

PDPPOLICIES 2013/2014

Our policies offer common sense and popular solutions to the problems affecting Britain today. In the PDP, policy is decided by our MEMBERS, not the leadership, with each member able to propose and vote on policy proposals.

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PDP POLICY - A NEW POLITICS, A NEW SOCIETY

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1. OVERVIEW:

1.0 All laws/policies will aim to encourage positive behaviour and penalise negative behaviour, in contrast to the current situation where all too often the opposite is true.

1.1 We will launch a major drive to encourage volunteering, and enable voluntary/community groups to take over redundant local services and assets.

1.2 The long term unemployed (12 months plus) will be expected to do voluntary work in not-for-profit organisations of at least 12 hours per week in return for benefits.

1.3 We will launch a major investment in sporting and youth facilities to provide a positive outlet for young people's energies.

1.4 Criminal Justice will be reformed to ensure sentences provide real punishment and rehabilitation.

1.5 Measures to reduce financial inequality between the regions and nations of Britain will be introduced with the aim of 'spreading the wealth around' instead of concentrating it in a particular social class or region. Rewarding hard work will be central to this approach.

1.6 All policies to concentrate on and encourage a 'One Nation' approach to governance.

1.7 Policies will encourage integration, greater social cohesion, sense of community and pride in our shared British identity. Policies will seek to decrease the segregation along ethnic and religious lines which has developed in many of our towns and cities. Measures will include:

1.8 - no further increase in the number of state funded single-faith schools.

1.9 - integration to be an objective in the allocation of social housing.

1.10 - a crackdown on the worst excesses of modern British culture such as binge drinking, drug abuse, street violence, anti-social behaviour and family breakdown.

1.11 - a legal right for individuals and organisations to refuse to interact with citizens who cover their faces in public. We regard this practice as deeply alien to our culture and dehumanising to both the wearer and those confronted by it, but would regard an outright ban as un-British and an infringement of personal freedom. However, freedom cuts both ways and those who find this practice offensive must be free to refuse to engage with it.

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2. CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

2.0 Murder to be punishable by life imprisonment with a mandatory minimum tariff of 25 years (ie. all murderers to serve at least 25 years before being considered for parole.)

2.1 Aggravated murder offences (eg. child sexual murder, murder in the course of armed robbery, gang related murder, murder of vulnerable individuals, murder of police officers etc) will receive higher mandatory minimums (30, 35, 40, whole life etc)

2.2 (The current system of sentencing, with short 'life' terms for murder, devalues human life, diminishes the effects of murder on the victims and brings the criminal justice system into disrepute. Genuine cases of mercy killing will be removed from the definition of murder and regarded as voluntary manslaughter.)

2.3 'Headline Sentencing' to be introduced whereby criminals will serve the actual sentence handed down by the judge, with the 'Proviso' that they will serve up to 50% longer if they misbehave in prison. The current system of 50% remission brings the whole criminal justice system into disrepute and devalues the effects of crime on victims.

2.4 'New Regime Prisons' (NRP) to be introduced providing 'Therapeutic Imprisonment' consisting of work and learning opportunities, psychological counselling and re-socialisation through the imposition and acceptance of discipline.

2.5 New Regime Prisons will be spartan yet humane, physically sealed from visitors, and somewhat akin to Britain in the 1950s with no TVs or other consumer durables in cells but ample access to books, selected radio broadcasts and learning opportunities.

2.6 New 'Drug Detox Centres' (DDC) will be introduced for offenders suffering drug addiction where they will undergo withdrawal under medical supervision, before transfer to NRPs.

2.7 Both DDCs and NRPs will be high security and sealed from public contact, and smuggling contraband into them shall be punishable by 20 years imprisonment.

2.8 A new Prison Mutiny Act will be introduced authorising the use of force to deal with serious violence and riot in prisons.

2.9 Heavier sentences for drug smuggling and dealing will be introduced and efforts redoubled to rid society of the scourge of hard drugs.

2.10 Those over 12 years old caught carrying blades in public without lawful excuse will be subject to a minimum term of 12 months imprisonment. The burden of proof will be on the defendant to prove they had lawful excuse once the prosecution proves they were carrying a blade.

2.11 Those over 12 years old caught carrying firearms in public without lawful excuse will be subject to a minimum term of 5 years imprisonment. The burden of proof will be on the defendant to prove they had lawful excuse once the prosecution proves they were carrying a firearm.

2.12 Community based sentences to be more strictly enforced and to involve genuine hard work for the benefit of local communities rather than the widespread 'skiving' that all too often occurs under the current system.

2.13 When suspects are arrested, the media may only report their name, age, town of abode and publish a photograph if necessary for the police investigation. No further reporting on the suspect's background or lifestyle will be permitted prior to conviction unless released by official police sources, the defence, or as evidence presented in court. (*This aims to prevent innocent citizens having their lives torn apart by salacious reporting and contamination of jury deliberations by extraneous facts.*)

2.13.1 In the immediate aftermath of the commission of a crime, the Police and all other investigating authorities such as the Crown Prosecution Service will not be permitted to divulge any details of that crime either within a press conference or generally to the public, unless the details divulged are proportionate to the aim of appealing to the public for information. Examples of non-proportionate information would include potentially inflammatory statements which could have the effect of prejudicing the outcome of any future investigation or trial and could also include statements which threaten the dignity and privacy of the victim and/or their immediate families.

2.14 Email, regular mail and telephone scammers to be dealt with more severely and more resource put in place to help catch them and bring them to justice.

2.15 Anonymity to be preserved for accusers of sexual and violent crimes, with the added proviso that anonymity may also be extended to the accused prior to trial. Anonymity may only be overruled following the conclusion of a trial provided that the Judge rules that it is in the public interest to do so, having taken into consideration the outcome of the trial and the views of the victim and / or the accused.

2.16 Any foreign national found guilty of an offence such as hate crime or inciting others to declare war to face deportation.

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3. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY

3.0 Ensure future energy security by utilising a wide range of energy sources including coal, gas, clean coal and carbon-capture, nuclear, wind, hydro-electric, tidal, solar and other renewable sources. Investment in exploration of new off-shore resources.

3.1 Subsidies for wind turbines to be reduced and greater concern given to the impact on the natural environment in planning applications.

3.2 Further investment in insulating and modernising Britain's homes to reduce energy consumption and provide a stimulus to the building trade.

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4. CULTURE AND SPORT

4.0 Major investment in sporting and youth facilities to provide a positive outlet for young people's energies, drawing on the magnificent success of the London 2012 Olympics.

4.1 Launch a major drive to encourage volunteering, and allow voluntary/community groups to take over and run redundant local services/assets as Community Trusts. 4.2 Tax incentives for film production in the UK to focus on British culture, society and history. Review of arts funding to ensure it is relevant to modern Britain and reaching out to a wider audience.

4.2 Reformation of University sport starting with football, before moving onto Rugby and Cricket. This would involve the affiliation of semi-professional clubs to local universities to encourage their young players (18-21) to receive a part-time education (Much like Team Bath FC did). The British University cup finals would also be shown on TV.

4.3 Large sporting events such as England World Cup matches etc to be shown on big screens in public places in major cities. London 2012 showed that sport can unite a whole nation and these kinds of events allow people from all walks of life to experience the sporting atmosphere.

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5. DEFENCE

5.0 Replace the Trident missile system with a more cost effective and truly independent nuclear deterrent. This may consist of a revised Trident system based on 3 submarines and fewer missiles and warheads (depending on costings) but must be truly independent of foreign (ie. US) control.

5.1 Establish (in consultation with Service Chiefs) and maintain a level of defence assets necessary for national security in all three services regardless of budgetary constraints, including a minimum number of naval vessels, aircraft, artillery, tanks and personnel.

5.2 Establish stronger military cooperation links with other Commonwealth, NATO and European countries to counter present and future threats globally.

5.3 Enhance the Civil Defence role of the military in order to counter non-military threats to the UK's well being.

5.4 Root and branch reform of the MOD, which has consistently proved itself the least efficient and most spendthrift government department, and one which too often holds service personnel and their families in contempt.

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6. ECONOMY AND TRADE

6.0 Reduce red tape, EU compliance and unnecessary state interference in the economy.

6.1 Create a more balanced economy less dependent on financial services, with a greater emphasis on manufacturing, green, hi-tech and creative industries.

6.2 Launch a major £20 billion infrastructure investment programme to take advantage of historically low interest rates, build the modern infrastructure needed for success in the 21st century, tackle housing shortages and kick start a faltering economy.

6.3 Increase Regional funding and tax incentives to encourage economic growth in our deprived regions. Relocate the majority of government departments to the regions. (Currently the presence of so much government in London acts as a massive public subsidy to London and the South East and distorts the UK economy.)

6.4 We oppose plans for regional pay and benefits which will entrench regional inequality.

6.5 The PDP should consider tightening the rules on tax relief to charitable businesses, including tightening up what is classed as a 'charitable' business.

6.6 Businesses in this country, trading and making profits from the people of this country, must pay the taxes of this country, and anti tax-avoidance efforts must be strengthened.

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7. ENTERPRISE

7.0 Create a more balanced economy less dependent on financial services, with a greater emphasis on manufacturing, green, hi-tech and creative industries.

7.1 Encourage economic growth in the regions with tax incentives and grants to encourage investment in deprived areas, and by relocating the majority of government out of London.

7.2 Cut red tape and ensure that EU regulation is minimised and implemented in the minimum form necessary for compliance. Reduced bureaucracy for Small and Medium Enterprises will be a priority.

7.3 Encourage greater cooperation and flexibility between employers and employees.

7.4 Greater shareholder oversight of executive pay and requirements for companies to introduce profit sharing schemes for all employees.

7.5 Executive pay rises to be linked to profitability and executive pay to be limited to a multiple of the pay of the lowest paid worker in that organisation.

7.6 Greater competition to be encouraged in the banking sector by breaking up some of the 'too big to fail' banks.

7.7 Force publicly funded banks to lend to viable small and medium sized enterprises.

7.8 Run workshops at colleges and sixth forms at weekends to educate young entrepreneurs about how to start their own business and the tax and legal issues surrounding it.

7.9 New regeneration programmes to be established in the most deprived areas to help invigorate the economies of these communities, improve prospects, increase jobs and employment, welfare and housing for members of these communities, and any funding given to local authorities for these purposes to be strictly audited with progress monitored.

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8. ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS

8.0 Continue the protection of Green Belt land and concentrate new development on brown field sites. Immigration controls to reduce population growth/ demands on resources.

8.1 Controls will be introduced in rural areas to ensure local people are not priced out of home ownership by second or holiday home owners.

8.2 Ensure energy security and sustainability by utilising a wide range of energy sources including coal, gas, clean coal and carbon capture, nuclear, wind, hydro-electric, tidal, solar and other renewable sources.

8.3 Launch a review of the power of supermarket chains to dictate pricing to farmers with a view to ensuring farming remains economically viable.

8.4 Ban industrial dairy farming where cows are kept permanently indoors, rather than on pasture. Any corporation or individual found to be guilty of engaging in this practice shall receive a sentence of at least 5 years imprisonment.

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9. EQUALITY

9.0 Ensure gender equality in pay, and encourage employers to allow flexible working for parents where possible.

9.1 Maintain laws against discrimination and hate crime, but look to slim down compliance and monitoring bodies, and bring common sense into enforcement. Ensure that Civil Partnerships have the same legal rights, recognition and respect as marriage.

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10. EUROPE

10.0 Hold a binding In-Out referendum on our EU membership within two years, following renegotiation of our membership terms and a Royal Commission report on the pros and cons of our membership. Let the people decide, but let it be an informed choice, via a public awareness campaign which would be run six months prior to the referendum in order to provide members of the public with sufficient information to enable them to make an informed decision on EU membership.

10.1 Renegotiation of EU membership terms to concentrate on repatriation of powers, subsidiarity, lower financial contributions, and moving towards a relationship based on free trade and cooperation rather than a super-state and coercion.

10.2 (The crisis in the Euro Zone will in all likelihood only be resolved by greater political and financial integration between Euro Zone countries. As we are not a part of this, it affords us a unique opportunity to rework our relationship with the EU on more favourable terms. This is an opportunity we should not squander.)

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11. FAMILY

11.0 Ensure the welfare system does not discriminate against couples and marriage and ensure through the NMW and Tax Credits that working families have a living wage.

11.1 Recognise and reward marriage in the tax system.

11.2 Ensure employers recognise the importance of a strong family life for their employees and provide a suitable work-life balance for all. Seek to learn from best practice in European family life.

11.3 Ensure absent fathers are held responsible for the upkeep of their children through an effective child support regime within the welfare system. Father's contributions from welfare benefits to be increased up to 50% of benefit received.

11.4 Greater legal protection for the rights of fathers and grandparents to maintain contact with their children when relationships break down.

11.5 Teach parenting and relationship skills as part of the National Curriculum.

11.6 Ensure teenage mothers do not receive social housing, but instead live with their own families, or where this is not possible, live within a supportive environment, consisting in the main of a Multi-Agency Accommodation Centre. Here they will receive advice and support from experienced mothers, social workers and other young mums to enable them to be excellent parents and allow them to access training and employment. Additional support will also be made available for those young mothers disclosing parental or relationship abuse. This represents a major improvement on the current policy of dumping young mums on sink council estates with little or no support and incentivising them to have more kids in return for a career being 'married to the state'.

11.7 A crackdown on loan sharks who prey on vulnerable individuals and families and a raising awareness of other means of support for hard working families who find themselves struggling to make ends meet. Consideration to be given to introducing new government loans for essential items and payments only which could provide a viable alternative and valuable lifeline for such individuals.

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12. FOREIGN AFFAIRS

12.0 Withdrawal of mainstream combat troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

12.1 Creation of defensible Special Forces bases within Afghanistan for intelligence gathering and operations to combat terrorist training activity.

12.2 Increase practical assistance for the fledgling democracies in the Middle East.

12.3 Increase pressure on Israel to genuinely embrace a Two State solution to the Israel/Palestine problem and to end settlement building on illegally occupied land.

12.4 Encourage a Muslim-led solution to the civil war in Syria with a commitment that no British ground forces will be deployed there. The focus should be on reconciling both sides insofar as is possible, with a view to promoting peace for the long term stability of both Syria and the Middle East.

12.5 Support for whatever proportionate action is necessary to prevent nuclear proliferation in the Middle East.

12.6 Strengthen ties among Commonwealth countries to encourage diplomatic, economic and security cooperation where it is in all nation's interests.

12.7 Maintain strong relations with the US based upon mutual respect rather than slavish acceptance of all US policy. Good friends say 'No' when necessary.

12.8 Review of how much is spent on foreign aid and look to reduce this figure and re-direct the money to helping the homeless, young carers, nursing homes and foster families.

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13. HEALTH

13.0 NHS to remain free at the point of delivery, though charges/exclusion will be imposed for persistent abusers of NHS services or staff, as well as for those who use violence and/or threats to intimidate staff upon first contact.

13.1 Patients admitted insensible through alcohol will be charged a flat rate £100 fee for treatment. Persistent abusers will face compulsory alcohol awareness courses.

13.2 NHS will no longer provide a range of elective treatments such as IVF or cosmetic surgery, in order to focus spending on essential life saving treatments. The NHS will seek to provide alternative sources of funding/finance for such procedures on favourable terms to patients.

13.3 Spending to be maintained or increased in real terms.

13.4 NHS to adopt more private sector methods to increase efficiency, but savings to be re-invested rather than creamed off as profit by private contractors.

13.5 Costly PFI contracts to be renegotiated wherever possible, and private contracting only undertaken where there are proven cost and quality benefits.

13.6 NHS manager numbers to be reduced by one third within one year.

13.7 NHS Trusts will no longer produce thousands of bespoke policies but will adopt centrally drafted national standards and procedures. Additional policies will only be adopted if deemed necessary to preserve local needs or if deemed necessary to fulfill statutory obligations in respect of child protection, vulnerable adults and crime prevention for example, however all such additional policies should be reviewed between 1 – 3 years to ensure relevancy.

13.8 Ward sisters and matrons to be put back in charge of the day to day running of wards.

13.9 Non degree access to nursing to be maintained placing a greater emphasis on vocation and aptitude rather than academic achievement.

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13.10 End the scandal of 'Health Tourism' by banning all but emergency treatment for non EU nationals. EU nationals will receive the same level of treatment UK nationals enjoy in those EU countries.



14. HOUSING

14.0 The shameful FACT is that the last Labour government invested less in social housing and built fewer houses than the previous Conservative government, and we have been left with a drastic shortage of housing and spiralling prices and rents as a result.

14.1 We will free up redundant publicly owned land and give it to private developers in return for them building 50% of the houses on that land for social housing owned by Housing Associations. We will also build social housing under our stimulus package. New housing to be built on publicly owned brown-field sites will be exempt from local planning control, but such development must have regard to the impact on local communities, environment and Green Belt restrictions. (The housing crisis is so acute that emergency measures are required to provide homes, reduce Housing Benefit costs & stimulate economic growth.)

14.2 This will not only help to provide much needed social housing and houses for owner occupation but it will create vibrant mixed communities instead of rental ghettos and at no/little cost to the taxpayer. As a result Housing Benefit and private sector rents will reduce.

14.3 This building programme, along with our other major infrastructure investment, will also provide a major stimulus to the economy.

14.4 We will also take action to encourage lending to first time buyers and other investment in much needed starter homes.

14.5 Our aim is to increase owner-occupation and give citizens both a home and a valuable asset for their futures. We recognise however that there will always be a need for rental properties in both the public and private sectors and aim to satisfy this need at less cost to the taxpayer.

14.6 It will be our aim to avoid the rapid house price inflation of the last two decades which fuelled the credit crisis and made homes so unaffordable for too many people. We also aim to reduce regional differences in house prices by cooling house price growth in London and the South East.

14.7 Controls will be introduced in rural areas to ensure local people are not priced out by holiday home owners.

14.8 Where Housing Benefit recipients in social housing which is too large for their needs refuse suitable alternative housing twice, their Housing Benefit may be reduced by 10% per week for each bedroom surplus to their needs. Assessment of tenants needs will have regard to illness, disability, shared parenting, absent service personnel and children in higher education, which may require 'additional' bedrooms.

14.9 The issue of homelessness to be addressed particularly in light of the economic recession. Consideration to be given to building more government or third sector shelters when economically viable to do so, particularly around city centres. Other measures should include establishing statutory local strategic partnerships to discuss homelessness and individual cases on a regular basis with the ultimate view of providing assistance to that individual in the form of temporary accommodation.

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15. HUMAN RIGHTS

15.0 We support Human Rights and are proud of the UK's long history of extending and protecting the rights of our citizens. However, since the introduction of Labour's 1998 Human Rights Act the concept of human rights has been distorted by a Human Rights industry in the UK staffed by unscrupulous and overpaid lawyers, and by a European Court of Human Rights that requires urgent reform.

15.1 We will seek to reform the Human Rights Act immediately.

15.2 We intend the UK to remain a signatory of the European Convention on Human Rights and subject to the oversight of a reformed European Court of Human Rights, acting in an important watchdog role.

15.3 This will be subject to the proviso that where Parliament fundamentally disagrees with any judgement of the ECHR it may, by majority, vote to reject the judgement and state its reasons for doing so.

15.4 Public funding will no longer be available for Human Rights cases unless stringent new criteria is met by the applicants, but unsuccessful claimants may appeal cases to the ECHR at their own (or supporters) expense. This will act as a vital filter to remove cases without any merit from the system.

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16. IMMIGRATION AND ASYLUM

16.0 Our aim will be to stabilise UK population at its current level and prevent the projected disastrous increase in population to 70 million by 2027. Immigration is an issue of resources not race.

16.1 Non EU permanent immigration to be restricted to exceptional cases only.

16.2 Student visas to confer no permanent right to settle in the UK and restriction to part time working of 16 hours per week.

16.3 Work visas for essential skilled workers to be temporary and to confer no permanent right to settle in the UK. The emphasis must be on filling essential roles with British staff and providing appropriate education and training where necessary.

16.4 No right to bring over dependent relatives for those on student and work visas.

16.5 Non EU Foreign spouses only to be allowed into the UK in exceptional circumstances and on condition they will not be entitled to UK benefits and will be repatriated if the relationship breaks down.

16.6 Arranged and 'mail-order' marriages from outside the UK will not be permitted.

16.7 The right to asylum is an important right which has been grossly abused by bogus asylum seekers and economic migrants over the last few years. We support the right to asylum as it was originally envisaged: for those individuals fleeing persecution because of who they are or because of membership of a persecuted minority group. The right should not apply merely because an individual is fleeing a war torn or poverty stricken country.

16.8 Asylum seekers will be expected to claim asylum in the first safe country they pass through and will be returned to that country if they fail to claim asylum there.

16.9 Asylum seekers from countries once deemed unsafe but now deemed safe will be assisted to return to their home countries.

16.10 Foreign criminals will be detained after serving their sentences until deportation is arranged.

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17. INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

17.0 To help tackle the problems which contribute to asylum seeking and economic migration we support maintaining foreign aid but will drastically reform the system for allocating and monitoring the use of aid to ensure it genuinely reaches the most needy and helps to build self reliance for the future.

17.1 Foreign aid will also be dependent upon foreign recipient governments respecting human rights, democracy and practicing good governance.

17.2 Foreign Aid to rapidly developing countries/nuclear armed countries/countries with space programmes, such as India, will be phased out and recipients helped to secure assistance from their own governments.

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18. JOBS AND WELFARE

18.0 JSA for new claimants to be increased by £10 per week for the first 6 months.

18.1 JSA to be reduced by £10 per week after 12 months of unemployment, and again after 24 months of unemployment. (This rule may be suspended if employment opportunities are particularly limited.)

18.2 New claimants to JSA will be given 6 months to find the work they want, after which they will be expected to apply for ANY suitable locally available work, and their applications will be monitored to ensure compliance. Graduates and those with previous employment/professional qualifications and experience will be given longer to find the work they want. Sanctions will apply for those refusing suitable work.

18.3 The Long term unemployed (12 months plus) will be expected to join a Work Programme undertaking unpaid work for a minimum 12 hours per week in either not-for-profit organisations or on the State controlled Environmental Improvement Programme. Sanctions will apply for those refusing to participate. However, in concert with the applicant's cooperation and willingness, every effort will be made to help that job seeker ensure that any unpaid work obtained is relevant or useful to their previous experience and/ or qualifications. This may ensure that the unpaid work contributes to strengthening that individual's personal and professional development as well as providing him/ her with work experience. Claimants who do not cooperate with this policy will be allocated any work which the relevant authority deems most suitable and will face sanctions if they fail to participate in any new arranged work scheme, as per above.

18.4 Those deemed unemployable in the private sector by the Employment Service will be employed at minimum wage in State Employment within the EIP. Payment of wages will be dependent upon attendance and participation.

18.5 Activities to move able bodied recipients off long term incapacity and disability benefits will continue, with assessments carried out by independent assessors, not family doctors.

18.6 The National Minimum Wage to be increased by £1 per hour as soon as economic recovery allows, and likewise increased gradually until it becomes an effective 'living wage'. We support the NMW, as whilst there is undoubtedly dignity in working for a living there is no dignity in being exploited. Tax Credits to be phased out as the NMW increases. It is not the taxpayer's job to be subsidising employers paying extremely low wages. Most businesses can simply pass increased costs onto customers.

18.7 Where Housing Benefit recipients in social housing which is too large for their needs refuse suitable alternative housing twice, their Housing Benefit may be reduced by 10% per week for each bedroom surplus to their needs. Assessment of tenants needs will have regard to illness, disability, shared parenting, absent service personnel and children in higher education, which may require 'additional' bedrooms.

18.8 Child Benefit to be payable for a mother's first two children only, this rule will apply to any children born 12 months after its introduction, NOT children already living before this date. Currently living children will continue to receive Child Benefit. Exemptions will apply to twins, triplets etc. (We live in a country and world facing rapid population growth and diminishing resources - the state should not be incentivising population growth.)

18.9 Other Welfare Benefits payable for children born after the date in 18.8 above will be dependent upon their parent's Tax and NI Contributions. Large families that fall on hard times after a period in work will continue to be supported but making a career of having kids on benefits will no longer be an option. Children currently living will continue to receive support. (Our aim is to encourage responsible parenthood and sustainable population growth.)

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19. JUSTICE

19.0 The criminal justice system will place victims rights at the forefront of criminal justice procedure from investigation by the police right through to sentencing, with victims being kept regularly informed and allowed ample opportunity to detail the effects of the crime upon themselves and their families both before and during sentencing.

19.1 Victims will have a 'right of reply' to defence counsel's pleas in mitigation.

19.2 Sentencing will be drastically reformed to truly reflect the human cost of crime and to provide a genuine deterrent to criminals.

19.3 The courts service will face a major reform in both criminal and civil proceedings to speed up justice, reduce costs and bureaucracy and increase rights of audience to lay people and other professionals.

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20. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

20.0 Increase the importance of local government and local government elections by making county and unitary authorities responsible for appointing members of the reformed House of Lords.

20.1 Abolish flat rate councillors allowances and pay only expenses incurred.

20.2 Encourage sharing of service provision between authorities to increase efficiency and cut costs. Compel councils to offer redundant public assets to local community groups.

20.3 Reduce the number of local government managers by a third over two years.

20.4 Encourage greater use of local referenda on significant issues of local concern, including Council Tax increases.

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21. NATIONAL SECURITY

21.0 Maintain spending on Security Services to combat domestic and foreign terrorist threats.

21.1 Reduce the risk of terrorism through greater social cohesion at home, expulsion of foreign undesirables, withdrawal from Afghanistan and taking a more even handed, just and ethical approach to foreign conflicts.

22. PENSIONS AND OLDER PEOPLE

22.0 Maintain the earnings link on pensions and the 'Triple Guarantee' that pensions are raised by the higher of earnings, inflation or 2.5%.

22.1 Reform public pensions to bring them more in line with the best of private pension provision and ensure they are sustainable for the future.

22.2 Encourage greater home ownership to provide pensioners with an investment nest-egg to add to their pension provision.

22.3 Reward and encourage those who have made private provision for their retirement.

22.4 Cap individual's contributions to social care costs in old age at £30,000 and introduce state sponsored insurance and equity release schemes to help fund this.

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23. POLITICAL REFORM

23.0 Create an English Grand Committee at Westminster where legislation affecting only England is voted on only by MPs representing English constituencies. Where legislation affects England and Wales, MPs for Welsh constituencies will also take part and vote.

23.1 Create a new House of Lords where 80% of members are appointed by local councils (county and unitary authorities) for 5 year terms and 20% are appointed by an independent panel, for their expertise, for 10 year terms. The constitutional relationship between Lords and Commons (supremacy of the Commons) to be maintained. Such an approach avoids the expense of even more elections and gives greater importance to local elections.

23.2 MPs expenses to include mortgage interest payments on necessary second homes, with any capital gain on the subsequent sale of the property to be repaid to Parliament. (Paying MPs rental costs instead is taxpayer's money down the drain.)

23.3 Carry out a feasibility study on relocating Parliament into the geographical heart of the UK.

23.4 The vast majority of government departments to be relocated to the regions, thus cutting running costs, ending this effective government subsidy of London, and providing economic stimulus to the regions. In this era of modern communications there is no need for such centralisation of government in London, and current centralisation makes government vulnerable to terrorist or military attack.

23.5 All candidates for Parliament to be required to have a minimum of five years experience working in a non-political role (paid or voluntary.)

23.6 Political donations from any legal entity (individual, company, trust etc.) to be limited to £10,000 per year.

23.7 We support the continued union of the UK, but wish Scotland well if she opts for independence (and believe this to be highly risky for her security and prosperity) but we oppose any further devolution which would threaten the economic wellbeing of the other nations and regions of the UK.

23.8 At least 5 weeks notice to be given of the date of any Parliamentary election or by-election.

23.9 The deposit payable at all Parliamentary elections to be reduced to £250.

23.10 A 'None of the Above' option to be included on ballot papers at all elections to allow voters to express dissatisfaction at the political parties/candidates on offer and encourage turnout.

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24. PUBLIC SECTOR

24.0 No public sector employee will earn more than the Prime Minister and none will be allowed to engage in tax avoidance payment schemes.

24.1 No public sector executive will be allowed to earn more than ten times the salary (pro rata) of the lowest paid employee in that organisation.

24.2 Numbers of public sector managers will be reduced by one-third in the first three years of a PDP administration. Too much senior management damages service delivery.

24.3 Emphasis to be placed upon effective, quality service delivery rather than the constant change, reform and chasing the next big initiative created by too many managers.

24.4 All public services to be placed on a 'Core Purpose' footing - (ie concentrating on delivery of their core purpose services and cutting out peripheral distractions). Let teachers teach, nurses nurse and medical practitioners practice medicine.

25. SCHOOLS

25.0 Improve the quality of teaching, encourage discipline, raise standards, empower and increase respect for teachers, and close the funding and achievement gap between richest and poorest pupils by effective targeting of resources (human and financial)

25.1 Encourage parents opting for private education to consider state schools instead.

25.2 Introduce voluntary mentoring schemes for kids from disadvantaged backgrounds.

25.3 Reform of GCSE and A Level examinations to prevent grade inflation and re-emphasise core academic skills.

25.4 Mixed ability teaching to be replaced by 'setting' in state comprehensive schools. (We do not favour the return of selection at age 11, which arbitrarily condemns the majority of kids to a 2nd class education, but recognise that mixed ability teaching helps neither the most gifted nor the less academic. Through 'setting' according to ability kids have constant opportunities to improve

and nobody is written off as a failure. Such 'ongoing selection' is superior to both the 11 Plus and mixed ability teaching.

25.5 Successful state schools to be encouraged to expand and mentor weaker schools.

25.6 Pupils able to opt for vocational courses at age 14 (plus English, maths, a science, a humanities and a language to GCSE level)

25.7 Failing schools to be transformed into National Academies, allowed greater local management but subject to nationally enforced standards.

25.8 All schools to have a statement of ethos and purpose which all pupils and parents must subscribe to. Affordable school uniform to be encouraged.

25.9 No increase in the number of state funded faith schools, which risk the development of a religious apartheid in state education. Privately funded faith schools to be subject to state inspection of teaching and ethos.

25.10 School/training/apprenticeship/employment to be compulsory until age 18.

25.11 Charitable status of private schools to be reviewed to examine what 'charitable' purpose they actually serve.

25.12 Reform of welfare and ending the 'something for nothing culture' will increase the value of getting a good education and working hard at school.

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26. TAXATION

26.0 We will maintain current levels of income tax until the public finances are put on a sound footing (with current rates maintained at 20, 40 and 50%). Likewise VAT and Corporation Tax will be maintained until such time that public finances allow a reduction.

26.1 Once finances allow, it is our long term aim to reduce the top rate to 40%, the middle rate to 30%, to increase the Personal Allowance to £10,000 and index link it, and increase the earnings limit at which the middle rate kicks in to £40,000 and likewise index link it.

26.2 We remain opposed to a 'Flat Tax' on principle, and support progressive tax rates where those higher earners who can afford to pay a higher percentage of their income in tax, do so. The effect of paying a 'Flat Tax' on low and average earners would be immense, possibly the difference between being able to survive or not. By contrast, the effect on high earners would be a massive tax cut. Our approach to taxation can be summed up thus: 'Those with the broadest shoulders should bear the heavier burden.'

26.3 We remain, however, committed to keeping tax rates as low as possible whilst maintaining the public spending necessary to maintain a civilised society and securing sound public finances.

26.4 We will introduce a two year Bankers Bonus Tax at 100% to punish the greed and irresponsibility of the bankers who helped get us into the mess we are in.

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27. TRANSPORT

27.0 Maintain and improve public transport, with a commitment to encouraging its use.

27.1 Launch a major £20 billion infrastructure investment programme to take advantage of historically low interest rates, build the modern infrastructure needed for success in the 21st century, kick start a faltering economy and lessen the geographical disadvantages suffered by the regions. To include:

27.2 - dualling of the A1 between Newcastle and Edinburgh.

27.3 - a new East Coast motorway

27.4 - improvement to road/rail links in rural and coastal areas to improve economic activity.



28. UNIVERSITIES

28.0 Tuition fees to be paid for through a Graduate Tax levied at c1% on the basic rate of tax and c3% on the higher rate payable by graduates of UK universities for a finite period.

28.1 This avoids the deterrent effect of graduate debt and ensures that the richest students do not get the cheapest degrees by paying up front as they can under the current system. Fees due from graduates moving abroad will be converted into a commercially enforceable debt if such graduates do not opt to continue paying the graduate tax.

28.2 University admissions tutors will be forced by law to choose state school candidates in preference to private school candidates where their A level grades are identical. This simply and fairly reflects the greater achievement of the state school candidate in attaining those grades with fewer resources.

28.3 We need to encourage activist parents who take an interest in their children's education to opt increasingly for the state rather than private sector. The above admissions policy will encourage this. By getting such parents invested in the state school system we improve state schools and the educational chances of all kids.

28.4 Other measures will be put in place to encourage and monitor university access for students from low and average income families.

28.5 Greater emphasis will be placed on part-time vocational degree/diploma courses to equip our workforce with the skills needed in the modern world economy at lower cost to students and the taxpayer.

28.6 More stringent academic entry requirements will be introduced (although merit will continue to be given to entrants with substantial professional experience in lieu of academic qualifications such as mature students) and low level vocational degree courses will be replaced by part-time vocational college courses.

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