size of peak bank bailout, % GDP



Source: Bank of England

## Create a safer banking system that serves the needs of the economy

*We will reform the regulation and structure of the banking system to ensure lower levels of leverage, less dependence on unstable wholesale funding, and greater availability of credit for SMEs.*

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In the run up to the financial crisis, UK banks became amongst the most indebted and most leveraged in the world – with disastrous consequences for us all. This credit boom turned into a bust, with a significant fall in credit available to firms. Lack of access to credit remains a major problem, especially for SMEs. We need to change the way we regulate our banks to stop a crisis on this scale ever happening again.

### Reform financial services

The financial services sector is one of our most globally successful industries, and we want the City to be the leading location for global finance. But the financial sector must not put the stability of the whole economy at risk.

We will put in place a levy on banks. We are prepared to act unilaterally if necessary, but there is emerging international agreement on this approach and the US and German governments have both announced similar plans.

We need fundamental reform of our failed regulatory system, avoiding badly-designed regulations that will damage our competitiveness and ensuring that the financial sector can supply the affordable credit that businesses need.

We will abolish Gordon Brown's failed tripartite system of regulation and put the Bank of England in charge of prudential supervision. We will restore the Bank's historic role in monitoring the overall growth of credit and debt in the economy. In addition, we will:

- pursue international agreement to prevent retail banks from engaging in activities, such as large-scale proprietary trading, that put the stability of the system at risk;
- empower the Bank of England to crack down on risky bonus arrangements;
- increase competition in the banking industry, starting with a study of competition in the sector to inform our strategy for selling the government's stakes in the banks; and,
- as the government comes to sell off its holdings in the banks, offer a 'people's bank bonus', so that everybody in the country has the chance to buy a stake in the state-owned banks.

We will create more diverse sources of affordable credit for small businesses, building on our proposals for a National Loan Guarantee Scheme.

## Presbyterian Mutual Society

In Northern Ireland, the plight of the Presbyterian Mutual Society has brought distress to many thousands of investors. It was Labour's financial mismanagement, and their guarantees to other financial institutions, that triggered the crisis in the PMS. This issue has not been resolved satisfactorily by the Labour Government. A Conservative and Unionist Government will continue to work with the Northern Ireland Executive for a fair resolution of the crisis in the PMS.







## Japan

Japan is a world leader in the development of green technology. It invests in R&D at almost double the UK's rate, and Japanese companies hold roughly 30 per cent of green technology patents filed in the US. As a result, Japan is far ahead of the UK in the trillion pound market for green technology. This leadership is not just good for the economy; it's also good for the environment. For example, thanks to the widespread use of green technologies, Japan has the lowest carbon intensity of any major economy.

## Build a greener economy

*We will reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions and increase our share of global markets for low carbon technologies.*

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Labour have said the right things on climate change, but these have proved little more than warm words. Despite three White Papers, a multitude of strategies and endless new announcements, the UK now gets more of its energy from fossil fuels than it did in 1997. Our performance on emissions has been criticised by environmental groups and we have the worst record of any major EU nation when it comes to renewable energy. This must change to safeguard the United Kingdom and the world's future.

We need to cut our carbon emissions to tackle the challenge of climate change. But the low carbon economy also provides exciting opportunities for UK businesses. We will encourage private sector investment to put the United Kingdom at the forefront of the green technology revolution, creating jobs and new businesses across the country.

## Create a low carbon future

This wave of low carbon innovation we want to unleash requires investment, so we will create the United Kingdom's first Green Investment Bank – which will draw together money currently divided across existing government initiatives, leveraging private sector capital to

finance new green technology start-ups. We will create green Individual Savings Accounts to help provide the financial backing we need to create a low carbon economy.

A credible and sustainable price for carbon is vital if we are to see adequate and timely investment in new electricity generation. Whatever the carbon content of electricity generated, operators considering new investments in projects with a life of several decades need to know where they stand. We will reform the Climate Change Levy to provide a floor price for carbon, delivering the right climate for investment in low carbon energy production.

We will increase the proportion of tax revenues accounted for by environmental taxes, ensuring that any additional revenues from new green taxes that are principally designed as an environmental measure to change behaviour are used to reduce the burden of taxation elsewhere.




# Londonderry



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# Change society

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**THERE IS  
SUCH A  
THING AS  
SOCIETY**



**IT'S JUST  
NOT THE  
SAME THING  
AS THE  
STATE**

## Mend our broken society

*Our society is broken, but together we can mend it: we can build the Big Society. A Conservative and Unionist Government will make the United Kingdom the most family-friendly country in Europe. We will back the NHS, which matters more to families than anything. We will defend Northern Ireland's education system and work to ensure that all children reach their full potential. We will tackle welfare dependency and the causes of poverty, and fight back against crime.*

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Despite Labour's massive expansion of the state, many people's quality of life is getting worse, not better. The number of people living in poverty has risen in the last three years, and inequality is at a record high. We have some of the worst rates of family breakdown in the world. In some of the most deprived parts of the country, life expectancy has actually fallen. The achievement gap at school between the richest and poorest is growing.

This terrible record of failure is not just a problem that affects our society and ruins people's lives. It affects our economy too, costing billions and wasting potential. It is the result of a political approach that addresses the symptoms, rather than the underlying causes, of social breakdown; one that relies on top-down government intervention and bureaucratic micro-management.

So we need a new approach: social responsibility, not state control; the Big Society, not big government. Only in this way will we tackle the causes of poverty and inequality, rather than just the symptoms. Only in this way will we transform the quality of our public services. And only in this way will we rebuild shattered communities and repair the torn fabric of society.

So we will redistribute power from the central state to individuals, families and local communities. We will give public sector workers back their professional autonomy. They will be accountable to the people they serve and the results they achieve will be made transparent. If people don't like the service they receive they will be able to choose better alternatives. In this way, we will create opportunities for people to take power and control over their lives. Our approach is absolutely in line with the spirit of the age: the post-bureaucratic age.

This vision demands a cultural change across the country. Our success will depend not just on the actions we take but on society's response. By promoting equality and tackling discrimination, our policies, like recognising civil partnerships as well as marriage in the tax system and helping disabled people live independently, will give everybody the chance to play their part. This way, we can make the United Kingdom fairer and safer; a country where opportunity is more equal.



**BIG  
SMILE SOCIETY**

**NOT BIG  
FROWN GOVERNMENT**



## Build the Big Society

*We will use the state to help stimulate social action, helping social enterprises to deliver public services and training new community organisers to help achieve our ambition of every adult citizen being a member of an active neighbourhood group. We will direct funding to those groups that strengthen communities in deprived areas, and we will introduce National Citizen Service, initially for 16 year olds, to help bring our country together.*

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The size, scope and role of government in the UK has reached a point where it is now inhibiting, not advancing, the progressive aims of reducing poverty, fighting inequality, and increasing general well-being. We can't go on pretending that government has all the answers.

Our alternative to big government is the Big Society: a society with much higher levels of personal, professional, civic and corporate responsibility; a society where people come together to solve problems and improve life for themselves and their communities; a society where the leading force for progress is social responsibility, not state control.

The Big Society runs consistently through our policy programme. Our plans to reform public services, mend our broken society, and rebuild trust in politics are all part of our Big Society agenda. These plans involve redistributing power from the state to society; from the centre to local communities, giving people the opportunity to take more control over their lives.

But we recognise that it is not enough to create opportunities for people to get involved in building the Big Society; our reform plans require a social response in order to be successful. So building the Big Society is not just a question of the state stepping back and hoping for the best: it will require an active role for the state. The state must take action to agitate for, catalyse and galvanise social renewal. We must use the state to help remake society.

### Public service reform

Our public service reform programme will enable social enterprises, charities and voluntary groups to play a leading role in delivering public services and tackling deep-rooted social problems.

We will strengthen and support social enterprises to help deliver our public service reforms by creating a Big Society Bank, funded from unclaimed bank assets, to provide new finance for neighbourhood groups, charities, social enterprises and other non-governmental bodies.

This will provide social enterprises with the start-up funding and support they need to bid for government contracts or work towards delivering services under a payment by results model.

The United Kingdom has a proud and long-standing charitable tradition, and we are convinced that the voluntary sector should play a major part in our civic renewal. We will introduce a fair deal on grants to give voluntary sector organisations more stability and allow them to earn a competitive return for providing public services. We will work with local authorities to promote the delivery of public services by social enterprises, charities and the voluntary sector.

## Neighbourhood groups

Our reform agenda is designed to empower communities to come together to address local issues. Our policies will give new powers and rights to neighbourhood groups: the ‘little platoons’ of civil society – and the institutional building blocks of the Big Society.

Our ambition is for every adult in the country to be a member of an active neighbourhood group. We will stimulate the creation and development of neighbourhood groups, which can take action to improve their local area. We will use Cabinet Office budgets to fund the

training of independent community organisers to help people establish and run neighbourhood groups, and provide neighbourhood grants to the UK’s poorest areas to ensure they play a leading role in the rebuilding of civic society.

To stimulate social action further, we will:

- transform the civil service into a ‘civic service’ by making sure that participation in social action is recognised in civil servants’ appraisals;
- launch an annual Big Society Day to celebrate the work of neighbourhood groups and encourage more people to take part in social action;
- provide funding from the Big Society Bank to intermediary bodies with a track record of supporting and growing social enterprises; and,
- develop a measure of well-being that encapsulates the social value of state action.

## National Citizen Service

Building the Big Society means encouraging the concept of public-spirited service – the idea that everyone should play a part in making their communities stronger.

That is why we will work with the Northern Ireland Executive to introduce National Citizen Service in this part of the United Kingdom.

The initial flagship project will provide a programme for 16 year olds to give them a chance to develop the skills needed to be active and responsible citizens, mix with people from different backgrounds, and start getting involved in their communities.

Even in these difficult times, the people of the UK have demonstrated their desire to give money and time to good causes. We will introduce new ways to increase philanthropy, and use the latest insights from behavioural economics to encourage people to make volunteering and community participation something they do on a regular basis.

## The National Lottery

We will restore the National Lottery to its original purpose and, by cutting down on administration costs, make sure more money goes to good causes. The Big Lottery Fund will focus purely on supporting social action through the voluntary and community sector, instead of Ministers' pet projects as at present. Sports, heritage and the arts will each see their original allocations of 20 per cent of good cause money restored.

## Sport and the Olympics

We will deliver a successful Olympics that brings lasting benefits for the country as a whole. Part of the community sports budget of the National Lottery will be responsible

for delivering an Olympic legacy, including the vigorous promotion of competitive sports through a national Olympic-style school competition. We will work with our Ulster Unionist Assembly colleagues to ensure that Northern Ireland benefits from the legacy of London 2012. To support high-level sport further, we will:

- work with the Scottish government to deliver a top-quality Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in 2014;
- ensure that the 2013 Rugby League and the 2015 Rugby Union World Cups are successful; and,
- strongly support England's bid to host the 2018 Football World Cup.

Such sporting events are an opportunity for the UK as a whole and we will work with the Northern Ireland Executive to ensure that Northern Ireland plays a part in their delivery.

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*“Strong families are  
the bedrock of a  
strong society”*

## Make the United Kingdom the most family-friendly country in Europe

*We will make the United Kingdom the most family-friendly country in Europe. We will support families in the tax and benefits system, extend flexible working and improve parental leave. We will help parents cope with the commercialisation of childhood and give families more control over their lives. We will support and improve Sure Start. We will give targeted help to disadvantaged and dysfunctional families.*

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Strong families are the bedrock of a strong society. They provide the stability and love we need to flourish as human beings, and the relationships they foster are the foundation on which society is built. The warmth of a child's parenting is as important to their life chances as the wealth of their upbringing.

Labour's complacent attitude to commitment has done untold harm, and their narrow approach ignores the importance of strengthening the relationships between all family members – children, parents, grandparents and the wider family. As a result, the United Kingdom is one of the least family-friendly countries in the world.

This will change with a Conservative and Unionist Government. We will help families with all the pressures they face: the lack of time, money worries, the impact of work, concerns about schools and crime, preventing unhealthy influences, poor housing. We will not be neutral on this. The United Kingdom's families will get our full backing across all our policies.

## Reform tax and benefits to help families and pensioners

Today, Labour's tax and benefits system rewards couples who split up. A Conservative and Unionist Government will end the couple penalty for all couples in the tax credit system as we make savings from our welfare reform plans. We will recognise marriage and civil partnerships in the tax system in the next Parliament. This will send an important signal that we value couples and the commitment that people make when they get married.

We support tax credits and will continue to provide the range of tax credits to families, although we can no longer justify paying tax credits to households earning more than £50,000. We will reform the administration of tax credits to reduce fraud and overpayments, which hit the poorest families hardest.

We strongly value the role older people play in families and in society, and will not let them suffer because of the economic mistakes of

others. That is why we have made a pledge to pensioners to re-link the basic state pension to earnings, and protect:

- the winter fuel payment;
- free bus passes;
- free TV licences;
- disability living allowance and attendance allowance; and,
- the pension credit.

## Give families more control over their lives

Making the United Kingdom more family-friendly means helping families spend more time together. That is why we will initially extend the right to request flexible working to every parent with a child under the age of eighteen. We want our government to lead from the front, so we will extend the right to request flexible working to all those in the public sector, recognising that this may need to be done in stages.

In addition, we will, in the longer term, extend the right to request flexible working to all, but only in the light of experience and after full consultation with business on how to do this in a way which is administratively simple and without burdening them with extra costs.

We will introduce a new system of flexible parental leave which lets parents share maternity leave between them, while ensuring that parents on leave can stay in touch with their employer. With our Ulster Unionist colleagues in the Assembly we support the provision of free nursery care for pre-school children, and we want that support to be provided by a diverse range of providers. A Conservative and Unionist Government will review the way the childcare industry is regulated and funded to ensure that no providers, including childminders, are put at a disadvantage.

To give families more control over their lives, we will put funding for relationship support on a stable, long-term footing and make sure couples are given greater encouragement to use existing relationship support. We will review family law in order to increase the use of mediation when couples do break up, and look at how best to provide greater access rights to non-resident parents and grandparents.

## Protect childhood

Children should be allowed to grow up at their own pace, without excessive pressure placed on them by businesses. We will take a series of measures to help reverse the commercialisation of childhood. We prefer to gain voluntary consent to these actions but we are prepared to legislate if necessary. We will:

- prevent any marketing or advertising company found to be in serious breach of rules governing marketing to children from bidding for government advertising contracts for three years;
- ban companies from using new peer-to-peer marketing techniques targeted at children, and tackle marketing on corporate websites targeted at children; and,
- establish a new online system that gives parents greater powers to take action against irresponsible commercial activities targeted at children.

## A new approach to early intervention

Conservatives and Unionists are committed to keeping Sure Start because the network of Children's Centres is of enormous value to parents across the country. But we believe Sure Start needs to work better because the people who need it most – disadvantaged and dysfunctional families – are not getting enough of the benefit.

We will take Sure Start back to its original purpose of early intervention, increase its focus on the neediest families, and better involve organisations with a track record in supporting families.

## Back the NHS

*Conservatives and Unionists back the NHS. We support the plans of Conservative colleagues in England to increase health spending every year and will seek the same in Northern Ireland.*

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Over three years ago David Cameron spelled out his priorities in three letters – NHS. Since then, Michael McGimpsey, the Ulster Unionist Health Minister in the Executive, and Ulster Unionist members of the Assembly, have consistently fought to protect the values of our NHS and have campaigned to defend health and social care in Northern Ireland from DUP cuts.

We will never change the idea at the heart of our NHS – that healthcare is free at the point of use and available to everyone based on need, not ability to pay.

Spending on health in Northern Ireland already lags behind England by approximately £600m. With demand for health care outstripping increases in funding and productivity gains, there has been growing pressure on our health service; but only our Ulster Unionist colleagues in the Assembly voted against further cuts to health and social care in Northern Ireland.

We understand the pressures which face health and social care. In recognition of its special place in our society, Conservatives and Unionists will urge increased health spending year-on-year in Northern Ireland in line with what is proposed in England by

Conservatives. We have already completed a huge reorganisation of health and social care in Northern Ireland which has seen £53m of funding being redirected towards front line services. Within the last three years we have reduced the number of Health Trusts from 18 to 6 and have cut the number of senior managers by over 60 per cent.

Conservatives and Unionists not only back the values of our NHS, we also back its funding and we have a vision for its future.

## Putting patients first

Given the huge pressures faced by health and social care over the coming decades, our pledge to protect health spending will not be enough on its own to deliver the rising standards of care that people expect and deserve. The gap between what we will have to do and what we can afford to do is challenging. In reforming our NHS, however, we have not been afraid to step up to the mark to ensure patients come first.

We have already established a Patient and Client Council (PCC) that is a strong voice for patients. Working closely with decision makers and providers the PCC is not afraid to speak up



for high standards of quality and patient care.

To give patients even more choice we have introduced a minor ailment scheme in Northern Ireland, allowing patients to use local pharmacists for services like screening and the treatment of minor ailments. This initiative has already driven up standards by allowing people to choose the best services available, and by reducing pressure on GPs.

We have also introduced free prescriptions. The abolition of these charges is an investment in the future of the health and well being of all the people in Northern Ireland. It's also an investment in the economy, enabling people to get back to work earlier if they have the right medication.

Meeting your healthcare needs can be complicated. That is why we want the family doctor to be a patient's guide throughout our NHS. Through the creation of Local Commissioning Groups (LCGs) we have ensured that local GPs, working with a range of clinical and local community representatives, are able to commission services on behalf of their areas – either in hospitals or using other forms of treatment and therapy in GP surgeries or specialist clinics.

## A more accessible NHS

Our reform plan for health and social care has ensured that patients will be put first. But more can still be done. We will continue to drive up quality, bring down waiting lists and improve cleanliness and infection control. However it would be irresponsible to leave it to patients alone to drive up quality – there is a great deal that government can do to help drive up standards without compromising the professional autonomy of our valued health and social care staff.

One area we can make a big difference is on access to life-saving drugs. This is particularly important for people suffering from cancers. Patients should be among the first in the world to use effective treatments, but currently they are among the last. We want more people to access the drugs and treatments that would prolong or improve their lives by reforming the way drug companies are paid for NHS medicines.

Hospital-acquired infections like MRSA now kill more than three times as many people as are killed on the roads every year. That is totally unacceptable, and completely avoidable. In Northern Ireland huge progress has been made through the 'Changing the Culture' initiative which has driven down rates of *C. difficile* by some 40 per cent while MRSA rates have dropped by 30 per cent. More single

rooms will help the battle against infection even further, as well as providing safety and privacy. We will increase the number of single rooms in hospitals, as resources allow.

Under direct rule fewer people were able to see an NHS dentist. In some parts of Northern Ireland no NHS dentist was even available. So we brought in a provider thus meeting the need and providing a much valued service, particularly in rural areas. We will continue to strive for the introduction of a new dentistry contract.

One in four British adults experience at least one mental health problem in any given year and poor mental health costs the UK economy £77 billion each year. Michael McGimpsey has stated that mental health and learning disability is his number one priority for Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland. We will continue to support Michael McGimpsey in this valued area as he seeks to invest in much needed services as outlined in the Bamford Report.

## A healthier nation

Today, health and social care in Northern Ireland faces unique upward pressures on spending. Lifestyle-linked health problems like obesity, smoking and alcohol abuse are putting huge demands on health services and are harming people's quality of life. Our population is ageing, meaning more people

living longer with chronic conditions and requiring regular treatment. On top of this there is the pressure of infectious diseases like HIV, Hepatitis C and pandemic flu. Each of these factors is leading to soaring costs for our NHS.

At the same time, health inequalities are growing wider – the difference between the life expectancy of the richest and poorest in our country is now greater than at any time since the 19th century. This is why we support Health Minister Michael McGimpsey's focus on public health and preventable disease – the surest route to improving Northern Ireland's health.

Significant success has already been made in this area through the establishment of the Public Health Agency for Northern Ireland (PHA). We want to encourage and help people live healthier and better lives and through the PHA will forge new and stronger relationships with local councils to address health inequalities.

Conservative and Unionists are committed to ensuring that the needs of public health will be addressed across government. This includes planning in local councils where the views of local communities on major developments must include public health considerations.



## Building on excellence in Northern Ireland's schools

*Northern Ireland is rightly proud of the standards of academic excellence in its schools which always out-perform the rest of the United Kingdom. We will resist attempts by Sinn Fein to destroy our education system. Not all children, however, are achieving their full potential. We need to ensure excellence, diversity and choice for all.*

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Improving our school system is the most important thing we can do to extend opportunity and reverse declining social mobility. But the UK is slipping down the world league tables in Maths and English.

In Northern Ireland the crisis in our education system has been provoked by the confrontational approach of the Sinn Fein Education Minister. We can't go on like this. Conservatives and Unionists are committed to working with our Ulster Unionist colleagues in the Assembly to ensure that Northern Ireland again leads the way in education.

Northern Ireland consistently tops the UK league tables for GCSE and A Level results. This terrific achievement must not be compromised or undermined. The evidence suggests that the removal of academic selection in Northern Ireland would not promote opportunity for all or eliminate underachievement, so Conservatives and Unionists will continue to support academic selection in Northern Ireland.

Conservatives and Unionists are committed to working with our Ulster Unionist Assembly

colleagues to establish a regulated, statutory process of post-primary transfer.

We recognise, however, that there is an unacceptable gap between the highest and lowest attainers in Northern Ireland's schools. We will work with our Ulster Unionist Assembly colleagues to promote meaningful reforms to ensure that those schools which are currently underachieving are given the right support to enable all pupils to reach their potential.

Tackling educational underachievement is a complex issue that requires targeted and appropriate support for children and schools. Conservatives and Unionists believe that promoting excellence, diversity and choice across Northern Ireland's education system is the best way to tackle educational underachievement and to promote social mobility.

Conservatives and Unionists recognise that the causes of educational underachievement begin in the early years of children's development. We support the call of our Ulster Unionist Assembly colleagues for the Executive to

publish a cross-cutting early years strategy to tackle educational underachievement.

We also support the extension of the specialist schools programme with the aim of making every post-primary school outside the grammar sector a specialist school. Specialist schools have a proven track record of increasing educational achievement amongst socially deprived pupils and narrowing the performance gap between boys and girls.

An education system that is dedicated to delivering excellence, diversity and choice through specialist and grammar schools, will facilitate collaborative planning amongst schools to deliver curricular pathways which are relevant to the needs of all young people and the economy.

With our Ulster Unionist colleagues in the Assembly, we oppose the divisive attempt by the Sinn Fein Education Minister to remove entirely all funding for preparatory schools in Northern Ireland.

The Education Minister's proposed Education and Skills Authority is a blueprint for centralising power and creating new and unnecessary layers of bureaucracy. Whilst we support the rationalisation of educational governance structures, we will work with our colleagues in the Northern Ireland Assembly in opposition to this oversized and overly-powerful quango.

We believe that head teachers and boards of governors are best placed to manage schools and to promote and protect a school's ethos. We also believe that head teachers are best placed to raise standards of behaviour in schools and we will work to stop heads being overruled by bureaucrats when it comes to expulsions and discipline.

We will work with our Ulster Unionist colleagues in the Assembly to promote voluntary collaboration between the different sectors and schools to provide long-term sustainability in the education system, value for money and a shared future, while meeting the needs of local communities, young people and the economy.

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*“We will work with our  
Ulster Unionist Assembly  
colleagues to secure effective law and  
order for the entire community  
in Northern Ireland”*

## Fight back against crime

*With the devolution of policing and justice to the Assembly, Conservatives and Unionists will work with our Ulster Unionist Assembly colleagues to secure effective law and order for the entire community in Northern Ireland.*

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Conservatives and Unionists will work to ensure that the Chief Constable has every resource possible to protect Northern Ireland from the threat posed by dissident republican terrorism. We will always uphold the operational independence of the Chief Constable and the independence of the judiciary from political interference.

Throughout the UK, knife crime has reached crisis levels in many areas, so we will support the strengthening of stop and search powers to make it easier for the police to get knives off the streets. We have to send a serious, unambiguous message to young people that carrying a knife is totally unacceptable.

In many towns drink-fuelled violence and disorder are out of control. Binge-drinking damages people's health and harms society. Tax on super-strength beers, ciders and alcopops, but not the everyday pint, will be increased to discourage dangerous drinking. And we will support measures to stop off-licences and supermarkets from selling alcohol below cost price.

We will support the introduction of a series of early intervention measures, like grounding

orders, to allow the police to use instant sanctions to deal with anti-social behaviour. This will help them intervene early to keep young people off the conveyor belt to crime.

We also need to free the police from the inappropriate rules and regulations that stop them dealing with crime. We will support amendments to the health and safety laws that stand in the way of common sense policing. We will back measures to end the confusion over criminals' anonymity and give police the power to identify offenders in order to protect the public and prevent crime. We will support changes to the rules so that anyone acting reasonably to stop a crime or apprehend a criminal is not arrested or prosecuted, and we will back measures to give householders greater protection if they have to defend themselves against intruders in their homes.





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# Change politics

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*“We will work to strengthen  
the Union of Great Britain  
and Northern Ireland”*

## A new agenda for a new politics

*Conservatives and Unionists have led the way in sorting out the mess of MPs' expenses. In government we will go further, by cutting the size of Parliament, cutting the scope of Whitehall, and cutting the cost of politics. We will make politics more local, more transparent and more accountable. We will work to strengthen the Union of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. We intend to build a new political system that serves people rather than politicians. Together, we can change our politics for the better.*

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The events of recent months have revealed the size of the fissures in our political system. Millions of people in this country are at best detached from democracy, at worst angry and disillusioned. This endangers our ability to work together to solve our common problems. Just putting this down to the shocking revelations of the expenses scandal would be a great mistake. MPs' expenses might have been the trigger for the public's anger, but this political crisis is driven by a deeper sense of frustration – that people have too little control over the decisions that affect their daily lives.

The top-down model of power that exists in the United Kingdom today is completely out of date. The argument that has applied for well over a century – that in every area of life we need people at the centre to make sense of the world for us and take decisions on our behalf – has collapsed. We now live in an age when technology can put information that was previously held by a few into the hands of the many. This is an age of personal freedom and choice, when culture and debate are shaped by a multitude of voices. But politics has not caught up with this new age. Instead of giving people more power over their lives, we have a government intent on taking it away.

We believe in people power – and today the information revolution gives us the practical tools to realise that philosophy. So we plan to change the United Kingdom with a sweeping redistribution of power: from the state to citizens; from the government to Parliament; from Whitehall to communities; from Brussels to the United Kingdom; from bureaucracy to democracy. Taking power away from the political elite and handing it to the man and woman in the street. Using decentralisation, accountability and transparency, we will weaken the old political elites, give people power, fix our broken politics and restore people's faith that if we act together things can change. This is a new agenda for a new politics.

## Make politics more accountable

*We will clean up politics: the expenses, the lobbying and problems with party funding. We will cut the cost of Parliament, cut the number of MPs and cut Ministers' pay. We will give citizens direct control over what goes on in Westminster, make government more accountable and safeguard the independence of the civil service.*

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It is vital that we act quickly and decisively to restore the reputation of politics. Too much unacceptable behaviour has gone unchecked for too long, from excessive expenses to sleazy lobbying practices. The people of the United Kingdom have looked on in horror as revelations have stripped away the dignity of Parliament, leaving millions of voters detached from the political process, devoid of trust in the political classes, and disillusioned with our system of government.

We will act rapidly to push through far-reaching reforms to restore ethics to politics and revive the electorate's faith in politicians. It will take nothing less than a deep clean of the political system in Westminster to root out the sleaze and dispel suspicion. We will start by cleaning up the expenses system to ensure MPs live by the same standards as the people who give them their jobs, and by curbing the way in which former Ministers have secured lobbying jobs by exploiting their contacts.

But that is just the start. We will also cut Ministers' pay and reduce the number of

MPs in Parliament. Then we will go further, far further, since the expenses scandal was just the trigger for a deeper sense of frustration. We promise a total overhaul of our system of government, so that power is passed from the politicians at Westminster back to the people of the United Kingdom. But this is the very least that is needed to fix our broken political system.

## Clean up Westminster

The political crisis was triggered by the scandal of MPs' expenses. We insisted that MPs' expenses were published online, and we have supported the independent proposals to clean up the House of Commons. We proposed legislation so that anyone wanting to be a member of either the House of Commons or the House of Lords will need to be treated as a full UK taxpayer. But much, much more is needed to clean up our politics and restore public trust.

At the moment, there is no way that local constituents can remove an MP found guilty of serious wrongdoing until there is a general election. That is why a Conservative and Unionist Government will introduce a power

of 'recall' to allow electors to kick out MPs, a power that will be triggered by proven serious wrongdoing. And we will introduce a Parliamentary Privilege Act to make clear that privilege cannot be abused by MPs to evade justice.

The cost of politics has spiralled out of control. We will cut the perks and bureaucracy associated with Parliament to save over £100 million a year. We will consult with the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority on how to move away from the generous final-salary pension system for MPs.

In Northern Ireland politics has been scarred by the number of 'double jobbing' MPs attempting to carry out dual mandates in Westminster and Stormont. The public is rightly opposed to this. Conservative and Unionist pressure at Westminster has already resulted in 'double jobbing' MPs no longer being able to claim two salaries. If elected, a Conservative and Unionist Government will go further and ban double jobbing outright. In future, politicians will be able to sit in Westminster or Stormont – but not both.

The public are concerned about the influence of money on politics, whether it is from trade unions, individuals, or the lobbying industry. We will seek an agreement on a comprehensive package of reform that will encourage individual donations and include an across-

the-board cap on donations. This will mark the end of the big donor era and the problems it has sometimes entailed.

A Conservative and Unionist Government will introduce new measures to ensure that the contacts and knowledge Ministers gain while being paid by the public to serve the public are not unfairly used for private gain. We will:

- ensure that ex-Ministers are banned from lobbying government for two years after leaving office;
- ensure that ex-Ministers have to seek advice on the business posts they take up for ten years after leaving office;
- rewrite the Ministerial Code to make clear that any former Minister who breaks the rules on appointments will be forced to give up some or all of their Ministerial pension; and,
- introduce new rules to stop central government bodies using public money to hire lobbyists to lobby other government bodies.

The lobbying industry must regulate itself to ensure its practices are transparent – if it does not, then we will legislate to do so.

## Give citizens more power

People have been shut out of Westminster politics for too long. Having a single vote every four or five years is not good enough –

we need to give people real control over how they are governed. So, with a Conservative and Unionist Government, any petition that secures 100,000 signatures will be eligible for formal debate in Parliament. The petition with the most signatures will enable members of the public to table a Bill eligible to be voted on in Parliament. And we will introduce a new Public Reading Stage for Bills to give the public an opportunity to comment on proposed legislation online.

Labour have meddled shamelessly with the electoral system to try to gain political advantage. A Conservative and Unionist Government will ensure every vote will have equal value by introducing ‘fair vote’ reforms to equalise the size of constituency electorates, and conduct a boundary review to implement these changes within five years.

We support the first-past-the-post system for Westminster elections because it gives voters the chance to kick out a government they are fed up with. We will work to build a consensus for a mainly-elected second chamber to replace the current House of Lords, recognising that an efficient and effective second chamber should play an important role in our democracy and requires both legitimacy and public confidence.

## Make government more accountable and representative

Because we are serious about redistributing power, we will restore the balance between the government and Parliament, by:

- establishing a Backbench Business Committee to give the House of Commons more control over its own timetable;
- allowing MPs the time to scrutinise law effectively;
- providing more free votes, and protecting the principle that issues of conscience – like abortion – remain subject to a free vote; and,
- making the use of the Royal Prerogative subject to greater democratic control so that Parliament is properly involved in all big national decisions.

We will scrap Labour’s failed target regime and instead require every department to publish a business plan, with senior management accountable to more rigorous departmental boards for their performance. We will make it easier to reward the best civil servants and remove the least effective. We will reform the Civil Service Compensation Scheme to bring it more into line with practice in the private

sector. We will put a limit on the number of special advisers and protect the impartiality of the civil service.

Rebuilding trust in politics means making our political system better reflect the people it is meant to represent. We will introduce a £1 million fund to help people with disabilities who want to become MPs, councillors or other elected officials with the extra costs they face in running for office. This will be funded from the existing budget of the Government Equalities Office.





**BYE BYE  
BUREAUCRACY**

## Make politics more transparent

*We will publish details of the money Westminster government spends and the people it employs. People will have a right to government data to make the performance of the state transparent. We will cut the unaccountable quango state and root out waste.*

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Government has been far too profligate for far too long. Billions are wasted each year on pointless bureaucracy and failed projects while taxpayers are left to foot the bill. The explosion of unaccountable quangos, public sector ‘non-jobs’ and costly bureaucracy is an indictment of Labour’s reckless approach to spending other people’s money. Once again, it undermines public trust in the political process.

We understand that people want government to be more effective in what it does, and to do it for less money. That means transforming the way the state goes about its business, using decentralisation, accountability and transparency to reduce dramatically the cost of government. And, because sunlight is the best disinfectant, we will bring the operation of government out into the open so that everyone can see whether we are delivering good value for money.

## Publish data so the public can hold government to account

Drawing inspiration from administrations around the world which have shown that being transparent can transform the effectiveness of

government, we will create a powerful new right to government data, enabling the public to request – and receive – government datasets in an open and standardised format. Independent estimates suggest this could provide a £6 billion boost to the UK economy. We will open up Whitehall recruitment by publishing central government job vacancies online, saving costs and increasing transparency.

A Conservative and Unionist Government will bring in new measures to enable the public to scrutinise the government’s accounts to see whether it is providing value for money. All data will be published in an open and standardised format. We will:

- require public bodies to publish online the job titles of every member of staff and the salaries and expenses of senior officials paid more than the lowest salary permissible in Pay Band 1 of the Senior Civil Service pay scale, and organograms that include all positions in those bodies;
- require anyone paid more than the Prime Minister in the public sector to have their salary signed off by the Treasury; and,

- require senior civil servants to publish online details of expense claims and meetings with lobbyists.

## Curtail the quango state

Under Labour, the quango state has flourished. Government figures show that there are over 700 unelected bodies spending £46 billion every year, but this does not even include the range of advisory bodies, public corporations, taskforces and regional government bodies that have sprung up under Labour. We believe that Ministers should be responsible for government policy, not unelected bureaucrats. Any quangos that do not perform a technical function or a function that requires political impartiality, or act independently to establish facts, will be abolished. To increase the scrutiny of quangos, we will:

- give Select Committees the right to hold confirmation hearings for major public appointments, including the heads of quangos;
- examine the case for giving Select Committees the power to prevent increases in quango budgets; and,
- ensure that the National Audit Office has full access to the BBC's accounts.

## Reduce the cost of procurement

This government has a dreadful record of managing procurement, with billions of pounds wasted on mismanaged projects. We will tackle wasteful government procurement projects by:

- strengthening the role of the Chief Information Officer to get a grip on government ICT projects;
- introducing a series of changes to ICT procurement to deliver better value for money;
- appointing senior private sector non-executives to departmental boards to deliver better value for money;
- publishing in full government contracts for goods and services worth over £25,000; and,
- increasing the accountability of EU spending by publishing details of every UK project that receives over £25,000 of EU funds.



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*“We will work with our  
Ulster Unionist colleagues to ensure  
that local government reform  
is in the best interest of  
local communities”*

## Make politics more local

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Over the last forty years, governments of all colours have been guilty of weakening local government. But what was a gradual centralisation has accelerated dramatically under Labour. Bureaucratic control has replaced democratic accountability. The wishes of local people are second-guessed by bureaucrats; the activities of councils micro-managed by unelected quangos. This hoarding of power by distant politicians and unaccountable officials in Whitehall has damaged society by eroding trust.

We believe that the more responsibility you give people, the more responsibly they behave. That is why we want to give people much more power and control over their lives. We want to give power away – to individuals where we can. But it is not always possible to give power to individuals, and in those cases we need to push power down to the most appropriate local level: neighbourhood, community and local government.

In Northern Ireland local government reform has been badly mismanaged under Direct Rule Ministers and the current Executive, squandering the opportunity for reform launched by an Ulster Unionist Minister in the

first power-sharing Executive. We will work with our Ulster Unionist colleagues to ensure that local government reform is meaningful, effective and is in the best interest of local people, communities and councils. For too long power in Northern Ireland has been dictated from above. Conservatives and Unionists are committed to giving Northern Ireland strong, meaningful local government as in the rest of the UK.

The planning system in Northern Ireland is not fit for the 21st century. Northern Ireland needs a planning system that is strategic, efficient and responsive to economic and development needs. It must also, however, be more transparent and accountable to local people. We will work with our Ulster Unionist colleagues in the Assembly to ensure that the right changes are made to transform the planning system in Northern Ireland.

## Restore our civil liberties

*We will scale back Labour's database state and protect the privacy of the public's information. We will introduce a balanced approach to the retention of people's DNA and reform the criminal records system so it protects children without destroying trust.*

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Labour have subjected the United Kingdom's historic freedoms to unprecedented attack. They have trampled on liberties and, in their place, compiled huge databases to track the activities of millions of perfectly innocent people, giving public bodies extraordinary powers to intervene in the way we live our lives.

The impact of this has been profound and far-reaching. Trust has been replaced by suspicion. The database state is a poor substitute for the human judgement essential to the delivery of public services. Worse than that, it gives people false comfort that an infallible central state is looking after their best interests. But the many scandals of lost data, leaked documents and database failures have put millions at risk. It is time for a new approach to protecting our liberty.

## Protect our freedoms

Labour's approach to our personal privacy is the worst of all worlds – intrusive, ineffective and enormously expensive. We will scrap ID cards, the National Identity Register and the Contactpoint database. To protect our freedoms from state encroachment and encourage

greater social responsibility, we will replace the Human Rights Act with a UK Bill of Rights. We will review and reform libel laws to protect freedom of speech, reduce costs and discourage libel tourism.

Wherever possible, we believe that personal data should be controlled by individual citizens themselves. We will strengthen the powers of the Information Commissioner to penalise any public body found guilty of mismanaging data. We will take further steps to protect people from unwarranted intrusion by the state, including:

- cutting back intrusive powers of entry into homes, which have been massively extended under Labour;
- curtailing the surveillance powers that allow some councils to use anti-terrorism laws to spy on people making trivial mistakes or minor breaches of the rules;
- requiring Privacy Impact Assessments of any proposal that involves data collection or sharing; and,
- ensuring proper Parliamentary scrutiny of any new powers of data-sharing.

The indefinite retention of innocent people's DNA is unacceptable, yet DNA data provides a useful tool for solving crimes. We will legislate to make sure that our DNA database is used primarily to store information about those who are guilty of committing crimes rather than those who are innocent. We will collect the DNA of all existing prisoners, those under state supervision who have been convicted of an offence, and anyone convicted of a serious recordable offence. We pushed the Government to end the permanent retention of innocent people's DNA, and we will change the guidance to give people on the database who have been wrongly accused of a minor crime an automatic right to have their DNA withdrawn.

Conservatives and Unionists will work with their Ulster Unionist colleagues in the Assembly to urge the Minister of Justice to introduce a similar provision in Northern Ireland.

We believe that people working in positions of trust with children should go through a proper criminal record check. But Labour's new system goes too far. We will review the criminal records and 'vetting and barring' regime and scale it back to common sense levels.

Provision for supplementary rights for Northern Ireland was contained in the 1998 Belfast Agreement, though twelve years on Labour are still consulting on this. A Conservative and

Unionist Government will not legislate for a separate bill of rights for Northern Ireland but will incorporate any Northern Ireland specific rights within the UK Bill of Rights. This will fulfil the obligations in the Belfast Agreement.

Conservatives and Unionists believe strongly in the right to lawful assembly and peaceful protest. In Northern Ireland parades are an important part of the culture and ethos of both major traditions. We support moves to make them more inclusive. The issue of parading is now being considered by the Northern Ireland Executive. Responsibility for parades will shortly be transferred to the Assembly with a view to legislation being brought forward to replace the Parades Commission later this year. We will work with our Ulster Unionist colleagues in the Assembly to find a solution that commands widespread support across the community.





## Strengthen the Union

*We are unionist parties and we will not put the Union at risk. But we support devolution and are committed to making it work for all countries. We will take forward the proposals of the Calman Commission, grant a referendum on greater powers for the Welsh Assembly, and support the devolved institutions in Northern Ireland. We will rebalance the unfairness in the voting system for devolved issues in Parliament.*

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In recent years, we have been hearing things that we have not heard for a long time: people in Scotland saying they want to leave the UK, and some people responding with ‘let them go’. Labour’s constitutional vandalism has weakened Parliament, undermined democracy and brought the integrity of the ballot into question. Our unbalanced devolution settlement has caused separatism to gather momentum in Scotland, and separatists have propped up a weakened Labour Party in Wales.

Conservatives and Unionists are passionate about the Union and we will never do anything to put it at risk. We are proud that the Conservatives and Unionists are the only political force fielding candidates in every part of the UK at this election.

## Support devolution

We support the changes proposed by the Calman Commission for clarifying the devolution settlement and creating a relationship of mutual respect between Westminster and Holyrood:

- The Prime Minister and other Ministers will go to Holyrood for questioning on a regular basis.
- The Scottish Parliament should have more responsibility for raising the money it spends. We will produce our own White Paper by May 2011 to set out how we will deal with the issues raised by Calman, and we will legislate to implement those proposals within the next Parliament.

Labour have refused to address the so-called ‘West Lothian Question’: the unfair situation of Scottish MPs voting on matters which are devolved. A Conservative and Unionist Government will introduce new rules so that legislation referring specifically to England, or to England and Wales, cannot be enacted without the consent of MPs representing constituencies of those countries.

We will not stand in the way of the referendum on further legislative powers requested by the Welsh Assembly. The people of Wales will decide the outcome and Conservatives and

Unionists will have a free vote. But our priority remains getting people back into work and strengthening the Welsh economy. So we will seek ways to work with the Welsh Assembly Government to increase economic growth and improve people's quality of life.

Ulster Unionists played an historic role in ending direct rule from Westminster and returning devolved government to Northern Ireland. Without the Ulster Unionist Party there would be no devolution. Ulster Unionists did the heavy lifting while other unionist parties stood on the sidelines. As a result the constitutional issues have been settled and the Union secured.

Conservatives and Unionists strongly support the political institutions established over the past decade and are committed to making devolution work. We will continue to support policies aimed at promoting peace, stability and economic prosperity and work to bring Northern Ireland back into the mainstream of UK politics. We will produce a government paper examining the mechanism for changing the corporation tax rate in Northern Ireland, in order to attract significant new investment. And we will stop the practice of 'double-jobbing' whereby people sit in both Westminster and Stormont.

Conservatives and Unionists share the widespread concern across Northern Ireland over the dysfunctional nature of the Northern

Ireland Executive, its inability to resolve education and its overall lack of delivery. All of this has happened under a DUP/Sinn Fein carve up of the Executive. We will continue to support our Ulster Unionist colleagues in the Assembly in their efforts to return to the inclusive Executive envisaged in the Belfast Agreement. Over time we would like the institutions to evolve into a more normal system with a government and opposition. But we recognise that any changes are for the future and will only come about after full consultation and with the agreement of the parties in the Assembly.

Forty years of politically motivated violence has left a terrible legacy on Northern Ireland society. We are unstinting in our admiration for the Royal Ulster Constabulary GC, our Armed Forces and all those people from across the community who stood together to ensure that the future of Northern Ireland would never be determined by violence. We owe them all an immense debt.

Conservatives and Unionists recognise that people on all sides lost their lives and, while we accept that mistakes might have been made on occasion, the vast majority of members of the security forces carried out their duties with immense bravery, skill and professionalism. We unreservedly reject any notion of 'equivalence' between those who perpetrated wicked and cowardly acts of terrorism and

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those who lost their lives defending democracy and the rule of law. Politically motivated violence – on all sides – was never justified and we will not be party to a re-write of history in order to give it a spurious legitimacy. A Conservative and Unionist government will not, therefore, take forward the proposal for a universal Recognition Payment to all families of the dead. We will, however, dedicate ourselves to building a better, fairer future for all. In addition, under a Conservative and Unionist Government there will be no more open-ended and costly inquiries into the past at vast public expense. There can be no hierarchy of investigations into the past.

Strangford Lough,  
County Down



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Protect the  
environment and  
support our  
farmers

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## Sustainable UK

*A Conservative and Unionist Government will cut carbon emissions and rebuild our energy security. We will make it easier for people to go green, with incentives for people to do the right thing. We will protect our precious habitats and natural resources, and promote a sustainable farming industry. We will fulfil our responsibility to hand on a richer and more sustainable natural environment to future generations.*

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We have a vision of a different United Kingdom. It is a country which leads the world in the market for green goods and services. A new high-tech manufacturing sector and a new green investment bank help create new jobs, wealth and growth. Our cars run on electricity and our rail infrastructure is fit for the 21st century.

In this vision, our homes require less energy and more of the energy we produce comes from renewable sources. Our countryside is better cared for, we conserve more natural habitats, and we create new green spaces and plant many more trees. Our landscape is protected and our wildlife is enjoyed by more people of all ages. It is a greener and more pleasant land for all its citizens.

This is a Conservative and Unionist vision for our future, and it is based on Conservative and Unionist values. We believe that it is our responsibility to create a clean and healthy environment to pass on to our children. That is why we have put green issues back at the heart of our politics and that is why they will be at the heart of our government.

Instead of using rules and regulations to impose a centralised worldview, we will go with the grain of human nature, creating new incentives and market signals which reward people for doing the right thing. Instead of pulling bureaucratic levers from above and telling people what they can't do, we will provide people with the information they need to make more responsible choices. Instead of holding businesses back by imposing unfair retrospective stealth taxes, we will unleash the power of green enterprise and promote resource efficiency to generate thousands of green jobs. The Westminster Government has formed the policy framework within which the Northern Ireland Assembly has tackled environmental and energy issues. We will work with our Ulster Unionist colleagues in the Northern Ireland Assembly to ensure that everyone in the UK benefits from our innovative ideas. This is how we will live up to our responsibility to be the most environmentally progressive government in our history.

## Combat climate change

*We will reduce carbon emissions in line with our international commitments. We will promote small- and large-scale low carbon energy production, including nuclear, wind, clean coal and biogas. We will safeguard our energy security by ensuring there is sufficient spare capacity in the energy system. We will make it easier to go green, including through a 'Green Deal' to cut household energy bills.*

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Labour's failure on climate change has been stark. Strong rhetoric has not been matched by effective action – it took the longest and deepest recession for sixty years for Labour to achieve any significant reduction in the UK's carbon emissions. We need to generate 15 per cent of our energy from renewables by 2020, but we have one of the worst records of any EU nation when it comes to renewable energy. Our national security is threatened by a looming energy crunch in which a third of our electricity generating capacity will close, and most of our gas will need to be imported by 2020.

Yet the United Kingdom is uniquely placed to be the world's first low carbon economy: we have the natural resources to generate wind and wave power, a skilled workforce trained in the energy industry, a hi-tech manufacturing sector and a green financial centre in the City of London. We urgently need to make this transition in order to strengthen our economy, help guarantee our energy security and protect our environment for future generations.

Conservatives and Unionists recognise that Northern Ireland's geographical location within the Union means that energy security and price are pressing issues. We will work with our Ulster Unionist colleagues in the Northern Ireland Assembly to explore the potential for a 'Green New Deal' for Northern Ireland.

## Ambitious goals for reducing emissions

Climate change is a global phenomenon, and that means the world must work together to reduce harmful emissions. A Conservative and Unionist Government will work towards an ambitious global deal that will limit emissions and make available substantial financial resources for adaptation and mitigation.

As part of our commitment to move towards a low carbon future, we can confirm our aim of reducing carbon emissions by 80 per cent by 2050. In government, we will lead from the front by delivering a 10 per cent cut in central



government emissions within twelve months and by working with local authorities and others to deliver emissions reductions.

## Promote low carbon energy production

The way our energy is produced and transmitted is stuck in the last century. A Conservative and Unionist government will transform this ‘dumb’, unresponsive network and create an ‘electricity internet’. We will work with our Ulster Unionist colleagues in the Northern Ireland Assembly to make the Single Electricity Market more competitive, give consumers more choice and to make prices more economical. We will seek to share innovations in ‘smart grid’ and ‘smart meter’ technology across the UK which will automatically match supply and demand, allowing a huge increase in renewable power.

To limit harmful emissions from UK power stations, we will take steps to encourage new low carbon energy production, including:

- introducing an Emissions Performance Standard to limit the levels of greenhouse gases our power stations produce;
- clearing the way for new nuclear power stations – provided they receive no public subsidy;

- creating four carbon capture and storage-equipped plants, taking coal – one of the most polluting fuels of all – and transforming it into a low carbon fuel of the future;
- delivering an offshore electricity grid in order to support the development of a new generation of offshore wind power, and establishing at least two Marine Energy Parks; and,

We will work with devolved institutions to ensure that this transformation in energy production and transmission is UK wide.

## Safeguard the UK’s energy security

The United Kingdom has had no clear energy policy for thirteen years. A succession of eleven energy Ministers and eight Secretaries of State with responsibility for energy has left our policy muddled and put our energy security at risk. The United Kingdom needs an energy policy that is clear, consistent and stable. That means that Ministers will be unambiguously responsible for determining energy policy and delivering an Annual Energy Statement to Parliament to set a clear direction for energy policy.

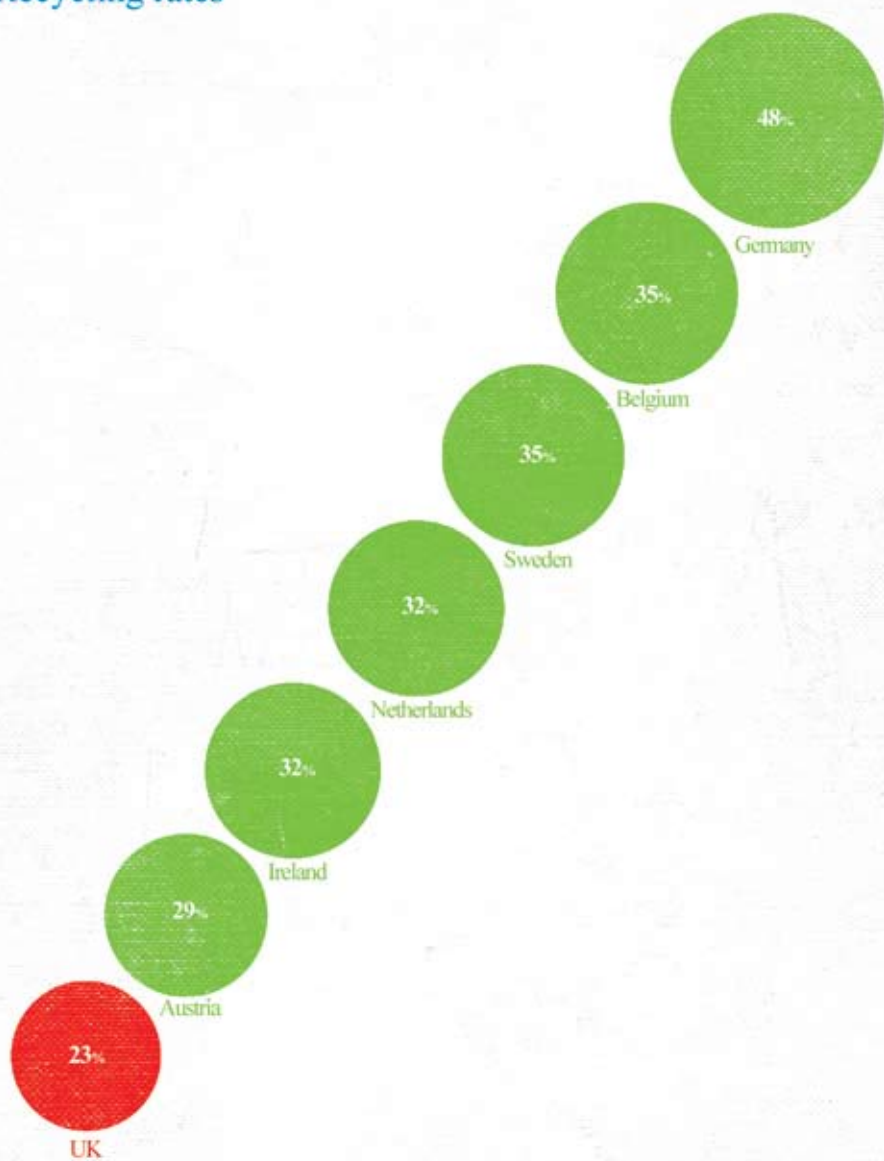
Labour’s just-in-time approach to energy supply has left us badly exposed to events outside our control. We will work to diversify the sources of the gas we need, secure long-

term contracts and increase storage capacity to guarantee supplies throughout the year. We support plans to create a gas storage facility off the coast of Northern Ireland.

## Helping people to do the right thing.

Transparency is one of the best ways to change people's behaviour. We will work with our Ulster Unionist colleagues in the Northern Ireland Assembly to explore the possibility of transforming consumers' control over their energy bills by ensuring every household bill provides information on how to move to the cheapest tariff offered by their supplier and how their energy usage compares to similar households. And we will give Post Office Card Account holders the chance to benefit from direct debit discounts, worth up to £150 a year.

## Recycling rates



Source: EuroStat, 2008

## Conserve and enhance the natural environment

*We will protect and improve the UK's natural environment, and pioneer new schemes to improve conservation. We will push for reform of the Common Agricultural and Fisheries Policies to promote sustainable farming and fishing. We will promote high animal welfare standards and ensure that government procures locally-produced food wherever possible. We will work towards a zero-waste society.*

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Conservatives and Unionists understand the inherent value of conserving things, and we know the importance of ensuring that we provide a good quality of life for future generations. Our natural environment has been degraded and urgent action is needed to address the loss of vital ecosystems in the face of climate change and development. Labour have relied too much on regulation and top-down targets that have failed to halt biodiversity loss.

We need to act now to enhance biodiversity, protect our countryside and marine environment, and secure the vital eco-systems that sustain life on land, in our rivers and in our seas. A Conservative and Unionist Government will take a broad approach to improving the natural environment as a whole, so that we can ensure a secure future for the natural world where vital ecological assets are protected and resources are used more responsibly.

### Conserve wildlife

Too many animals remain at risk of extinction, and climate change will put even more pressure on endangered species and precious habitats.

We will support the strongest protection for endangered species and work to protect vital habitats from destruction. We will tackle the smuggling and illegal trade in wildlife through our new Border Police Force.

We will fight for wholesale reform of the Common Fisheries Policy to encourage sustainable practices, give communities a greater say over the future of their fishing industries, and bring an end to the scandal of fish discards. We will take forward the Marine and Coastal Access Act and ensure that its conservation measures are implemented effectively, including the creation of Marine Conservation Zones.

We will be equally vigilant in ensuring the welfare of animals. We will promote the highest standards of farm animal welfare. We will work to reduce the use of animals in scientific research. We will promote responsible pet ownership by introducing effective codes of practice under the Animal Welfare Act, and target irresponsible owners of dangerous dogs.

To give wildlife greater protection, we will:

- firmly oppose any resumption of commercial whaling and do all we can to ensure that the international moratorium stays in place;
- press for a total ban on ivory sales and the destruction of existing stockpiles; and,
- promote new green spaces and wildlife corridors to help animals adapt and thrive in the face of climate change.

## Protect habitats

The natural world faces great pressure from development and climate change. We will produce a White Paper on protecting the natural environment, including a focus on restoring habitat. We will pioneer a new system of conservation credits to protect habitats. When it comes to protecting wildlife and biodiversity we will promote collaboration and best practice throughout the UK.

We will tackle illegal logging by:

- pressing for financial support from within a reformed EU budget to be given to developing countries to halt deforestation;
- pressing for only legally-harvested timber and timber products to be made available on the market; and,
- introducing a new criminal offence under UK law for the import and possession of illegal timber.

## Promoting sustainable and productive farming practices

Conservatives and Unionists care passionately about Northern Ireland's rural communities as an essential part of our social and economic fabric. We believe we have a countryside and a rich rural heritage of which we can be proud.

We will work with our Ulster Unionist colleagues in the Assembly to see vibrant, flourishing and sustainable rural communities take their place at the heart of Northern Ireland.

Now more than ever, rural communities in Northern Ireland need a thriving farming industry. We understand and recognise the significant strategic importance of agriculture to the wider Northern Ireland economy. Growing numbers of consumers have become increasingly interested in where their food is from and how it is produced. We must ensure that our hard working local farmers have a sustainable industry capable of meeting the demands of a globalised economy.

Farmers in Northern Ireland produce a quality product to the highest standard of environmental protection, animal welfare and traceability. Conservatives and Unionists are rightly proud of the quality farming practices that exist in Northern Ireland. In the years ahead, however, farming in Northern Ireland will face many profound challenges that will require a strategic, coordinated response from

policy makers and the industry: Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform; food security; reducing red tape; encouraging farm diversification and encouraging the next generation of farmers to enter the industry.

In this challenging context, a Conservative and Unionist Government will work closely with the Northern Ireland Assembly to promote and defend the interests of Northern Ireland's farming industry and rural communities.

Conservatives and Unionists in Northern Ireland believe that future reform of the CAP must reflect the central importance of farming to the economy, to society and to the environment, whilst acknowledging consumer concerns about food quality and food security. Hard-working farmers and farm families have had to adapt to significant reform of the CAP in recent years. Therefore CAP reform must be introduced at a pace that allows farmers in Northern Ireland to adapt and should create a level playing field in Europe.

The challenge for the future is to provide stability for farmers whilst helping them become more market orientated and more responsive to environmental needs, while ensuring that they have a level playing field upon which to compete. Conservatives and Unionists are mindful of the need for fairer and freer trade across the world and for future CAP reform to help this process, whilst ensuring that food produced outside the EU complies with

the high standards that farmers in Northern Ireland must adhere to.

Conservatives and Unionists in Northern Ireland understand that farmers are often crippled by red tape and bureaucracy and will work to ensure that future CAP reform will free farmers to farm, not fill in forms.

A Conservative and Unionist Government will therefore negotiate for reform to the CAP to deliver greater value for money while supporting the long-term sustainability of UK farming. We will work with our Ulster Unionist colleagues in the Northern Ireland Assembly to minimise repetitive on-farm inspections, and to abolish the Agricultural Wages Board.

Encouraging consumers to buy local produce not only helps local farmers but also benefits the environment by reducing the amount of food miles. A Conservative and Unionist Government will introduce honesty in food labelling to put an end to misleading practices and give consumers the choice to buy food produced locally with the assurance of high animal welfare standards.

We want retailers and manufacturers to introduce honest country of origin food labelling, and if necessary a Conservative and Unionist Government will legislate to bring this about.

In Northern Ireland we are the only part of the UK sharing a land border with another EU member state and because of the challenges this brings for our industry, a Conservative and Unionist Government will ensure that the industry in Northern Ireland is involved in and consulted on how any such legislation is implemented in practice.

We will ensure a fair market for food suppliers – especially farmers – by reducing the burden of regulation. To ensure the grocery supply code of practice is applied fairly we will introduce an independent supermarket ombudsman.







Royal Irish Regiment,  
Belfast, 2008

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Promote our  
national interest

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## A stronger the United Kingdom in a safer world

*A Conservative and Unionist Government will defend our national security and support our brave Armed Forces in everything they do. We will promote our national interest with an active foreign policy. We will work constructively with the EU, but we will not hand over any more areas of power and we will never join the Euro. We will honour our aid commitments and make sure this money works for the poorest nations.*

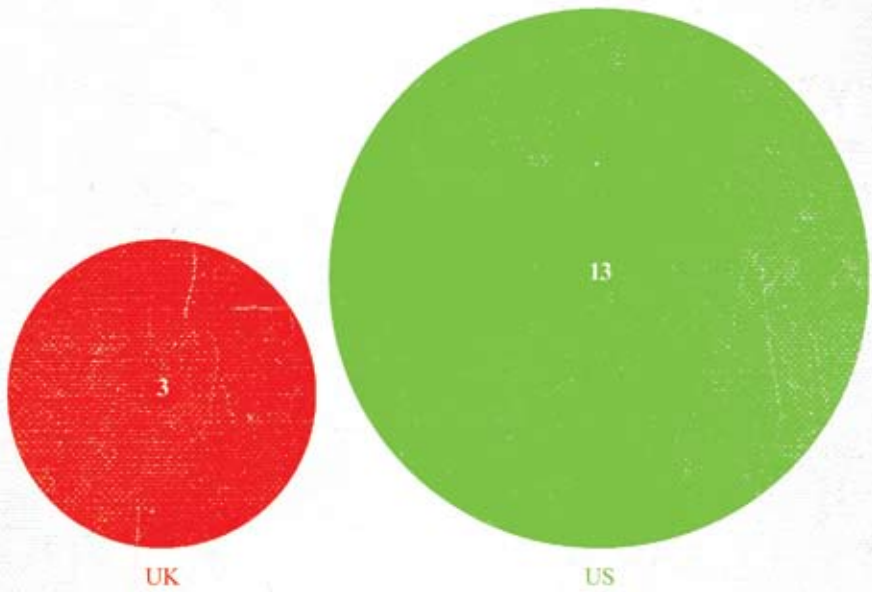
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This country possesses great assets and advantages – a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, a leading role in NATO, a strong relationship with the United States, a major role in the affairs of the EU, and Armed Forces that are the envy of the world. We are a global trading nation and home to the world’s pre-eminent language.

But, looking a decade or two ahead, powerful forces of economics and demography elsewhere in the world will make it harder for us to maintain our influence. All this in a world that is becoming more dangerous, where threats as diverse as state failure, international terrorism and new forms of warfare are being amplified by the impact of climate change and the spread of nuclear weapons technology. In a world of shifting economic power and increased threats, the UK stands to lose a great deal of its ability to shape world affairs unless we act to reverse our declining status.

We no longer inhabit a world in which foreign and defence issues can be separated from domestically-generated threats. Instead, we live in a world in which dangers, events and actions abroad are inter-dependent with threats to our security at home. We must meet the threats we face with a concerted response from the state. That response cannot just come from how we conduct our foreign affairs, or organise our defence and internal security – it must cut across energy, education, community cohesion, health, technology, international development and the environment too.

## Helicopters per 1,000 troops, Helmand Province, 2009



Source: The Times, Channel 4

## Defend our security

*We will create a National Security Council to oversee all aspects of our security, chaired by the Prime Minister. We are committed to succeeding in our mission in Afghanistan and will not leave our Forces without the resources they need to fulfil this goal. We will repair the Military Covenant with a series of measures to support service personnel, their families and veterans.*

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Labour have failed to deliver a unified and coherent approach to national security. They have not even kept their promise of a comprehensive National Security Budget. Their incompetence places our nation at risk. Despite fighting two major wars in the last decade, Labour have cut the target for the trained strength of the Army, shrunk the size of the Navy by a fifth and run down the RAF.

The men and women of our Armed Forces are the ones charged with protecting our nation's security. But Labour's dangerous mismanagement has endangered lives and harmed the United Kingdom's capacity to defend itself. Labour have been too slow to provide the equipment, such as helicopters, which our Forces on operations have badly needed. Our brave men and women, their families, and our veterans deserve the best for putting their lives on the line to protect our liberties. We will ensure they get the best. We are particularly proud of the role played by men and women from Northern Ireland in the Royal Irish and other regiments of the British Army in recent operations. The United Kingdom

punches above its weight on the world stage, and Northern Ireland punches above its weight in our Armed Forces.

## A resilient nation

We understand the severity of the threats that exist and will do all we can to make the United Kingdom safe. We will establish a National Security Council to co-ordinate responses to the dangers we face, which will be chaired by the Prime Minister. In addition, we will:

- create a National Security Adviser and a new National Resilience Team for Homeland Security;
- develop a National Security Strategy and oversee a Strategic Defence and Security Review that implements that strategy; and,
- establish a new Permanent Military Command for Homeland Defence and Security to provide a more structured military contribution to homeland security.

Terrorism remains a major threat to our country and some of the biggest threats to our

security do not come from abroad – they are home grown. A Conservative and Unionist Government will ban any organisations which advocate hate or the violent overthrow of our society, such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir, and close down organisations which attempt to fund terrorism from the UK. In Northern Ireland, we will continue to give our fullest support to the police and other agencies in their efforts to combat the threat from dissident republican and other terrorist organisations.

## Support our brave Armed Forces

Our mission in Afghanistan is vital to our national security. Success in Afghanistan will be achieved when it is a more stable state, able to manage its own security, resist outside interference, and prevent terrorists from using its territory as a safe haven. We will always ensure our Forces have the resources they need to carry out their mission properly, and we will press other members of NATO to take their fair share of the military burden. The training of Afghanistan's own security forces is key to the success of the mission, and we will continue to make it a priority.

Our Strategic Defence and Security Review will ensure that resources for our Armed Forces are matched to our foreign policy requirements. We support the decision to renew the United Kingdom's submarine-based nuclear deterrent, based on the Trident missile system.

The hopeless mismanagement of defence procurement by this government has wasted billions of taxpayers' money and left our Armed Forces underequipped and dangerously exposed. We will review the structure of the Ministry of Defence to reduce running costs by 25 per cent. We will reform the procurement process to ensure the delivery of equipment on time and on budget. We will release spending on unnecessary and bureaucratic EU defence initiatives and spend the money on our Armed Forces. As part of that process, we will re-evaluate our position with the European Defence Agency.

Our commitment to look after the Armed Forces and their families – the Military Covenant – has been allowed to fall into disrepair. This is one of the most damning failures of Gordon Brown's government. We will restore the Military Covenant and ensure that our Armed Forces, their families and veterans are properly taken care of. To make that happen, we will:

- double the operational allowance;
- maximise rest and recuperation leave;
- ensure our servicemen and women are treated in dedicated military wards in hospital;
- change the rules so that service personnel are

not locked out of the voting system by rules that Labour have introduced;

- use ‘pupil level annual school census’ data to include service children within our plans for a pupil premium in schools, ensuring they attract extra funding;
- provide university and further education scholarships for the children of servicemen and women killed while on active duty, backdated to 1990;
- pilot a mental health follow-up service for those who have left the services; and,
- review the rules governing the awarding of medals.



## Iran

In Iran, hundreds of thousands of citizens calling for democratic reforms are using new technologies to come together, coordinate their protests against the state, and communicate with the outside world. The power of these information flows is growing rapidly. Every time the Iranian state has tried to choke the flow of information to dampen down the protests, people have turned to new technologies to share and access information. When the state cut off text messaging services, protesters switched to social media like Twitter and Facebook. When foreign journalists had their visas removed and had to leave the country, Iranians began to upload video clips onto YouTube so that the government's actions could continue to be scrutinised. And when the government tried to ban popular websites, private citizens outside Iran set up proxy internet servers so that Iranians could continue to access information.



## A liberal Conservative and Unionist foreign policy

*We have great national assets and advantages to help us make the most of the opportunities we face and to deal with challenges. We will engage positively with the world to deepen alliances and build new partnerships. We will help reform international institutions, help those in need, and play our part in tackling climate change and the proliferation of military nuclear technology.*

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A Conservative and Unionist Government's approach to foreign affairs will be based on liberal Conservative and Unionist principles. Liberal, because the United Kingdom must be open and engaged with the world, supporting human rights and championing the cause of democracy and the rule of law at every opportunity. But Conservative and Unionist, because our policy must be hard-headed and practical, dealing with the world as it is and not as we wish it were.

Our approach to foreign affairs is based on a belief in freedom, human rights and democracy. We are sceptical about grand utopian schemes to remake the world. We will work patiently with the grain of other societies, but we will always support liberal values because they provide the foundations for stability and prosperity.

Protecting the United Kingdom's enlightened national interest requires global engagement. We will be safer if our values are strongly upheld and widely respected in the world. Our national identity is bound up in our historic global role as an outward-looking nation, giving generously to developing countries, and

providing a safe haven to genuine refugees.

It is not in our character to have a foreign policy without a conscience or to turn our back on the millions who live in poverty and conflict.

## Promote our enlightened national interest

A Conservative and Unionist Government will champion a distinctive UK foreign policy. We will renew and reinforce our engagement with the rest of the world and build up UK influence by deepening our alliances beyond Europe and the United States, not only diplomatically but in culture, education, commerce and security.

A Conservative and Unionist Government will always speak up for freedom and human rights. Torture is unacceptable and abhorrent, and we will never condone it.

We will support humanitarian intervention when it is practical and necessary, while working with other countries to prevent conflict arising.

Promoting the United Kingdom's interests and

values means developing and strengthening our alliances and reforming international institutions. To achieve these goals, we will:

- work to establish a new special relationship with India, the world's largest democracy;
- seek closer engagement with China while standing firm on human rights;
- elevate our relationships with many friendly nations, including in the Middle East, as well as North Africa, South Asia and Latin America;
- press to keep the EU's doors open to those countries, including Turkey, that wish to join, conditional on the rigorous application of the accession criteria;
- support permanent seats on the United Nations Security Council for Japan, India, Germany, Brazil and African representation; and,
- strengthen the Commonwealth as a focus for promoting democratic values and development.

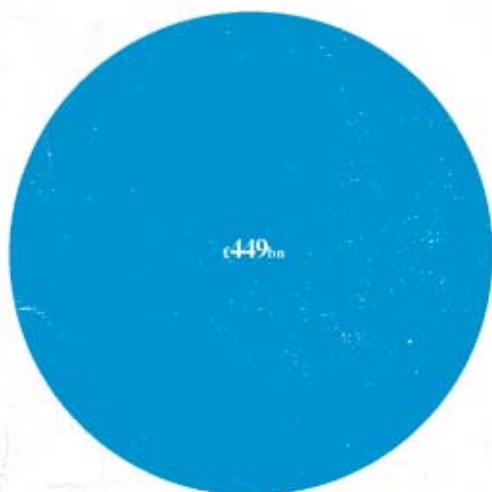
We will work with our allies across the world to prevent conflict and secure peace. We will maintain a strong, close and frank relationship with the United States. We will work closely with other European countries to establish a common approach to common problems, such as climate change. We will be committed to

NATO as the ultimate guarantor of Europe's security. To ensure our global security further, we will:

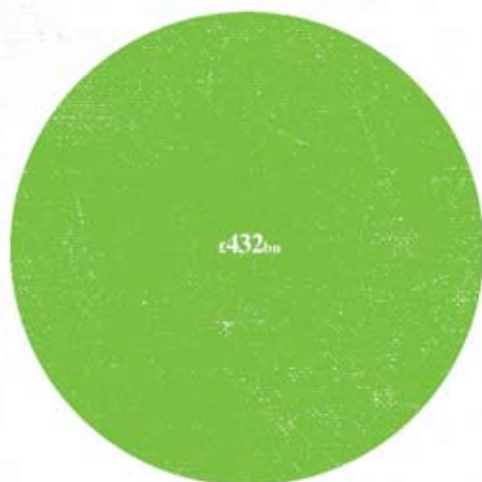
- work towards greater stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan;
- support concerted international efforts to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon;
- support a two-state solution to the Middle East Peace Process;
- promote stability in the Western Balkans;
- always be ready to assist Cypriots in their efforts to agree a just, balanced and lasting settlement to reunite their island; and,
- play our part in efforts to make the world safer from the dangers of nuclear weapons and nuclear proliferation.



## Total volume of UK trade



Trade with EU



Trade with the rest of the world

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2008

## An open and democratic Europe

*We will be positive members of the European Union but we are clear that there should be no further extension of the EU's power over the UK without the consent of the people of the UK. We will ensure that by law no future government can hand over areas of power to the EU or join the Euro without a referendum of the people of the UK. We will work to bring back key powers over legal rights, criminal justice and social and employment legislation to the UK.*

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The European Union has done much to reconcile the painful division of Europe and to spread democracy and the rule of law across our continent. But it should not rest on those achievements.

European countries need to work together to boost global economic growth, fight global poverty, and combat global climate change. The European Union has a crucial part to play in enabling the countries of Europe to meet these great challenges of the 21st century. A Conservative and Unionist Government will play an active and energetic role in the European Union to advance these causes.

We will stand for open markets, and a strong transatlantic relationship; for an EU that looks out to the world, and that builds strong and open relations with rising powers like China and India. And, like every other Member State, we will fight our corner to promote our national interests.

We believe the United Kingdom's interests are best served by membership of a European Union that is an association of its Member States. We will never allow the United Kingdom to slide into a federal Europe. Labour's ratification of the Lisbon Treaty without the consent of the people of the UK has been a betrayal of this country's democratic traditions. In government, we will put in place a number of measures to make sure this shameful episode can never happen again.

## Restore democratic control

In future, the people of the UK must have their say on any transfer of powers to the European Union. We will amend the 1972 European Communities Act so that any proposed future Treaty that transferred areas of power, or competences, would be subject to a referendum – a 'referendum lock'. A Conservative and Unionist Government would never take the UK into the Euro. Our amendment to the 1972 Act will prevent any future government from doing so without a referendum.

Unlike other European countries, the UK does not have a written constitution. We will introduce a United Kingdom Sovereignty Bill to make it clear that ultimate authority stays in this country, in our Parliament.

The Lisbon Treaty contains a number of so-called ‘ratchet clauses’, which allow the powers of the EU to expand in the future without a new Treaty. We do not believe that any of these ‘ratchet clauses’ should be used to hand over more powers from the United Kingdom to the EU. So a Conservative and Unionist Government will not agree to the UK’s participation in the establishment of a European Public Prosecutor’s Office or permit its jurisdiction over the UK. We will change the 1972 Act so that an Act of Parliament would be required before any ‘ratchet clause’ could be used. Additionally, the use of a major ‘ratchet clause’ which amounted to the transfer of an area of power to the EU would be subject to a referendum.

The steady and unaccountable intrusion of the European Union into almost every aspect of our lives has gone too far. A Conservative and Unionist Government will negotiate for three specific guarantees – on the Charter of Fundamental Rights, on criminal justice, and on social and employment legislation – with our European partners to return powers that we believe should reside with the UK, not the EU. We seek a mandate to negotiate the return of these powers from the EU to the UK.







## Project Umubano

Every summer for the past three years, the Conservatives have been running 'Project Umubano' in Rwanda. Over that period, Conservative MPs and volunteers have provided English lessons to 3,000 Rwandan primary school teachers, renovated a school, established a small medical library at Kirambi Health Centre, and built a community centre. Project Umubano is a sign of our commitment to One World Conservatism, and our belief in the positive power of social action.

## One World Conservatism

*We will honour our commitment to spend 0.7 per cent of national income in aid, and ensure our aid is transparent and properly targeted. We will spend at least £500 million a year to tackle malaria. Both the people of the UK and those who receive aid will get more control over how it is spent. We will push for a trade deal which brings growth to the poorest countries, helps those countries adapt to climate change, and puts in place the building blocks of wealth creation.*

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The global downturn has shaken up rich and poor countries alike. For poor countries, it threatens to undermine a decade's growth and poverty reduction. For rich countries, it puts new pressures on household and government budgets – nowhere more so than in the UK, where Labour's appalling mismanagement of the economy has saddled us with unprecedented levels of debt. But we should use this opportunity to reaffirm, not abandon, our values – which is why we will continue to increase the level of UK aid. We will do so because it is in our national interest, as well as being the right thing to do.

### Deliver on our commitment to the world's poorest nations

A new Conservative and Unionist Government will be fully committed to achieving, by 2013, the UN target of spending 0.7 per cent of national income as aid. We will stick to the rules laid down by the OECD about what spending counts as aid. We will legislate in the first session of a new Parliament to lock in this level of spending for every year from 2013.

We support the Millennium Development Goals and will continue to work towards them. We will maintain an independent Department for International Development (DFID) and keep aid untied from commercial interests. We will be completely transparent about the cost and performance of DFID programmes by independently evaluating programmes and by introducing, where appropriate, payment by results.

Our bargain with taxpayers is this: in return for contributing your hard-earned money to helping the world's poorest people, it is our duty to spend every penny of aid effectively. We will ensure UK aid money is properly spent by publishing full details of UK aid on the DFID website. This will include spending data on a project-by-project basis, published in an open and standardised format so that it can be used by third party websites. In addition, we will work to bring about improved transparency of aid spending by other development organisations.

We will create a new MyAid Fund to allow British people a direct say on aid spending, as well as giving people in developing countries more say over how aid is spent in their communities.

Under Labour, our aid funding is not used in a focused way, and is sometimes spent in countries that should be looking after their own poor citizens. So we will stop giving aid to China and Russia and review which other countries should get UK aid. We will focus more on the poorest, paying particular attention to development within the Commonwealth.

A key aim of our aid is to make sure everyone gets access to the basics: clean water, sanitation, healthcare and education. We will focus particularly on the rights of women, children and disabled people to access these services. Malaria continues to kill nearly a million people per year, despite the fact that it is easily preventable and treatable. So, as part of our commitment to increase aid funding, a Conservative and Unionist Government will spend at least £500 million per year tackling malaria and will strongly support efforts to develop a malaria vaccine.

Trade and economic growth are the only sustainable way for developing countries to escape poverty, which is why we will put maximum effort into achieving an ambitious, pro-development global trade deal. Our aid programme will help poor countries put in

place the building blocks of wealth creation: property rights, effective public services, stability and the rule of law.

We will provide a more integrated approach to post-conflict reconstruction where UK military personnel are involved – building on the Stabilisation Unit in Whitehall and creating a new Stabilisation and Reconstruction Force to bridge the gap between the military and the reconstruction effort.

To help deliver on our commitment to developing countries, we will:

- establish a Poverty Impact Fund to support innovative and effective British poverty-fighting groups which do not currently qualify for government funding;
- explore ways to help the very poorest developing countries take part in international climate change negotiations, and work to make our aid ‘climate-smart’;
- end Labour’s use of the Export Credit Guarantee Department to support investment in dirty fossil fuel power stations, and instead use it to help spread new green energy technology to developing countries; and,
- encourage the establishment of a Pan-African Free Trade Area, which has the potential to transform that continent’s economies.





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