



**STRONG LEADERSHIP  
A CLEAR ECONOMIC PLAN  
A BRIGHTER, MORE SECURE FUTURE**

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## ***We have a plan for every stage of your life:***

### **FOR THE BEST START IN LIFE**

we will continue to increase spending on the NHS, provide 7-day a week access to your GP and deliver a truly 7-day NHS – so you know you will always have access to a free and high quality health service when you need it most.

### **FOR YOUR SCHOOL YEARS**

we will maintain the amount of money that follows each child into school, ensure there is a good primary school place available for every child and lift the cap on university places – so you have the skills you need to succeed.

### **TO SECURE YOUR FIRST JOB**

we will create 3 million new apprenticeships; take everyone earning less than £12,500 out of Income Tax altogether and pass a law to ensure we have a Tax-Free Minimum Wage in this country; and continue to create a fairer welfare system where benefits are capped to the level that makes work pay – so you are rewarded for working hard and doing the right thing.

### **AS YOU RAISE YOUR FAMILY**

we will extend the Right to Buy to Housing Association tenants, build 200,000 new Starter Homes – 20 per cent below the market price, for first-time buyers under 40 – and provide 30 hours of free childcare to working parents of three and four year-olds – so you are able to work while having the security of your own home in which to raise your family.

### **WHILE YOU GROW OLDER**

we will not raise VAT, National Insurance contributions or Income Tax but we will raise the 40p Income Tax threshold to £50,000 and take the family home out of tax by increasing the effective Inheritance Tax threshold for married couples and civil partners to £1 million – so you can keep more of your income and pass it on to future generations.

### **AND WHEN YOU RETIRE**

we will continue to increase the Basic State Pension by at least 2.5 per cent through the triple lock, give you the freedom to use your pension savings as you want and pass them on tax-free and we will cap the amount you can be charged for your residential care – so you can have the dignity and security you deserve in your old age.

***The next Conservative Government will secure a better future for you, your family and Britain.***



## Foreword

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Over the last five years, we have put our country back on the right track. Five years ago, Britain was on the brink. As the outgoing Labour Treasury Minister put it with brutal candour, ‘there is no money’. Since then, we have turned things around.

Britain is now one of the fastest growing major economies in the world. We are getting our national finances back under control. We have halved our deficit as a share of our economy. More people are in work than ever before. Britain is back on its feet, strong and growing stronger every day.

This has not happened by accident. It is the result of difficult decisions and of patiently working through our long-term economic plan. Above all, it is the product of a supreme national effort, in which everyone has made sacrifices and everyone has played their part.

It is a profound Conservative belief that our country is made great not through the action of government alone, but through the flair, the ingenuity and hard work of the British people – and so it has proved the last five years.

We can be proud of what we have achieved so far together, and especially proud that as we have taken hard decisions on public spending, we have protected the National Health Service, with 9,500 more doctors and 6,900 more nurses, and ensured generous rises in the State Pension.

Our friends and competitors overseas look at Britain, and they see a country that is putting its own house in order, a country on the rise. They see a country that believes in itself. But our national recovery remains a work in progress. It is fragile, and with the wrong decisions, it could easily be reversed.

So the central questions at this election are these: how do we maintain our economic recovery, upon which our ambitions for our country depend? And how do we make sure that the recovery benefits every one of our citizens, at every stage of their lives?

This Manifesto sets out our plan to do just that. It is a plan for a better future – for you, for your family. It is a plan for every stage of your life. For your new-born baby, there will be the world's best medical care. For your child, there will be a place at an excellent school. As you look for your first job, we are building a healthy economy that provides a good career for you with a decent income. As you look for that first home, we will make sure the Government is there to help. As you raise your family, we will help you with childcare. And as you grow older, we will ensure that you have dignity in retirement. Throughout, we will make sure that if you or your family fall ill, you will always be able to depend on our cherished National Health Service to give you the care you need.

And in an increasingly dangerous and uncertain world, we will fulfil the most basic duty of government – to defend our country and keep it safe.

But all of these things depend on a strong and growing economy. So as you consider how to vote, I hope you will ask this: which party is best placed to keep our economy strong? The team which has delivered the growing economy we have today, which created more jobs since 2010 than the rest of the European Union put together; or the party which left behind a ruined economy just five short years ago?

Now is a time to build on the progress we have made, not to put it all at risk. This Manifesto is our plan of action – our plan to take our amazing country forward. Above all, it is a plan for you.

I hope you will give it your support, so that together, we can see through the task we have begun.





# A strong economy to help you and your family

## Our commitment to you:

*Your job, your home, the mortgage you pay, the school your children go to, your local hospital, your pension – all these things depend on a strong economy. So we will carry on working through our long-term economic plan. We will:*

- *keep our economy secure by **running a surplus so that we start paying down our debts***
- ***increase the tax-free Personal Allowance to £12,500 and the 40p Income Tax threshold to £50,000***
- *commit to **no increases in VAT, National Insurance contributions or Income Tax***
- ***crack down on tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance and ensure those who can afford to pay the most do***
- *rebalance our economy, **build a Northern Powerhouse and back elected metro mayors***
- *pursue our ambition to **become the most prosperous major economy in the world by the 2030s.***

Our long-term economic plan is turning around Britain's economy. Five years ago, Britain was reeling from the chaos of Labour's Great Recession; in 2014 we were the fastest growing of all the major advanced economies – last year, we grew 75 per cent faster than Germany, three times faster than the Eurozone and seven times faster than France. Five years ago, the budget deficit was more than 10 per cent of GDP, the highest in our peacetime history, and the national debt was rising out of control; today, the deficit is half that level and debt as a share of national income will start falling this financial year.

**The fastest growing of all the major advanced economies in 2014**

Industries are coming back to life. Companies are striding into new markets. Manufacturers are returning to our shores. More tech companies are starting up here than anywhere else in Europe. We have overtaken France as the third largest car producer in Europe and there are 760,000 more businesses than in 2010 providing jobs and creating wealth across the country.

The Great Recession has given way to a Great Revival, which is creating on average 1,000 new jobs every day: more than the rest of the European Union combined. This is no accident. It is the product of hard work by people in every part of the country and it is thanks to the success of our long-term economic plan. By halving the deficit, we have helped to restore confidence to the economy. By maintaining fiscal discipline, we have helped keep mortgage rates lower than they otherwise would be. And by establishing the independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), we have ended – permanently – the ability of politicians to cook the books for political gain at the nation's expense. With inflation at a record low, the latest OBR forecasts show that living standards will be higher in 2015 than in 2010, and are set to grow strongly every year for the rest of the decade, with the average family £900 better off. It is only by securing the recovery, dealing with our debts and creating jobs that we can continue to raise living standards. That means sticking to our long-term economic plan; Britain is on the right path.

But the job is not finished. There are clouds on the international horizon. Huge challenges remain at home. We have cut the record deficit we inherited to five per cent of GDP, but that is still too high. Our trade with emerging economies is up, with exports to China more than doubled since 2009, but overall we are still too



dependent on slow-growing European markets. Business investment is rising, but we still underinvest compared to other countries. Productivity remains too low. And while prosperity is now spreading around the country, our economic growth remains uneven, too reliant on financial services.

**1,000 jobs created for every day of the Parliament since 2010**

We will finish the job we started in a balanced way. Those with the broadest shoulders have contributed the most to deficit reduction – which is why inequality has fallen, and child and pensioner poverty are down – and they will continue to do so. We will increase NHS spending every year. We will control spending, eliminate the deficit, and start to run a surplus. We will go from stuck in the red, to back in the black. By building on the foundations we have put in place, we will have a truly national recovery and be able to pursue our ambition for Britain to become the most prosperous major economy in the world by the 2030s.

If we do not stick to our long-term economic plan, we will slip back again, reversing the progress we have made in the last five years. More borrowing – and the extra debt interest that it brings – means there is less money to spend on schools and hospitals. More spending means higher taxes for hardworking people, and interest rates that are higher than they otherwise would be – punishing homeowners, hurting businesses, costing jobs.

## ***A strong economy allows us to invest in and protect our public services like the NHS and schools***

And failing to control our debt would be more than an economic failing; it would be a moral failing – leaving our children and grandchildren with debts that they could never hope to repay.

So you face a clear choice. Economic competence, with David Cameron as Prime Minister, following through

on our long-term economic plan. Or economic chaos under Labour, with higher taxes, more debt and no plan to fix our public finances, create jobs or build a more secure economy.

## **Our plan of action:**

*We will finish the job by eliminating the deficit to keep our economy secure and keep your taxes and mortgage payments down*

Our long-term economic plan reflects our values: we as a nation should not be piling up and passing on unaffordable levels of debt to the next generation. We will eliminate the deficit in a sensible and balanced way that will enable us to continue to increase spending on the NHS and cut Income Tax for 30 million working people.

Our deficit reduction plan has two phases. The first will see us continue to reduce government spending by one per cent each year in real terms for the first two full financial years of the next Parliament, the same rate as over the last five years. That means saving £1 a year in every £100 that government spends. We don't think there's a business that couldn't do that – and we don't think government, when it is spending your money, should be any different.

**We have halved the deficit as a share of our economy**

That will require a further £30 billion in fiscal consolidation over the next two years, on top of the £120 billion that we have already identified and delivered over this Parliament. We will find £13 billion from departmental savings, the same rate of reduction as in this Parliament. We will find £12 billion from welfare savings, on top of the £21 billion of savings delivered in this Parliament. And we will raise at least £5 billion from continuing to tackle tax evasion, and aggressive tax avoidance and tax planning, building on the £7 billion of annual savings we have delivered in this Parliament. This £30 billion of further consolidation is necessary to ensure that debt keeps falling as a share of GDP and to deliver a balanced

structural current budget in 2017-18, meeting the new fiscal mandate that Parliament voted on earlier this year.

Our commitment goes further than this. A balanced current budget is not enough to deliver a reliable reduction in our level of national debt, which remains far too high in a world of continuing economic challenges. International evidence and Treasury analysis shows that the only way to keep our economy secure for the future is to eliminate the deficit entirely and start running a surplus. Anything less would be to ignore the lessons of the past.

That is why, in the second phase of our deficit reduction plan starting in 2018-19, we are set to move into surplus, with the Government taking in more than it is spending for the first time in 18 years. That means we can start properly paying down our debts and reducing the scale of annual interest payments – reducing the UK's vulnerability to future shocks by fixing the roof while the sun is shining. We will achieve this by continuing to control government spending in 2018-19, no longer cutting it in real terms, but instead growing it in line with inflation.

## **To eliminate the deficit we must continue to cut out wasteful spending and make government more efficient, effective and accountable**

From 2019-20, after a surplus has been achieved, spending will grow in line with GDP. A new fundamental principle of fiscal policy, monitored by the independent OBR, will ensure that in normal economic times, when the economy is growing, the government will always run a surplus in order to reduce our national debt and keep our economy secure, with a state neither smaller than we need nor bigger than we can afford. Total government spending as a share of our national income at the end of the next Parliament is forecast to be very slightly higher than in the year 2000, the year before Labour lost all control of spending and the national debt started its longest rise for hundreds of years.

Our approach is focused on reducing wasteful spending,

making savings in welfare, and continuing to crack down on tax evasion and aggressive avoidance. This means that we can commit to no increases in VAT, Income Tax or National Insurance. Tax rises on working people would harm our economy, reduce living standards and cost jobs. Instead, as we reduce the deficit, we will cut Income Tax, as we have done over the last five years: during the next Parliament, we will increase the tax-free Personal Allowance to £12,500 and the higher rate threshold to £50,000, so you keep more of your hard-earned money.

**The richest are paying a greater share of income tax than in any of Labour's 13 years**

*We will continue to build a stronger, safer and more secure banking system that serves its customers and provides businesses with the finance they need to grow and create jobs*

We will make sure our financial services industry is the best regulated in the world with our new system of supervision led by the independent Bank of England. Our new Financial Policy Committee will monitor and control the growth of indebtedness and imbalances across the whole economy – a vital task that was totally ignored in the run up to the financial crisis. Our tough new Financial Conduct Authority will protect consumers and ensure that financial markets work for the benefit of the whole economy. To protect hardworking taxpayers from future banking crashes, we will finish the process of ring-fencing banks' high street branches from their investment arms by 2019 at the latest. In order to ensure that new pay structures for bankers rebuild trust and reduce short-termism, we will ensure that Britain continues to have the toughest regime of bonus deferral and clawback of any financial centre. We will continue to sell the Government's stakes in the bailed-out banks and building societies in order to deliver value for money for taxpayers and support the economy. Hardworking taxpayers supported the banks during the financial crisis and so the banks should in turn support them during the recovery – that is why we will keep the bank levy in place and restrict established banks' ability to pay less tax by offsetting their profits against past losses.



### *We will make the banks work for you*

Our plan is to ensure banks help secure our recovery and back businesses to create jobs and growth in our economy. We capped payday lenders, made it easier for you to switch your bank account and will continue to support the credit union movement in making financial services more accessible. We will continue the successful Funding for Lending scheme into 2016. We will help new and existing challenger banks to inject fresh competition into the market for personal current accounts, mortgages and business loans, including through the British Business Bank, while backing the financial technology revolution. We will improve our support for investment into start-ups and roll-out our innovative Help to Grow scheme, which will plug a £1 billion finance gap for firms that are looking to expand, invest and take on new employees.

### *We will continue to lead the world on tax and transparency*

Tackling tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance and tax planning is an important part of our long-term economic plan. We will increase the annual tax charges paid by those with non-domiciled status, ensuring that they make a fair contribution to reducing the deficit, and continue to tackle abuses of this status. We will lead international efforts to ensure global companies pay their fair share in tax, as David Cameron did at the G8 Summit in Northern Ireland in 2013, which secured significant international progress on fairer tax rules and full transparency over who really owns companies. We will push for all countries to sign up to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative; review the implementation of the new international country-by-country tax reporting rules and consider the case for making this information publicly available on a multilateral basis. We will ensure developing countries have full access to global automatic tax information exchange systems and continue to build the capacity of tax authorities in developing countries. We are also making it a crime if companies fail to put in place measures to stop economic crime, such as tax evasion, in

***We are fixing the economy so that everyone feels the benefit***

their organisations and making sure that the penalties are large enough to punish and deter.

### *We will rebalance our economy and build a Northern Powerhouse*

We are committed to a truly national recovery, benefiting all parts of our country. We have devolved powers to Scotland and Wales, and set out long-term economic plans to raise the growth rate of all parts of England, bringing areas which have grown more slowly up to at least the national average. Over the last year, the North grew faster than the South. By connecting up the North with modern transport links, we will enable its great cities and towns to pool their strengths. We will invest a record £13 billion in transport for the North. We will electrify the main rail routes, build the Northern Hub, and provide new trains for the North. We will upgrade the A1, M62, M1 and A555 link road. And that is on top of our £50 billion commitment to build High Speed 2 – the new North-South railway linking up London with the West Midlands, Leeds and Manchester – and develop High Speed 3 to join up the North. We will back scientific and technical strengths by creating new institutions such as Health North; the Royce Institute for Advanced Materials in Manchester; Leeds, Liverpool and Sheffield; the National Centre for Ageing Science and Innovation in Newcastle; the Cognitive Computing centre at Daresbury; and by making investments in energy research in Blackpool, Cumbria and Thornton.

### *We will back new jobs in the South West*

To help attract growth and new businesses we will improve connections to the South West with major investment in the M5, A358, A30 and A303, and the electrification of the Great Western Main Line – bringing new fast trains on the route. We will invest to boost tourism in the South West and ensure the world-class defence assets and cyber-security industries of the South West benefit the local economy.

Britain's exports are growing fastest in the North East and our employment fastest in the North West



*We will make the Midlands an engine of growth*

We will back business by investing a record £5.2 billion in better transport, upgrading the M1 and M6, and electrifying the Midland Main Line from St Pancras to Sheffield – putting the Midlands at the centre of a modern, inter-connected transport network for the UK. We will back the Midlands’ strength in advanced manufacturing, engineering and science with major projects such as the Energy Research Accelerator and support for innovation in the motor industry.

*We will properly connect the East of England and back innovation*

We will improve rail connections to East Anglia, delivering ‘Norwich in 90 minutes’ and ‘Ipswich in 60 minutes’ and upgrade key roads like the A11 and A47. We will support the creation of new jobs by backing the East’s great strengths – agri-tech, high-tech businesses around Cambridge, and energy businesses at Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft.

*We support policies that grow the economy as a whole, generating new jobs and higher wages for everybody**We will devolve powers and budgets to boost local growth in England*

We will devolve far-reaching powers over economic development, transport and social care to large cities which choose to have elected mayors. We will legislate to deliver the historic deal for Greater Manchester, which will devolve powers and budgets and lead to the creation of a directly elected Mayor for Greater Manchester. In Cambridgeshire, Greater Manchester and Cheshire East, we will pilot allowing local councils to retain 100 per cent of growth in business rates, so they reap the benefit of decisions that boost growth locally. We will devolve further powers over skills spending and planning to the Mayor of London. And we will deliver more bespoke Growth Deals with local councils, where locally supported, and back Local Enterprise Partnerships to promote jobs and growth.

## Better roads, trains and modern communications

### Our commitment to you:

*You depend on infrastructure at every stage of your life: to go to school, to go to work, to enable businesses to grow and create jobs for your children and grandchildren. We have a plan of action that will improve our roads, railways, airports and internet connections. We will:*

- **invest in infrastructure** to attract businesses and good jobs across the whole of the UK
- **make your life easier, with more and faster trains, more roads and cycle routes**
- **keep commuter rail fares frozen in real terms for the whole of the next Parliament**
- **roll out universal broadband and better mobile phone connections, to ensure everyone is part of the digital economy.**

Under Labour, road and rail were starved of resources, while too many people were stuck on the wrong side of the digital divide. This meant packed trains, potholes, patchy broadband coverage – businesses held back and cities left behind. Turning these problems around takes time.

**Improving our trains, roads and broadband helps local businesses grow and create more jobs and opportunities**

But because we have made savings elsewhere, we have been able to make significant investments in infrastructure. We will commit, alongside running a surplus, to increase our capital spending – investment in infrastructure – at least in line with our national income. We have set out a plan to invest over £100 billion in our infrastructure over the next Parliament.

This will fund the biggest investment in rail since Victorian times, and the most extensive improvements to our roads since the 1970s. And it will give us the

**We are investing over £2 billion electrifying our railways**

most comprehensive and cheapest superfast broadband coverage of any major European country.

### Our plan of action:

*We will spend more on infrastructure, to improve your quality of life*

Overall public investment will be higher on average over this decade, as a percentage of GDP, than under the whole period of the last Labour Government. We will deliver on our National Infrastructure Plan and respond to the Airports Commission's final report.

#### *We will transform our railway network*

We will invest £38 billion in our railway network in the five years to 2019. Electrification of the railways is a key part of our investment programme, with work already underway across the North, the Midlands, and South Wales; there are plans to go further in the rest of the country, including East Anglia and the South West. In addition to rolling out our national high-speed rail network, with High Speed 2 and High Speed 3, we will complete the construction of the new east-west Crossrail across Greater London, and push forward with plans for Crossrail 2, a new rail route running through London and connecting Surrey and Hertfordshire. We will support a fairer deal for taxpayers and commuters: we will keep commuter rail fares frozen in real terms for the whole of the next Parliament – regulated fares will only be

able to rise by Retail Price Inflation, and train operating companies will not have any flexibility to raise ticket prices above this. We will also introduce smart ticketing and part-time season tickets and require train companies to improve compensation arrangements for passengers when trains are more than a few minutes late. We are investing millions of pounds in fitting out trains with new wi-fi equipment and improving mobile phone signals, which will benefit passengers on trains across England and Wales.

### *We will support motorists and invest in our roads, to save you time and money*

We abolished Labour's fuel duty escalator, and instead have frozen fuel duty, delivering the longest duty freeze in 20 years. We will invest £15 billion in roads. This will include over £6 billion in the northern road network, with the dualling and widening of the A1 north of Newcastle and the first new trans-Pennine road capacity in over 40 years. We will take action to tackle some of the most notorious and longstanding problems on our road network, including improvements to the A303, A47 and A27. We will add 1,300 extra lane miles to our roads, improve over 60 problem junctions, and continue to provide enough funding to fix around 18 million potholes nationwide between 2015 and 2021.

### *We will make motoring greener and promote cycling, to protect your environment*

Our aim is for almost every car and van to be a zero emission vehicle by 2050 – and we will invest £500 million over the next five years to achieve it. We want to double the number of journeys made by bicycle and will invest over £200 million to make cycling safer, so we reduce the number of cyclists and other road users killed or injured on our roads every year.

**We are investing £790 million extending superfast broadband to rural areas – with 2 million UK premises already connected and 40,000 being upgraded every week**

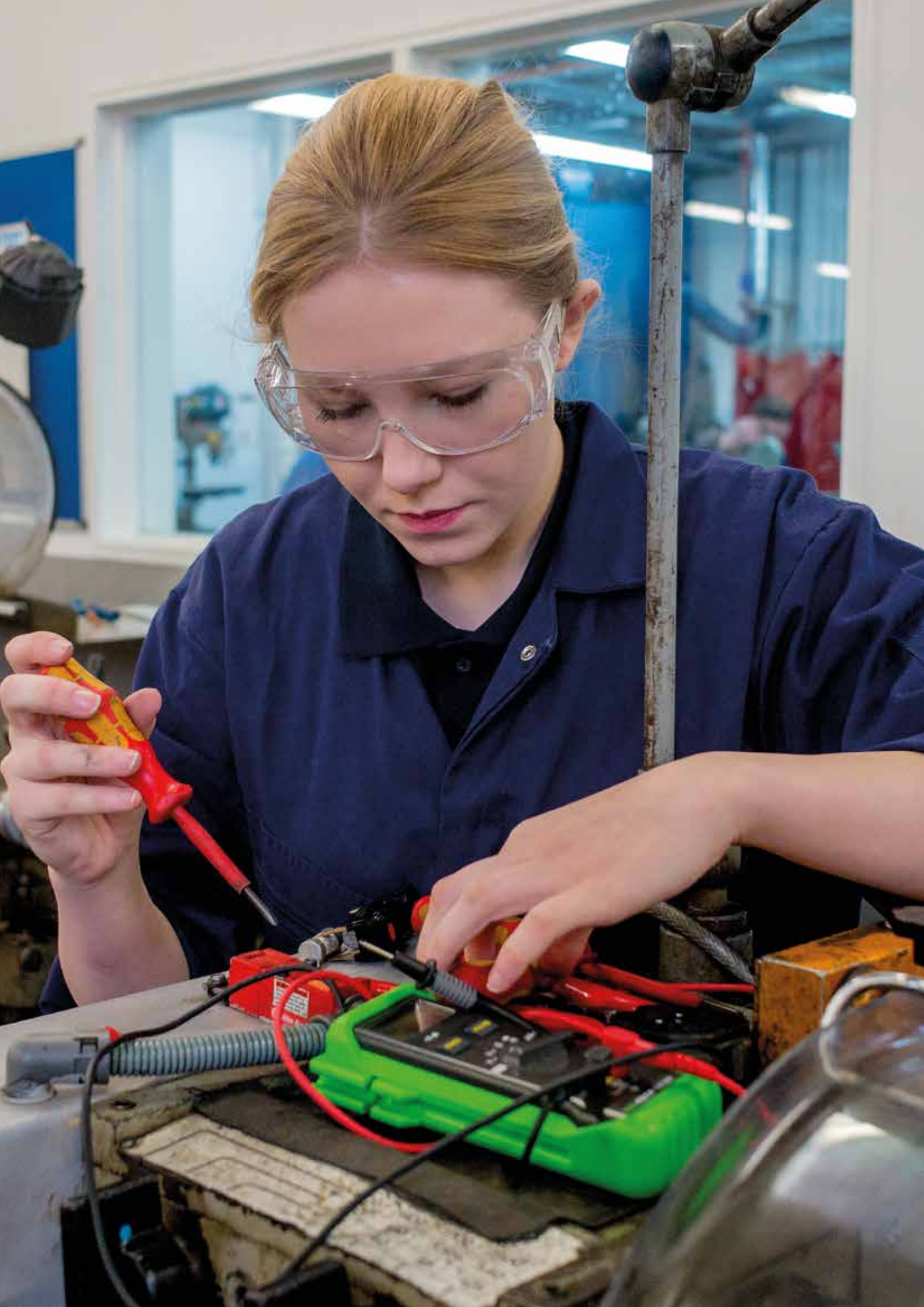
### *We will deliver faster internet, to help you work and communicate more easily*

We will secure the delivery of superfast broadband in urban and rural areas to provide coverage to 95 per cent of the UK by the end of 2017, and we will ensure no one is left behind by subsidising the cost of installing superfast capable satellite services in the very hardest to reach areas. We will also release more spectrum from public sector use to allow greater private sector access. And we have set an ambition that ultrafast broadband should be available to nearly all UK premises as soon as practicable.

### *We will boost mobile coverage, so you can stay connected*

We will hold the mobile operators to their new legally binding agreement to ensure that 90 per cent of the UK landmass will have voice and SMS coverage by 2017. We will continue to invest in mobile infrastructure to deliver coverage for voice calls and text messages for the final 0.3 – 0.4 per cent of UK premises that do not currently have it. We will ensure that Britain seizes the chance to be a world leader in the development of 5G, playing a key role in defining industry standards.





## Jobs for all

### Our commitment to you:

*Whatever stage of life you are at – whether you're looking for your first job out of school, or coming to the end of your career – we will work to help you enjoy the satisfaction and rewards of a decent job. We will:*

- *help businesses to **create two million new jobs**, so we achieve full employment*
- *give businesses **the most competitive taxes of any major economy***
- *back small firms with **a major business rates review***
- *support **three million new apprenticeships**, so young people acquire the skills to succeed*

If you want to live in the most vibrant and dynamic country in the world, this election matters. Only the Conservatives have the vision, the optimism, the ambition and the discipline to transform Britain. That's because we know that a decent job is the best weapon against poverty and the best way to provide security for families.

the next Parliament. We will abolish long-term youth unemployment, and make sure that all young people are either earning or learning. And we will make our economy more inclusive, by removing barriers that stop women and disabled people from participating in our workforce.

Britain has created more jobs than the rest of the EU put together since 2010

*A job is the best way to provide security for families*

Thanks to the success of our long-term economic plan, Britain is creating more jobs than the 27 other countries of the European Union put together. That means more people with the security of a regular pay packet. Over the past five years, 1.9 million new jobs have been created; 1,000 jobs for every single day that we have been in government.

To achieve this, we will back British businesses: cutting red tape, lowering taxes on jobs and enterprise, getting young people into work, boosting apprenticeships and investing in science and technology. With the Conservatives, Britain will be the best place in Europe to innovate, patent new ideas and set up and expand a business. We aim to be number one in Europe and in the top five worldwide in the World Bank's Doing Business rankings by 2020 and to lead Europe in attracting foreign investment.

This represents a transformation in many people's lives; giving families more security; boosting the self-esteem of young people taken on; and providing hope for those who have been unemployed for years.

Backing business also means helping our farmers and our rural communities. Neglected for 13 years under Labour, we have started the process of championing and connecting up the countryside. In the coming years, we will go further, helping our farmers, supporting British food around the world and opening up new export markets.

But we need to go further. We have set out the bold aim of achieving full employment, with the highest employment rate of any major economy. We want Britain to be the best place in the world to start a business and will create another two million jobs over

This is all at risk if the Labour Party forms the government. Their policies to spend more, borrow more and tax more would be catastrophic for Britain's businesses – and for all the families thrown back into the despair of joblessness and financial uncertainty.

## ***Our plan will help to generate jobs and higher wages for everybody***

### **Our plan of action:**

*We will boost apprenticeships and help you secure a good job*

We have already delivered 2.2 million new apprenticeships over the last five years. Over the next five years, we will deliver three million more and ensure they deliver the skills employers need. We aim to achieve full employment in the UK, with the highest employment rate in the G7, and we will help businesses create two million jobs over the Parliament. We have abolished the jobs tax – employers' National Insurance contributions (NICs) – for the under 21s and next year we will do the same for young apprentices under 25. We will continue to help smaller businesses take on new workers through the Employment Allowance, which frees businesses from the first £2,000 of employers' NICs so that a third of employers pay no jobs tax.

**We will support business to keep creating 1,000 jobs a day over the next five years**

*We will aim to abolish long-term youth unemployment*

Our economic plan has helped deliver sharp falls in long-term youth unemployment, taking the numbers of 16–18 year-olds not in education, employment or training to historic lows. We will provide support to those 16–17 year-olds still not in education, employment or training and to

those who risk becoming so. Jobcentre Plus advisers will work with schools and colleges to supplement careers advice and provide routes into work experience and apprenticeships. But it is not fair – on taxpayers, or on young people themselves – that 18-21 year-olds with no work experience should slip straight into a life on benefits without first contributing to their community. So we will introduce tougher Day One Work Requirements for young people claiming out-of-work benefits. We will replace the Jobseeker's Allowance for 18-21 year-olds with a Youth Allowance that will be time-limited to six months, after which young people will have to take an apprenticeship, a traineeship or do daily community work for their benefits. It is also not fair that taxpayers should have to pay for 18-21 year-olds on Jobseeker's Allowance to claim Housing Benefit in order to leave home. So we will ensure that they no longer have an automatic entitlement to Housing Benefit.

*We will reward entrepreneurship*

To support jobs, we cut Corporation Tax from 28 to 20 per cent over the course of the Parliament, reduced National Insurance bills and capped the rise in business rates. We have extended 100 per cent Small Business Rate Relief and are providing extra support for high street shops by increasing the business rates retail discount to £1,500. In the next Parliament, we want to maintain the most competitive business tax regime in the G20, and oppose Labour's plans to increase Corporation Tax. We will conduct a major review into business rates by the end of 2015 to ensure that from 2017 they properly reflect the structure of our modern economy and provide clearer billing, better information sharing and a more efficient appeal system.

*We will protect you from disruptive and undemocratic strike action*

Strikes should only ever be the result of a clear, positive decision based on a ballot in which at least half the workforce has voted. This turnout threshold will be an important and fair step to rebalance the interests of employers, employees, the public and the rights of trade unions. We will, in addition, tackle the disproportionate impact of strikes in essential public services by introducing a tougher threshold in health, education, fire and transport. Industrial action in these essential services would require the support of at least 40 per cent of all those entitled to take part in strike ballots – as well as a majority of

## Britain has the most competitive business tax regime in the G20 – and we want to keep it that way

those who actually turn out to vote. We will also repeal nonsensical restrictions banning employers from hiring agency staff to provide essential cover during strikes; and ensure strikes cannot be called on the basis of ballots conducted years before. We will tackle intimidation of non-striking workers; legislate to ensure trade unions use a transparent opt-in process for union subscriptions; tighten the rules around taxpayer-funded paid ‘facility time’ for union representatives; and reform the role of the Certification Officer.

### *We will cut red tape, boost start-ups and small businesses*

This Government was the first in post-war history to reduce the burden of regulation. We will cut a further £10 billion of red tape over the next Parliament through our Red Tape Challenge and our One-In-Two-Out rule. This will support our aim to make Britain the best place in Europe, and one of the top five worldwide, to do business by 2020. We will also treble our successful Start Up Loans programme during the next Parliament so that 75,000 entrepreneurs get the chance to borrow money to set up their own business. We will raise the target for SMEs’ share of central government procurement to one-third, strengthen the Prompt Payment Code and ensure that all major government suppliers sign up. We have already helped small businesses by increasing the Annual Investment Allowance, reducing the burden of employment law through our successful tribunal reforms and supporting 27,000 new business mentors. We will go further by establishing a new Small Business Conciliation service to mediate in disputes, especially over late payment.

The gender pay gap is down to a record low – and there are more women on FTSE 100 boards than ever before

The creation of the Office of Tax Simplification (OTS) in 2010 has resulted in many improvements to the UK tax system. We will establish the OTS on a permanent basis and expand its role and capacity. We will boost our support for first-time exporters and back the GREAT campaign, so we achieve our goal of having 100,000 more UK companies exporting in 2020 than in 2010 and reach our target of £1 trillion in exports. And we will set a new, significantly higher, permanent level for the Annual Investment Allowance.

### *We will fight for equal opportunity*

Last year alone, 140,000 disabled people found work. But the jobless rate for this group remains too high and, as part of our objective to achieve full employment, we will aim to halve the disability employment gap: we will transform policy, practice and public attitudes, so that hundreds of thousands more disabled people who can and want to be in work find employment. We now have more women-led businesses than ever before, more women in work than ever before and more women on FTSE 100 boards than ever before. We want to see full, genuine gender equality. The gender pay gap is the lowest on record, but we want to reduce it further and will push business to do so: we will require companies with more than 250 employees to publish the difference between the average pay of their male and female employees. Under Labour, women

## *Our aim is to make Britain the best place to do business in Europe*

accounted for only one in eight FTSE 100 board members. They represent a quarter of board members today and we want to see this rise further in the next Parliament. We also want to increase the proportion of public appointments going to women in the next Parliament, as well as the number of female MPs.

### *We will back you at work*

Now that the economy is growing strongly again, we have seen the first real-terms increase in the National Minimum Wage since Labour’s Great Recession began. We strongly support the National Minimum Wage and want to see further real-terms increases in the next Parliament. We



accept the recommendations of the Low Pay Commission that the National Minimum Wage should rise to £6.70 this autumn, on course for a Minimum Wage that will be over £8 by the end of the decade. We also support the Living Wage and will continue to encourage businesses and other organisations to pay it whenever they can afford it. We will also take further steps to eradicate abuses of workers, such as non-payment of the Minimum Wage, exclusivity in zero-hours contracts and exploitation of migrant workers.

### *We will continue to invest in science, back our industrial strategies and make Britain the technology centre of Europe*

Great science is worthwhile in its own right and yields enormous practical benefits too – curing diseases, driving technological innovation, promoting business investment and informing public policy for the better. We ring-fenced the science budget by making difficult choices to reduce spending in other areas. Now we will invest new capital on a record scale – £6.9 billion in the UK's research infrastructure up to 2021 – which will mean new equipment, new laboratories and new research institutes. This long-term commitment includes £2.9 billion for a Grand Challenges Fund, which will allow us to invest in major research facilities of national significance, such as the new Alan Turing Institute, and projects such as the Polar Research Ship and Square Kilometre Array. We have boosted research and development tax credits and we will continue to support our network of University Enterprise Zones, ensuring that Britain's world-beating universities are able to make money from the technology they develop. We will support our modern industrial strategies, such as our successful Life Sciences strategy, to help people compete and win in the intense global race for high value, high knowledge jobs. We will work with the Automotive Council in support of our resurgent car industry and direct further resources towards the Eight Great Technologies – among them robotics and nanotechnology – where Britain is set to be a global leader. We have delivered a network of catapult centres – R&D hubs in the technologies of the future – and we will create more to ensure that we have a bold and

Inequality is down from the record high it reached under Labour

comprehensive offer in place for Britain's researchers and innovators.

### *We will support the rural economy and strengthen local communities*

We have the land, the technology, and the entrepreneurial flair to enable us to make the most of the economic potential of our rural areas. We will provide rural Britain with near universal superfast broadband by the end of the next Parliament and secure the future of 3,000 rural Post Offices. We know how important it is to preserve vital community assets such as pubs, town halls and sports facilities, so we will strengthen the Community Right to Bid that we created. We will extend the length of time communities have to purchase these assets, and require owners to set a clear 'reserve' price for the community to aim for when bidding. We will set up a Pub Loan Fund to enable community groups to obtain small loans to pay for feasibility work, lawyers' fees, or materials for refurbishment, where they have bid to run the pub as part of our reforms to the Community Asset Register.

### *We will champion our farmers and food producers*

We will set out a long-term vision for the future of British farming, working with industry to develop a 25 year plan to grow more, buy more and sell more British food. We will allow farmers to smooth their profits for tax purposes over five years, up from the current two years, to counter income volatility. We will treble the number of apprenticeships in food, farming and agri-tech, as part of our plan to secure three million more apprenticeships. We will support a science-led approach on GM crops and pesticides and implement our 25-year strategy to eradicate bovine TB. We will liberate farmers from red tape by coordinating all visits through a single Farm Inspection Taskforce, which will involve farmers themselves and use data from existing industry schemes, such as Red Tractor. We will push for further reform of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy. We will promote British food abroad by setting up a Great British Food Unit to help trademark and promote local foods around the world and back British food at home, by guaranteeing that all central government departments purchase food to British standards of production by the end of the Parliament. We will also help consumers to buy British by pushing for country of origin labelling in Europe, particularly for dairy products, following on from



our success with beef, lamb, pork and poultry. And we will champion our new Groceries Code Adjudicator, so farmers receive a fair deal from the supermarkets.

### *We will support our fishing and coastal communities*

We will defend our hard-won Common Fisheries Policy reforms, which include ending the scandalous practice of discarding perfectly edible fish and reforming the quota system so that all at-risk species, including cod, plaice, haddock and seabass, will be fished sustainably by the end of the next Parliament. We will continue to devolve the

management of North Sea fisheries to local communities, and rebalance the UK's inland water quotas to smaller, specific locally-based fishing communities.

### *We will support countryside pursuits*

We will protect hunting, shooting and fishing, for all the benefits to individuals, the environment and the rural economy that these activities bring. A Conservative Government will give Parliament the opportunity to repeal the Hunting Act on a free vote, with a government bill in government time.





# Cutting your taxes and building a fairer welfare system

## Our commitment to you:

*Our goal is a country that not only rewards those who work hard and do the right thing, but gives everyone – no matter their background – the chance to fulfil their potential. Achieving this means seeing through our major reforms of tax and welfare. We will:*

- **cut income tax for 30 million people**, taking everyone who earns less than £12,500 out of Income Tax altogether
- **pass a new law so that nobody working 30 hours on the Minimum Wage pays Income Tax on what they earn**
- **back aspiration by raising the 40p tax threshold** – so that no one earning less than £50,000 pays it
- **cap overall welfare spending**, lower the amount of benefits that any household can receive to £23,000 and continue to roll out Universal Credit, to make work pay
- **bring in tax-free childcare to support parents back into work**, and give working parents of 3 and 4-year-olds 30 hours of free childcare a week.

Under Labour, those who worked hard found more and more of their earnings taken away in tax to support a welfare system that allowed, and even encouraged, people to choose benefits when they could be earning a living. This sent out terrible signals: if you did the right thing, you were penalised – and if you did the wrong thing, you were rewarded, with the unfairness of it all infuriating hardworking people.

**We have cut Income Tax for over 26 million people – and taken over 3 million people out of Income Tax altogether**

Over the last five years, we have cut people's taxes wherever possible. We have raised the tax-free Personal Allowance to £10,600 from £6,475: over 26 million people are now keeping more of their hard-earned money and 3 million of the lowest paid are paying no

Income Tax at all. We believe that cutting people's taxes is the right thing to do – not only because it is your money, but also because cutting the taxes of the lowest paid and helping them stand on their own two feet is the most effective poverty-tackling measure there is.

Real fairness means that where people really cannot work, they must be supported – but where they are able to work, they should. We have made long overdue changes to our welfare system. We have capped benefits so no household can take more in out-of-work benefits than the average household earns by going out to work. We have begun to introduce Universal Credit – a way to simplify benefits into a new single payment – so that work always pays. We are reassessing those on incapacity benefits so that help goes to those who really need it. The days of something for nothing are over – and all this has helped to reduce by 900,000 the number of people living in workless households.

In the next Parliament, we will continue to reward hard work: raising the tax-free Personal Allowance so that those working 30 hours on the Minimum Wage pay



## *The goal of welfare reform should be to reward hard work and protect the vulnerable*

no Income Tax at all and taking hardworking people out of a 40p higher rate tax band originally meant to capture only the wealthy. And we will see through our welfare reforms, lowering the benefit cap and rolling out Universal Credit, to make the system fairer and reward hard work.

### **Our plan of action:**

#### *We will reward work*

A Conservative Government will not increase the rates of VAT, Income Tax or National Insurance in the next Parliament. Instead, we will ease the burden of taxation by raising the tax-free Personal Allowance – the amount you can earn before you start paying tax – to £12,500. This will cut Income Tax for 30 million people and take everyone who earns less than £12,500 out of Income Tax altogether. That means by the end of the decade, one million more people on the lowest wages will be lifted out of Income Tax, and people who work for 30 hours a week on the increased National Minimum Wage will no longer pay any Income Tax at all. We will pass a new law so that the Personal Allowance automatically rises in line with the National Minimum Wage. The new Tax Free Minimum Wage law will be applied from the first Budget after the General Election. The change will update the 1977 'Rooker-Wise' amendment which forced governments to uprate tax thresholds in line with inflation, meaning the Personal Allowance will now increase more quickly.

**We will cut Income Tax for 30 million people – so that hard work is always rewarded**

#### *We will back your ambition*

The 40p tax rate was only supposed to be paid by the best-off people in our country. But in the past couple of decades, far too many have been dragged into it. We have already announced an above-inflation increase in the threshold next year. Now we will raise the 40p tax threshold much further, so that no one earning less than £50,000 pays the higher rate of Income Tax. The 800,000 people earning between £42,385 and £50,000 will no longer pay the 40p rate of tax.

#### *We will support you as you raise your family*

We will support you, whether you choose to go out to work or stay at home to raise your children. We will back the institution of marriage in our society, enabling married couples to transfer £1,060 of their tax-free income to their husband or wife, where the highest earner is a basic rate taxpayer. This applies to civil partnerships too, and the transferable amount will always rise at least in line with the Personal Allowance. And we will help families stay together and handle the stresses of modern life by continuing to invest at least £7.5 million a year in relationship support.

#### *We will bring in tax-free childcare to help parents return to work, and give working parents of three and four year-olds 30 hours of free childcare a week*

We have already legislated to introduce tax-free childcare in the next Parliament – worth up to £2,000 per child per year – to help parents who want to work. We introduced 15 hours a week of free childcare for all three and four-year olds and the most deprived two-year-olds. And because working families with children under school age face particularly high childcare costs, in the next Parliament we will give families where all parents are working an entitlement to 30 hours of free childcare for their three and four year-olds.

#### *We will cap the UK's overall welfare spending, to save you money*

We will keep a check on the growth of welfare spending, enabling us to provide a system that is fair to those who need it, and fair to those who pay for it too. Our overall welfare cap will limit the amount that government

## *A welfare system that is fair to those who need it, and fair to those who pay for it too: stopping benefit cheats and ending welfare abuse*

can spend on certain social security benefits in the five years from 2015-16. We will freeze working age benefits for two years from April 2016, with exemptions for disability and pensioner benefits – as at present – as well as maternity allowance, statutory maternity pay, statutory paternity pay, statutory adoption pay and statutory sick pay. We will deliver Universal Credit, in order to provide the right incentives for people to work; target support at those who need it most; reduce fraud and error; and streamline administration of the welfare system. We will work to eliminate child poverty and introduce better measures to drive real change

**We will lower the benefit cap from £26,000 to £23,000 to reward work**

in children's lives, by recognising the root causes of poverty: entrenched worklessness, family breakdown, problem debt, and drug and alcohol dependency.

### *We will reduce the household benefit cap to make the system fairer*

We will lower the maximum amount that a single household can claim in benefits each year from £26,000 to £23,000, so we reward work. We will continue to have exemptions from the cap for those receiving Disability Living Allowance or the Personal Independence Payment.

### *We will help you back into work if you have a long-term yet treatable condition*

We will make sure the hardest to help receive the support they need for a fulfilling life. We will review how best to support those suffering from long-term yet treatable conditions, such as drug or alcohol addiction, or obesity, back into work. People who might benefit from treatment should get the medical help they need so they can return to work. If they refuse a recommended treatment, we will review whether their benefits should be reduced. We will also provide significant new support for mental health, benefiting thousands of people claiming out-of-work benefits or being supported by Fit for Work.

## Controlled immigration that benefits Britain

### Our commitment to you:

*Our plan to control immigration will put you, your family and the British people first. We will reduce the number of people coming to our country with tough new welfare conditions and robust enforcement. We will:*

- *keep our ambition of delivering **annual net migration in the tens of thousands, not the hundreds of thousands***
- ***control migration from the European Union, by reforming welfare rules***
- ***clamp down on illegal immigration and abuse of the Minimum Wage***
- ***enhance our border security and strengthen the enforcement of immigration rules***
- *develop a fund to **ease pressure on local areas and public services.***

Conservatives believe in controlled immigration, not mass immigration. Immigration brings real benefits to Britain – to our economy, our culture and our national life. We will always be a party that is open, outward-looking and welcoming to people from all around the world. We also know that immigration must be controlled. When immigration is out of control, it puts pressure on schools, hospitals and transport; and it can cause social pressures if communities find it hard to integrate.

**We must work to control immigration and put Britain first**

Between 1997 and 2009, under the last Labour Government, we had the largest influx of people Britain had ever seen. Their open borders policy, combined with their failure to reform welfare, meant that for years over 90 percent of employment growth in this country was accounted for by foreign nationals – even though there were 1.4 million people who spent most of the 2000s living on out-of-work benefits. For the past five years, we have been working to turn around the situation we inherited.

Since 2010, we have stripped more than 850 bogus

colleges of their rights to sponsor foreign students; installed proper exit checks at our borders; cracked down on illegal working and sham marriages; made it harder for people to live in the UK illegally, by restricting their access to bank accounts, driving licences and private housing; and reduced the number of appeal routes to stop people clogging up our courts with spurious attempts to remain in the country. All of this has made a difference. Immigration from outside the EU has come down since 2010.

**Non-EU migration cut by 13 per cent – and economic migration from outside the EU capped**

We have seen many more people from the EU coming to Britain than originally anticipated, principally because our economy has been growing so much more rapidly and creating more jobs than other EU countries. As a result, our action has not been enough to cut annual net migration to the tens of thousands. That ambition remains the right one. But it is clearly going to take more time, more work and more difficult long-term decisions to achieve. Continuing this vital work will be our priority over the next five years.

We will negotiate new rules with the EU, so that people

will have to be earning here for a number of years before they can claim benefits, including the tax credits that top up low wages. Instead of something-for-nothing, we will build a system based on the principle of something-for-something. We will then put these changes to the British people in a straight in-out referendum on our membership of the European Union by the end of 2017. At the same time, we will continue to strengthen our borders, improve the enforcement of our immigration laws and act to make sure people leave at the end of their visas. Across the spectrum, from the student route to the family and work routes, we will build a system that truly puts you, your family and the British people first.

## Our plan of action:

### *We will regain control of EU migration by reforming welfare rules*

Changes to welfare to cut EU migration will be an absolute requirement in the renegotiation. We have already banned housing benefit for EU jobseekers, and restricted other benefits, including Jobseeker's Allowance. We will insist that EU migrants who want to claim tax credits and child benefit must live here and contribute to our country for a minimum of four years. This will reduce the financial incentive for lower-paid, lower-skilled workers to come to Britain. We will introduce a new residency requirement for social housing, so that EU migrants cannot even be considered for a council house unless they have been living in an area for at least four years. If an EU migrant's child is living abroad, then they should receive no child benefit or child tax credit, no matter how long they have worked in the UK and no matter how much tax they have paid. To reduce the numbers of EU migrants coming to Britain, we will end the ability of EU jobseekers to claim any job-seeking benefits at all. And if jobseekers have not found a job within six months, they will be required to leave.

**Tougher tests for migrants before they can claim benefits**

### *We will tackle criminality and abuse of free movement*

We will negotiate with the EU to introduce stronger powers to deport criminals and stop them coming back, and tougher and longer re-entry bans for all those who abuse free movement. We want to toughen requirements for non-EU spouses to join EU citizens, including with an income threshold and English language test. And when new countries are admitted to the EU in future, we will insist that free movement cannot apply to those new members until their economies have converged much more closely with existing Member States.

### *We will continue to cut immigration from outside the EU*

We have already capped the level of skilled economic migration from outside the EU. We will maintain our cap at 20,700 during the next Parliament. This will ensure that we only grant visas to those who have the skills we really need in our economy. We will reform the student visa system with new measures to tackle abuse and reduce the numbers of students overstaying once their visas expire. Our action will include clamping down on the number of so-called 'satellite campuses' opened in London by universities located elsewhere in the UK, and reviewing the highly trusted sponsor system for student visas. And as the introduction of exit checks will allow us to place more responsibility on visa sponsors for migrants who overstay, we will introduce targeted sanctions for those colleges or businesses that fail to ensure that migrants comply with the terms of their visa.

### *We will strengthen the enforcement of immigration rules*

We have introduced a 'deport first, appeal later' rule for foreign national offenders. We will now remove even more illegal immigrants by extending this rule to all immigration appeals and judicial reviews, including where a so-called right to family life is involved, apart from asylum claims. We will also implement a new removals strategy to take away opportunities for spurious legal challenge and opportunities to abscond. We will introduce satellite tracking for every foreign national offender subject to an outstanding deportation order or deportation proceedings. And we will implement the

requirement for all landlords to check the immigration status of their tenants.

### *We will tackle people trafficking and exploitation*

We have already re-introduced a proper system of exit checks across the country, passed a Modern Slavery Act that will protect people from exploitation, and quadrupled the fines for unscrupulous employers who undercut the Minimum Wage. Now we will introduce tougher labour market regulation to tackle illegal working and exploitation. To crack down further on illegal working, we will harness data from multiple agencies, including Exit Checks data, to identify illegal immigrants and businesses that employ illegal workers. And to incentivise tougher action on employers who do not pay the minimum wage, we will allow inspection teams to reinvest more of the money raised by fines levied on employers.

### *We will ease pressure on public services and your local community*

We are taking unprecedented action to tackle health tourism and will recover up to £500 million from migrants who use the NHS by the middle of the next Parliament. To help communities experiencing high and unexpected volumes of immigration, we will introduce

a new Controlling Migration Fund to ease pressures on services and to pay for additional immigration enforcement. To prevent sectors becoming partially or wholly reliant on foreign workers, we will require those regularly utilising the Shortage Occupation List, under which they can bring skilled foreign workers into the UK, to provide long-term plans for training British workers.

## *We will protect British values and our way of life*

### *We will promote integration and British values*

Being able to speak English is a fundamental part of integrating into our society. We have introduced tough new language tests for migrants and ensured councils reduce spending on translation services. Next, we will legislate to ensure that every public sector worker operating in a customer-facing role must speak fluent English. And to encourage better integration into our society, we will also require those coming to Britain on a family visa with only basic English to become more fluent over time, with new language tests for those seeking a visa extension.





## Giving your child the best start in life

### Our commitment to you:

*Your child deserves the best start in life. A good education is not a luxury; it should be a right for everyone. We will:*

- *ensure a good primary school place for your child, with zero tolerance for failure*
- *turn every failing and coasting secondary school into an academy and deliver free schools for parents and communities that want them*
- *help teachers to make Britain the best country in the world for developing maths, engineering, science and computing skills*
- *create 3 million new apprenticeships and make sure there is no cap on university places, so we have aspiration for all.*

We know what works in education: great teachers; brilliant leadership; rigour in the curriculum; discipline in the classroom; proper exams. We have been bold in reforming the education system to deliver these things, based upon simple, clear principles and values. We believe that parents and teachers should be empowered to run their schools independently. We believe that teaching is a highly skilled profession, and that we need to attract the best graduates into it. And we believe that there is no substitute for a rigorous academic curriculum to secure the best from every pupil.

We inherited a system where far too many children left school without the qualifications and skills they needed. One in three children was leaving primary school unable to read, write and add up properly. The number of pupils studying the core academic subjects at GCSE had halved. Our schools had fallen down the global league tables for maths and science. And the poorest children were attending the weakest schools.

Our far-reaching education reforms have changed this. We have brought high standards back to teaching, discipline back to schools, and challenging subjects back onto the curriculum. Today, there are a million more pupils in schools rated by Ofsted as 'good' or 'outstanding'. Over a thousand schools that were ranked 'inadequate' have become Academies, bringing in new leadership to promote discipline, rigour and higher standards.

There are over 250 new free schools – set up and run by local people – delivering better education for the children who need it most. We have boosted the number of apprenticeships to record levels – 2.2 million over the last five years – and last September more people headed off to university than at any time in history. Too many children, however, are still not receiving the excellent education that they deserve. So we will continue our reforms, so that every child has the best possible start in life.

There are a million more pupils in schools rated by Ofsted as 'good' or 'outstanding'

### Our plan of action:

*We will drive up standards in your child's school*

We have made exams more rigorous and ended grade inflation. There is more to do. We will start by introducing tough new standards for literacy and numeracy in primary schools. We will expect every 11-year-old to know their times tables off by heart and be able to perform long division and complex multiplication. They should be able to read a book and write a short story with accurate punctuation, spelling and grammar. If children do not

reach the required standards in their exams at the end of primary school, they will resit them at the start of secondary school, to make sure no pupil is left behind. We will require secondary school pupils to take GCSEs in English, maths, science, a language and history or geography, with Ofsted unable to award its highest ratings to schools that refuse to teach these core subjects.

### *We will ensure there is a good primary school place for your child, with zero tolerance of failure*

We have more than doubled Labour's spending on new school places. But we want to go even further, investing at least £7 billion over the next Parliament to provide good school places. And we will let our best headteachers take control of failing primary schools, by expanding the National Leaders of Education programme.

## **Every school needs high standards, proper funding and accountability**

### *We will turn every failing and coasting secondary school into an academy, and deliver free schools if parents in your area want them*

Over 4,000 schools are already benefiting from academy status, giving them more power over discipline and budgets. And nearly 800 of the worst-performing primary schools have been taken over by experienced academy sponsors with a proven track record of success. This is improving education for our children. So we will continue to expand academies, free schools, studio schools and University Technical Colleges. Over the next Parliament, we will open at least 500 new free schools, resulting in 270,000 new school places. And we will introduce new powers to force coasting schools to accept new leadership. Any school judged by Ofsted to be requiring improvement will be taken over by the best headteachers – backed by expert sponsors or high-performing neighbouring schools – unless it can demonstrate that it has a plan to improve rapidly. We will continue to allow all good schools to expand, whether they are maintained schools, academies, free schools or grammar schools.

### *We will continue to protect school funding*

Over the last five years, we have protected the schools budget and committed £18 billion for new school buildings, so that children can learn in the best environment possible. Under a future Conservative Government, the amount of money following your child into school will be protected. As the number of pupils increases, so will the amount of money in our schools. On current pupil number forecasts, there will be a real-terms increase in the schools budget in the next Parliament. We will continue to provide the pupil premium, protected at current rates, so that schools receive additional money for those from the poorest backgrounds. We will support families by providing free meals to all infants. And we will make schools funding fairer. We have already increased funding for the 69 least well-funded local authorities in the country, and will make this the baseline for their funding in the next Parliament. We will not allow state schools to make a profit.

### *We will back your child's teachers*

We have already given teachers greater disciplinary powers. In the next Parliament, we will expect every teacher to be trained not just in how to tackle serious behaviour issues, but also in how to deal with the low level disruption that stops children from learning properly. This generation of teachers is already the best-qualified ever. In future, we will recruit and keep the best teachers by reducing the time they spend on paperwork, introducing bursaries for the most in-demand subjects, paying good teachers more, further reducing the burden of Ofsted inspections and continuing to encourage the growth of Teach First. We will increase the number of teachers able to teach Mandarin in schools in England, so we can compete in the global race. We want teachers to be regarded in the same way as other highly skilled professionals, so we are supporting the creation of an independent College of Teaching to promote the highest standards of teaching and school leadership.

### *We will lead the world in maths and science*

We have increased the time schools will spend on maths, and ensured that children learn to code as soon as they start school. Maths is now the most popular A-level subject. We aim to make Britain the best place in the world to study maths, science and engineering, measured by improved performance in the PISA league tables. To help achieve this, we will train an extra 17,500 maths and physics

## Schools budget protected with £5 billion given to tackle Labour's school places crisis

teachers over the next five years. We will make sure that all students are pushed to achieve their potential and create more opportunities to stretch the most able.

### *We will protect children*

Every child deserves a warm, loving home, and to feel safe online and at school. We have made improving support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities a priority. We have created 2,200 more special schools places through our free schools programme, introduced a coordinated assessment process to determine a child or young person's needs, and funded degree-level specialist training for teachers and support staff. And to make sure it's working, Ofsted now formally inspects local areas for their effectiveness in fulfilling their new duties. We have made progress in reforming our adoption system, but there is more to do. We will introduce regional adoption agencies, working across local authority boundaries to match children with the best parents for them. We will continue to raise the quality of children's social work, by expanding training programmes, such as Frontline, and creating new opportunities to develop the next generation of leaders in the field. We will continue to tackle all forms of bullying in our schools. And we will stop children's exposure to harmful sexualised content online, by requiring age verification for access to all sites containing pornographic material and age-rating for all music videos.

### *We will improve skills training*

We have given employers much more control over apprenticeship courses, so they teach skills relevant to the workplace. We will continue to replace lower-level, classroom-based Further Education courses with high-quality apprenticeships that combine training with experience of work and a wage. We will ensure there is a

## Child poverty is down – with 300,000 fewer children living in poverty

University Technical College within reach of every city. We will abolish employers' National Insurance contributions on earnings up to the upper earnings limit for apprentices under the age of 25. And we will roll out many more Degree Apprenticeships, allowing young people to combine a world-class degree with a world-class apprenticeship.

### *We will improve Further Education*

We will continue to improve Further Education through our network of National Colleges, which will provide specialist higher-level vocational training in sectors critical to economic growth. We will publish more earnings and destination data for Further Education courses, and require more accreditation of courses by employers.

### *We will ensure that if you want to go to university, you can*

This year, for the first time, over half a million people have been admitted to our universities, including a record proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. From September, we will go even further, abolishing the cap on higher education student numbers and removing an arbitrary ceiling on ambition. Our reforms to university funding mean you do not have to pay anything towards tuition while studying, and only start paying back if you earn over £21,000 per year. We will ensure the continuing success and stability of these reforms, so that the interests of both students and taxpayers are fairly represented. We will also introduce a national postgraduate loan system for taught masters and PhD courses. We will ensure that universities deliver the best possible value for money to students: we will introduce a framework to recognise universities offering the highest teaching quality; encourage universities to offer more two-year courses; and require more data to be openly available to potential students so that they can make decisions informed by the career paths of past graduates.

### *We will ensure that our universities remain world-leading*

We will maintain our universities' reputation for world-class research and academic excellence. Through the Nurse Review of research councils, we will seek to ensure that the UK continues to support world-leading science, and invests public money in the best possible way. And we will encourage the development of online education as a tool for students, whether studying independently or in our universities.



# Protecting and improving our National Health Service

## Our commitment to you:

*Our National Health Service must be there for you throughout your life. We will:*

- **continue to increase spending on the NHS, supported by a strong economy, so the NHS stays free for you to use**
- **spend at least an additional £8 billion by 2020 over and above inflation to fund and support the NHS's own action plan for the next five years**
- **ensure you can see a GP and receive the hospital care you need, 7 days a week by 2020, with a guarantee that everyone over 75 will get a same-day appointment if they need one**
- **integrate health and social care, through our Better Care Fund**
- **lead the world in fighting cancer and finding a cure for dementia**

The NHS is vitally important to all of us. Founded on the principle that no one should ever have to worry about their ability to pay for their healthcare, it is a profound expression of our values as a nation.

Patients, doctors and nurses are the experts on how to improve people's health. So we have given greater power and accountability to the frontline than any other government. We cleared out bureaucracy, generating savings which we have invested in care for patients. Instead of chasing managerial targets, we have focused on outcomes and performance. And we have given patients more power by providing them with more information.

Under Labour, micro-management from Whitehall clogged-up the system. A cover-up culture developed, where doctors and nurses were scared to speak out about the appalling standards of care at hospitals in places such as Stafford and Morecambe Bay. By the time Labour left office, our cancer survival rates lagged far behind those of other countries, and more than 18,000 patients had been waiting for over a year to start their treatment.

***We are building an NHS that is more efficient, more effective and more accountable***

We are putting things right. We protected the NHS budget. Our doctors and nurses are now doing over a million more operations each year than in 2010. Our Cancer Drugs Fund has given more than 60,000 people access to life-saving drugs. We have doubled funding for dementia research. Hospital infections have halved. An independent think tank, the Commonwealth Fund, has found that under the Conservatives the NHS has become the best healthcare system of any major country. And patients are reporting the highest levels of satisfaction for years. The NHS is performing well in the face of increasing demand, with fewer patients waiting longer than the 18, 26 and 52 week targets than in May 2010. We have slashed the number of people who wait over a year for the treatment they need, from over 18,000 to under 500.

Despite this progress, our NHS faces major challenges. An ageing population will place more pressure on health and social care, and life-saving but expensive new drugs will push up costs. And for years it's been too hard to access the NHS out of hours, even though sudden illness and events which you and your family cannot plan for do not respect normal working hours. We will rise to these challenges. By building a strong economy, we will be able to increase spending in real terms every year. With a future Conservative Government, you will have a truly 7-day NHS, at the frontier of science, offering you new drugs and treatments, safeguarded for years to come.

## Our plan of action:

*We will deliver a strong NHS through a strong economy*

We are set to increase health spending by more than £7 billion above and beyond inflation in the five years since 2010. And we will continue spend more on the NHS, in real terms, every year. The NHS is more efficient now than it has ever been. We will implement the NHS's own plan to improve health care even further – the Five Year Forward View. Because of our long-term economic plan, we are able to commit to increasing NHS spending in England in real terms by a minimum of £8 billion over the next five years. Combined with the efficiencies that the NHS Forward View sets out, this will provide the funding necessary to implement this plan in full.

**We are prioritising resources to frontline services – with 9,500 more doctors and 6,900 more nurses**

*We will make the NHS more convenient for you*

We want England to be the first nation in the world to provide a truly 7 day NHS. Already millions more people can see a GP 7 days a week, from 8am-8pm, but by 2020 we want this for everyone. We will now go further, with hospitals properly staffed, so that the quality of care is the same every day of the week. We will restore your right to access a specific, named GP – something that Labour abolished. We will ensure that your family doctor appointments and repeat prescriptions are routinely available online, wherever you live. And we will guarantee same-day GP appointments for all over 75s who need them.

*We will offer you the safest and most compassionate care in the world*

We will ensure that English hospitals and GP surgeries are the safest in the world, places where you are treated with dignity and respect. We will continue to eliminate mixed-sex wards and hospital infections. We will ensure

**We have increased the NHS budget above inflation every year**

that the NHS is accountable when mistakes are made, and implement the recommendations of the independent review into the Stafford Hospital scandal. We will ensure that the independent Care Quality Commission rates all hospitals, care homes and GP surgeries. We introduced expert Chief Inspectors to promote excellence and root out poor care, and we will continue to back them. We are deeply proud of our NHS staff, who are the best in the world. Over the last five years, we have hired thousands more doctors and nurses. We will continue to ensure that we have enough doctors, nurses and other staff to meet patients' needs, and consider how best to recognise and reward high performance.

*We will help you make informed choices about your healthcare*

We will improve standards in all areas of care. In 2013 we introduced the friends and family test so you could provide feedback on the care and treatment you received; we aim to increase the proportion of people who rate their experience as 'excellent' or 'very good'. We will boost transparency even further, ensuring you can access full information about the safety record of your hospital and other NHS or independent providers, and give patients greater choice over where and how they receive care. We will give you full access to your own electronic health records, while retaining your right to opt-out of your records being shared electronically.

*We will support you and your family to stay healthy*

We are helping people to stay healthy by ending the open display of tobacco in shops, introducing plain-packaged cigarettes and funding local authority public health budgets. We will take action to reduce childhood obesity and continue to promote clear food information. We will support people struggling with addictions and undertake a review into how

**People deserve patient-centred healthcare not more bureaucracy**

best to support those suffering from long-term yet treatable conditions, such as drug or alcohol addiction, or obesity, back in to work. We will be the first country to implement a national, evidence-based diabetes prevention programme. And we will invest more in primary care, to help prevent health problems before they start.

### *We will ensure you receive the best healthcare*

We will speed up your access to new medicines by implementing the findings of our Innovative Medicines and Medical Technology Review. We will increase the use of cost-effective new medicines and technologies, and encourage large-scale trials of innovative technologies and health services. Antibiotic resistance is a major health risk so we will continue to lead the global fight against it, taking forward the recommendations of the independent review launched by the Prime Minister, David Cameron. And we will support our long-term economic plan by fostering research, innovation and jobs in the life science industry.

### *We will help if you or your loved ones are affected by cancer*

Cancer survival rates are improving, and are now the best they have ever been. We will continue to invest in our life-saving Cancer Drugs Fund. We will work with the NHS, charities and patient groups to deliver the new strategy recommended by NHS England's cancer taskforce. This will improve survival rates and save thousands of lives through enhanced prevention, earlier detection and diagnosis, and better treatment and care. We will continue to support research to improve the diagnosis and treatment of rare diseases and cancers, including through

Over 60,000 people have benefited from the Cancer Drugs Fund

decoding 100,000 whole genomes. This will help scientists and doctors understand diseases better, and design more effective, personalised treatments.

### *We will continue to take your mental health as seriously as your physical health*

We have legislated to ensure that mental and physical health conditions are given equal priority. We will now go further, ensuring that there are therapists in every part of the country providing treatment for those who need it. We are increasing funding for mental health care. We will enforce the new access and waiting time standards for people experiencing mental ill-health, including children and young people. Building on our success in training thousands of nurses and midwives to become health visitors, we will ensure that women have access to mental health support during and after pregnancy, while strengthening the health visiting programme for new mothers.

### *We will ensure that people can grow old in comfort and dignity*

We have led the world on fighting dementia, and will deliver our strategy – the Prime Minister's Challenge on Dementia 2020 – making sure that everyone diagnosed with the condition gets a meaningful care plan to support them and their family. We will increase support for full-time unpaid carers. We will guarantee that you will not have to sell your home to fund your residential social care. Too many people spend their last days in hospital when they would prefer to die closer to home; we will support commissioners to combine better health and social care services for the terminally ill so that more people are able to die in a place of their choice. We will continue to integrate the health and social care systems, joining-up services between homes, clinics and hospitals, including through piloting new approaches like the pooling of around £6 billion of health and social care funding in Greater Manchester and the £5.3 billion Better Care Fund.





## Enabling you to enjoy our heritage, creativity and sports

### Our commitment to you:

*Wherever you live in the country, we want you to be able to enjoy the best our culture and sports have to offer. We will:*

- *keep our **major national museums and galleries free to enter***
- ***support school sport**, build on our Olympic and Paralympic legacy, and deliver the Rugby and Cricket World Cups and the World Athletics Championships*
- ***freeze the BBC licence fee**, to save you money*
- *support our creative industries and **defend a free media***

One of the highlights of the past five years was the London Olympic and Paralympic Games. Those weeks in 2012 demonstrated the best of our country. When the pressure is on, we deliver; when the stakes are high, we come together; when it comes to taking on the world, we can win.

We may not be the biggest country, but our museums are second to none. In music, art, fashion, theatre, design, film, television and the performing arts, we have an edge. Conservatives understand these things do not just enhance our national prestige and boost our economy; they help tie our country together, strengthening the bonds between all of us.

That's why, despite all the economic chaos we inherited, we have put over £8 billion of public and Lottery funding into the arts, heritage, museums and galleries during the last five years. We have also boosted school sports and increased the share of National Lottery funding going to good causes.

***Culture and sport help bring us closer together as a nation, strengthening the bonds between all of us***

### Our plan of action:

*We will support our world-leading museums, galleries and heritage*

We will keep our major national museums and galleries free to enter and enable our cultural institutions to benefit from greater financial autonomy to use their budgets as they see fit. Over the last five years, we have made sure that arts funding benefits the whole of the UK. We will support a Great Exhibition in the North; back plans for a new theatre, The Factory, Manchester; and help the Manchester Museum, in partnership with the British Museum, to establish a new India Gallery. We are also supporting plans to develop a modern world class concert hall for London. We will ensure the protection and enjoyment of one of our most ancient and precious heritage sites by building a tunnel where the A303 passes closest to Stonehenge. We significantly increased National Lottery funding for heritage and have created a brand new heritage charity – English Heritage – to support more than 400 buildings and monuments. And we will continue to support essential roof repairs for our cathedrals and churches, along with other places of worship.

*We will continue to support local libraries*

We will help public libraries to support local communities by providing free wi-fi. And we will assist them in embracing the digital age by working with them

to ensure remote access to e-books, without charge and with appropriate compensation for authors that enhances the Public Lending Right scheme.

### *We will support our media*

A free media is the bedrock of an open society. We will deliver a comprehensive review of the BBC Royal Charter, ensuring it delivers value for money for the licence fee payer, while maintaining a world class service and supporting our creative industries. That is why we froze the BBC licence fee and will keep it frozen, pending Charter renewal. And we will continue to ‘top-slice’ the licence fee for digital infrastructure to support superfast broadband across the country.

### *We will defend press freedom*

We will continue to defend hard-won liberties and the operation of a free press. But alongside the media’s rights comes a clear responsibility, which is why we set up the public, judge-led Leveson Inquiry in response to the phone-hacking scandal, created a new watchdog by Royal Charter and legislated to toughen media libel laws. Because the work of the free press is so important we will offer explicit protection for the role of journalists via the British Bill of Rights and we will ban the police from accessing journalists’ phone records to identify whistle-blowers and other sources without prior judicial approval. Local newspapers are an important source of information for local communities and a vital part of a healthy democracy. To support them as they adapt to new technology and changing circumstances, we will consult on the introduction of a business rates relief for local newspapers in England.

### *We will support our creative industries*

The creative industries have become our fastest-growing economic sector, contributing nearly £77 billion to the UK economy – driven in part by the tax incentives for films, theatre, video games, animation and orchestras we introduced. Our support for the film industry has resulted in great British films and encouraged Hollywood’s finest to flock to the UK. We will continue these reliefs, with a tax credit for children’s television next year, and expand them when possible. We will protect intellectual property by continuing to require internet service providers to block sites that carry large

amounts of illegal content, including their proxies. And we will build on progress made under our voluntary anti-piracy projects to warn internet users when they are breaching copyright. We will work to ensure that search engines do not link to the worst-offending sites.

### *We will continue to support tourism in our country*

Our tourism industry already supports three million jobs and is one of the nation’s leading employers and export earners. We will set challenging targets for Visit Britain and Visit England to ensure more visitors travel outside the capital. We will simplify and speed up visa issuance for tourists. And because tourism is an industry that depends more than most on young people, we will step up efforts to recruit more apprentices into the business.

### *We will build on our Olympic and Paralympic legacy*

We want our sportsmen and women to win even more medals in Rio 2016 than they did in London 2012. So we will continue to support elite sports funding as part of our Olympic and Paralympic legacy. We will deliver the Rugby World Cup in 2015, the World Athletics Championship in 2017, IPC World Championships in 2017 and the Cricket World Cup in 2019, maximising the opportunities for tourism and jobs. We will support new sports in the UK, in particular through greater links with the US National Football League, the National Basketball Association and Major League Baseball, with the ultimate ambition of new franchises being based here.

### *We will boost sport in your community*

We have already boosted funding for sport in primary schools and over 18,000 schools have registered to take part in our School Games. We will go further, supporting primary school sport with £150 million a year, paid directly to head-teachers, until 2020. This will make sure that all primary schoolchildren benefit from

**School Games supported with over £150 million of National Lottery and public money**

a minimum of two hours high-class sport and PE each week. We will improve the quality of Community Sports facilities, working with local authorities, the Football Association and the Premier League to fund investment in artificial football pitches in more than 30 cities across England. We will continue to invest in participation and physical activity, recognising sport's vital benefits to health and to NHS England's campaign to prevent diabetes. We will lift the number of women on national sports governing bodies to at least 25 per cent by 2017, and seek to increase participation in sport by women and girls.



## Helping you build the Big Society

### Our commitment to you:

*Building the Big Society is about involving the people, neighbourhoods, villages, towns and cities of Britain in the great task of improving our country – and giving young people the power and opportunity to play a real part in their community. We will:*

- **guarantee your child a place on National Citizen Service, so they can learn new skills and meet young people from different walks of life**
- **promote equal treatment and equal opportunity for all in a society proud of its tolerance and diversity**
- **give those who work for a big company and the public sector a new workplace entitlement to Volunteering Leave for three days a year, on full pay.**

The Big Society is a vision of a more engaged nation, one in which we take more responsibility for ourselves and our neighbours; communities working together, not depending on remote and impersonal bureaucracies. Of course, there are many tasks which require the resources and grip of government. But there are also many areas of national life in which we need more people to step forward, take responsibility and play their part. This is about a national culture change, saying to everyone in Britain: ask what you can do for your community and your country.

**Volunteering is at a 10-year high, with 3 million more adults giving their time last year than in 2010**

In the past five years, there has been real progress. Volunteering is now at a ten-year high, with over three million more adults giving their time last year than in the year to March 2010. Charitable donations are on the up, with one million more people giving to good causes than at the end of the last Parliament. There are now parents' groups and charities running their own free schools. There are social enterprises helping people into jobs through the Work Programme. We have launched the world's first social investment bank, introduced more social impact bonds than the rest of the world combined

and highlighted the great work done in communities with the Big Society Awards and the Prime Minister's Points of Light award.

A generation of teenagers has undertaken National Citizen Service (NCS), developing their skills, broadening their horizons and growing in confidence; over the next five years, we will expand NCS – so it becomes a rite of passage for young people in our country. We will give more people the power and support to run a school, start their own social enterprise, and take over their own local parks, landmarks and pubs. We will encourage the 1,400 communities engaged in neighbourhood planning to complete the process and assist others to draw up their own plans. And we will take new steps to encourage volunteering, enabling more people to join the unsung heroes who are the backbone of communities across Britain.

### Our plan of action:

#### *We will expand National Citizen Service*

Over 130,000 young people have graduated from NCS and we have now guaranteed a place on NCS for every 16 and 17-year-old who wants one. In addition to this, we will increase the number of cadet units in schools, so that more students have the chance to learn skills such as leadership and self-reliance.

*We will innovate in how we deliver public services*

We have pioneered ways to deliver high-quality public services, including through getting the voluntary sector more involved. For example, our Work Programme has helped harness the talent and energy of charities to help people turn their lives around and find their way back into work. We will examine ways to build on this type of innovative approach in the future. We have also pioneered the use of social impact bonds and payment-by-results, and we will look to scale these up in the future, focusing on youth unemployment, mental health and homelessness.

*We will help you volunteer and support action to help the vulnerable*

We will support the Prince of Wales’ Step Up To Serve initiative, encouraging young people to serve in their community. And we will make volunteering for three days a year a workplace entitlement for people working in large companies and the public sector. People could, for example, volunteer for a local charity or serve as a school

Over 130,000 young people have taken part in National Citizen Service

governor. We have always believed that churches, faith groups and other voluntary groups play an important and longstanding role in this country’s social fabric, running foodbanks, helping the homeless, and tackling debt and addictions, such as alcoholism and gambling. We have already introduced tougher regulation of gambling, with enhanced player protections and planning controls to prevent the further proliferation of high street betting shops; we’ve capped payday lending and backed financial inclusion; and will continue to support action that helps vulnerable people get the assistance they need.

*We will champion equal rights and correct past wrongs*

Our historic introduction of gay marriage has helped drive forward equality and strengthened the institution of marriage. But there is still more to do, and we will continue to champion equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people. We will build on the posthumous pardon of Enigma codebreaker Alan Turing, who committed suicide following his conviction for gross indecency, with a broader measure to lift the blight of outdated convictions of this nature. Thousands of British men still suffer from similar historic charges, even though they would be completely innocent of any crime today. Many others are dead and cannot correct this injustice themselves through the legal process we have introduced while in government. So we will introduce a new law that will pardon those people, and right these wrongs.

# Making government work better for you

## Our commitment to you:

*The government is the servant of the British people. Every pound spent must be scrutinised, and government run as efficiently and effectively as possible. We will:*

- *save you money by **cutting government waste***
- ***put more of the essential services you use online**, to make them more convenient*
- *continue to **make government more transparent**, so you can hold us to account for how your money is being spent.*

Government is the servant of the British people, not their master. That simple fact was forgotten when Labour was in power. Quangos grew in number, wasteful projects proliferated and the bureaucracy swelled – symptoms of a Government that believed it always knew best.

## *Hardworking taxpayers deserve a government that is more efficient and accountable*

Conservatives have brought in a new approach. We are determined to measure success not by how much money is spent, but how much it improves people's lives. Whitehall is now leaner and smaller than at any time since the Second World War. We have halved the running costs of the Department for Education. We have abolished or merged over 300 quangos. We have moved paperwork online. We have shone a bright light on government spending – requiring all central government spending over £25,000 to be published online. We have also ensured that people receive a transparent breakdown of how their taxes are spent.

In the next five years, we will ensure this efficiency revolution continues. We will also continue to reform our political system: make votes of more equal value through long overdue boundary reforms, reducing the number of MPs and ensuring the Electoral Commission does more

£14.3 billion was saved in 2014 through efficiencies in government – equivalent to nearly £850 for every working household

to tackle voting fraud. These measures will help to restore public confidence in British politics.

## Our plan of action:

### *We will cut government waste*

We have reduced the cost of government, by selling empty buildings, managing big projects better, shrinking the Civil Service, reforming pensions, moving more services online, and improving contracting. We plan a further £10 billion annual savings by 2017-18 and £15-20 billion in 2019-20.

## *To eliminate the deficit, we must continue to cut out wasteful spending*





## *We will deliver better public services and more open government*

We have supported the growth of public service mutuals – organisations that are owned by their staff and deliver public services. We want more of them, so we will guarantee a ‘right to mutualise’ within the public sector. This will free up the entrepreneurial spirit of public servants and yield better value for money for taxpayers. Transparency has also been at the heart of our approach to government. Over the last five years, we have been open about government spending, provided access to taxpayer-funded research, pursued open data and helped establish the Open Government Partnership. We will continue to be the most transparent government in the world. We addressed public concern about the influence of money on politics, with a law that strengthened rules governing non-party campaigning and established a register of consultant lobbyists. In the next Parliament, we will legislate to ensure trade unions use a transparent opt-in process for subscriptions to political parties. We will continue to seek agreement on a comprehensive package of party funding reform.

## *We will make government more efficient*

We value our outstanding public servants. Over the last five years, we have made efficiencies in government. We have ruled out the introduction of regional pay in the public sector, which we do not support and will not introduce. Britain's impartial, professional and highly capable Civil Service is admired around the world and one of our nation's strengths. We will push ahead with reform of the Civil Service to make it more dynamic and streamlined. We will make recruitment to the Civil Service more open and actively look for exceptional talent, especially in areas where capabilities are in short supply. We will continue to tackle all the bureaucracy of Whitehall that clogs the arteries of government. We will end taxpayer-funded six-figure payoffs for the best paid public sector workers. We will continue to sell unneeded government property and co-locate services wherever possible. We have already created 20 high-quality digital services, which include apprenticeships applications and tax self-assessments. We will save you time, hassle and money by moving more services online, while actively tackling digital exclusion. We will ensure digital assistance is always available for those who are not online, while rolling out cross-government technology platforms to cut costs and improve productivity – such as GOV.UK.

## *We will reform Parliament*

We have improved the operation of Parliament, strengthening its ability to hold the Government to account, with reforms such as the election of Select Committee chairs and the creation of the Backbench Business Committee, which enables backbenchers, for the first time, to determine a significant proportion of the House of Commons’ business. We have also passed the Fixed Term Parliament Act, an unprecedented transfer of Executive power. In the next Parliament, we will address the unfairness of the current Parliamentary boundaries, reduce the number of MPs to 600 to cut the cost of politics and make votes of more equal value. We will implement the boundary reforms that Parliament has already approved and make them apply automatically once the Boundary Commission reports in 2018. This will deal with the fact that the current electoral layout over-represents parts of the country where populations have been falling and under-represents parts where populations have been rising.

## *We will ensure that the House of Lords fulfils its valuable role as a chamber of legislative scrutiny and revision*

While we still see a strong case for introducing an elected element into our second chamber, this is not a priority in the next Parliament. We have already allowed for expulsion of members for poor conduct and will ensure the House of Lords continues to work well by addressing issues such as the size of the chamber and the retirement of peers.

## *We will protect our electoral system, to safeguard our democracy*

Building on our introduction of individual voter registration, we will continue to make our arrangements fair and effective by ensuring the Electoral Commission puts greater priority on tackling fraud and considers insisting on proof of ID to vote. We will complete the electoral register, by working to include more of the five million Britons who live abroad. We will introduce votes for life, scrapping the rule that bars British citizens who have lived abroad for more than 15 years from voting. We will respect the will of the British people, as expressed in the 2011 referendum, and keep First Past the Post for elections to the House of Commons. And we will introduce English votes for English laws, answering the longstanding West Lothian Question in our democracy.



## Helping you to buy a home of your own

### Our commitment to you:

*The chance to own your own home should be available to everyone who works hard. We will:*

- *help to **keep mortgage rates lower** by continuing to work through our long-term economic plan*
- *build more homes that people can afford, including **200,000 new Starter Homes** exclusively for first-time buyers under 40*
- *extend the **Help to Buy Equity Loan scheme** to 2020 to help more people onto and up the housing ladder, and introduce **a new Help to Buy ISA** to support people saving for a deposit*
- *give more people the chance to own their home by **extending the Right to Buy** to tenants of Housing Associations and create a **Brownfield Fund** to unlock homes on brownfield land*
- *ensure **local people have more control over planning** and protect the **Green Belt***

Conservatives believe passionately in home ownership. We understand how good it feels when you have worked long hours, saved money for years, and finally take possession of the keys to your first home. For years, however, people have been finding it harder and harder to get on the housing ladder. Under Labour, house-building fell to its lowest peacetime level since the 1920s. Developers were building too few homes and the aftermath of the banking crisis saw young people struggling to raise a deposit.

### House building at its highest since 2007

These past five years have been about reversing this trend. We have unblocked the planning system, to help builders start building again. We have introduced Help to Buy, making it much easier for people to secure a mortgage. And we have reinvigorated the Right to Buy which Labour had cut back, extending home ownership to a whole new generation of social tenants. As a result, over 200,000 people have been helped either on or up the housing ladder. Most of those helped have been young first-time buyers spread right across our country.

### Everyone who works hard should be able to own a home of their own

As the party of home ownership, we want to go further and faster – and this manifesto sets out our plan. At its heart, a clear objective to build affordable homes, including 200,000 Starter Homes which will be sold at a 20 per cent discount, and will be built exclusively for first time buyers under the age of 40. At the same time, we will extend our Help to Buy Equity Loan scheme, introduce a new Help to Buy ISA, extend the Right to Buy to Housing Association tenants and make sure that, when it comes to planning decisions, local people are in charge.

And for all those already in their home, we will make sure we continue working through our economic plan, so mortgage rates stay lower for longer and people can keep hold of their homes and plan for the future – safe in the knowledge they have a government that is competently looking after the public finances so they can look after their own.

## *We will continue to work through our plan, so mortgage rates stay lower for longer*

### **Our plan of action:**

*We will double the number of first-time buyers, and help more people own their own home*

We are setting an ambition to double the number of first-time buyers compared to the last five years – helping one million more people to own their own home. We will extend Help to Buy to cover another 120,000 homes – in total helping over 200,000 people and we will continue the Help to Buy mortgage guarantee until the start of 2017, and the Help to Buy equity loan until at least 2020. From this autumn, we will introduce a new Help to Buy ISA to support people who are working hard to save up for a deposit for their first home. A ten per cent deposit on the average first home costs £15,000, so if you put in up to £12,000, government will put in up to £3,000 more. A 25 per cent top-up is equivalent to saving a deposit from your pre-tax income – making it effectively a tax cut for first-time buyers.

**Our new Help to Buy ISA will support people who are working hard to save for a deposit**

*We will build 200,000 Starter Homes and more affordable housing*

We will build 200,000 quality Starter Homes over the course of the next Parliament, reserved for first-time buyers under 40 and sold at 20 per cent below the market price. We have delivered over 217,000 new affordable homes since 2010. We will now go further, delivering 275,000 additional affordable homes by 2020. And we will offer 10,000 new homes to rent at below market rates,

to help people save for a deposit.

*We will extend the Right to Buy to tenants in Housing Associations*

We will extend the Right to Buy to tenants in Housing Associations to enable more people to buy a home of their own. It is unfair that they should miss out on a right enjoyed by tenants in local authority homes. We will fund the replacement of properties sold under the extended Right to Buy by requiring local authorities to manage their housing assets more efficiently, with the most expensive properties sold off and replaced as they fall vacant. We will also create a Brownfield Fund to unlock homes on brownfield land for additional housing.

*We will give you the Right to Build*

We aim at least to double the number of custom-built and self-built homes by 2020, and we will take forward a new Right to Build, requiring councils to allocate land to local people to build or commission their own home, as you can do in most of Europe.

*We will protect the Green Belt*

We have safeguarded national Green Belt protection and increased protection of important green spaces. We have abolished the Labour Government's top-down Regional Strategies which sought to delete the Green Belt in and around 30 towns and cities and introduced a new Local Green Space planning designation which allows councils and neighbourhood plans to give added protection to valuable local green spaces.

*We will support locally-led garden cities and towns and prioritise brownfield development, making sure new homes are always matched by the necessary infrastructure to support them*

We will support locally-led garden cities and towns in places where communities want them, such as Ebbsfleet and Bicester. When new homes are granted planning permission, we will make sure local communities know up-front that necessary infrastructure such as schools and roads will be provided. We will ensure that brownfield land is used as much as possible for new development. We will require local authorities to have a register of what is available, and ensure that 90 per cent

of suitable brownfield sites have planning permission for housing by 2020. To meet the capital's housing needs, we will create a new London Land Commission, with a mandate to identify and release all surplus brownfield land owned by the public sector. We will fund Housing Zones to transform brownfield sites into new housing, which will create 95,000 new homes.

**Average council tax bills in England have fallen, in real terms, by 11 per cent**

### *We will help keep your council taxes low*

Under this Government, average council tax bills in England have fallen, in real terms, by 11 per cent. Whereas Labour wants to propose a new tax on family homes, we will help local authorities keep council tax low for hardworking taxpayers, and ensure residents can continue to veto high rises via a local referendum. And in London, where there is a Conservative Mayor, bills have fallen even further. We will continue to work with councillors to deliver high quality, value for money services. We will encourage voluntary integration of services and administration between and within councils –

for example, with the Troubled Families Programme and the Better Care Fund – to promote savings and improve local services. We want local councils to help manage public land and buildings, and will give them at least a 10 per cent stake in public sector land sales in their area.

### *We will help you build a strong local economy*

We want local authorities to help create strong local economies. Building on the local retention of business rates introduced in 2012, we will promote localism by allowing councils to keep a higher proportion of the business rates revenue that is generated in their area. This will provide a strong financial incentive for councils to promote economic growth. We will review how we can further reduce ring-fencing and remove Whitehall burdens to give councils more flexibility to support local services. We will support Business Improvement Districts and other forms of business-led collaboration on high streets – giving more say to local traders on issues such as minor planning applications, cleaning and parking. We will continue to support local shops and residents in tackling aggressive parking enforcement and excessive parking charges, and take steps to tackle rogue and unfair practices by private parking operators. Our Coastal Communities Fund will help our seaside areas thrive, helping to boost skills and create jobs.

# Protecting and enhancing our natural environment

## Our commitment to you:

*We set ourselves the goal of being the first generation to leave the natural environment of England in a better state than that in which we found it. This is a big ambition to which we remain committed. We will:*

- *put in place a new 'Blue Belt' to **protect precious marine habitats***
- *invest in **cleaner air and water** for you and your family*
- ***keep our forests in trust for the nation***

For Conservatives, Britain's 'green and pleasant land' is not some relic from a bygone era, to be mourned and missed: it's the living, breathing backdrop to our national life. Our moors and meadows, wildlife and nature, air and water are a crucial part of our national identity and make our country what it is. So we care about them deeply, want to protect them for everyone and pass them onto future generations.

Labour never understood this. Our rural communities fell further behind urban areas; biodiversity suffered, with important species and habitats declining under their watch; and they failed to protect the Green Belt.

Over the last five years, we have committed billions of pounds to reduce emissions from transport and clean up our rivers and seas. We have done more to protect our seas, safeguarded our Green Belt and planted 11 million trees. And we set out a comprehensive, long-term vision to protect our natural heritage in this country's first White Paper on the Natural Environment for 20 years.

Over the next five years, we will put in place stronger protections for our natural landscapes, establish a new Blue Belt to safeguard precious marine habitats, launch a programme of pocket parks in towns and cities and continue to lead in tackling the illegal wildlife trade. Our plan is to conserve and enhance our natural environment so that this remains the most beautiful country in the world.

## Our plan of action:

### *We will protect your countryside, Green Belt and urban environment*

We will spend £3 billion from the Common Agricultural Policy to enhance England's countryside over the next five years, enabling us, among other things, to clean up our rivers and lakes, protect our stonewalls and hedges, and help our bees to thrive. We will ensure that our public forests and woodland are kept in trust for the nation and plant another 11 million trees. We will make it easier to access our beautiful landscapes, by providing free, comprehensive maps of all open-access green space. Building on our introduction of a five pence charge on single-use plastic bags, we will review the case for higher Fixed Penalty Notices for littering and allow councils to tackle small-scale fly-tipping through Fixed Penalties rather than costly prosecutions. We will launch an ambitious programme of pocket parks – small areas of inviting public space where people can enjoy relief from the hustle and bustle of city streets. We will protect the Green Belt, and maintain national protections for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Parks, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and other environmental designations.

### *We will help you enjoy cleaner air and water*

We will continue to do even more to tackle air pollution and clean up our rivers and waterways, including supporting the Thames Tideway Tunnel. We have spent over £3 billion on improving flood defences, and capped the cost of flood insurance. We will now go further, building 1,400 new flood defence schemes, to protect 300,000 homes.

### *We will build new infrastructure in an environmentally-sensitive way*

We will build new roads and railways in a way that limits, as far as possible, their impact on the environment. This includes investing £300 million in cutting light pollution from new roads, doing more tunnelling, building better noise barriers and helping to restore lost habitat. We will also replace locally any biodiversity lost in the construction of High Speed 2. We set up the Natural Capital Committee to put hard economic numbers on the value of our environment, and we will extend its life to at least the end of the next Parliament. We will work with it to develop a 25 Year Plan to restore the UK's biodiversity, and to ensure that both public and private investment in the environment is directed where we need it most.

## *We want to protect our environment for future generations*

### *We will create a 'Blue Belt' to protect precious marine habitats*

Earlier this year, we announced the creation of a new Marine Protected Area around the Pitcairn Islands – the largest protected expanse of sea in the world. We will now go even further, creating a Blue Belt around the UK's 14 Overseas Territories, subject to local support and environmental need. We will designate a further protected area at Ascension Island, subject to the views of the local community. And, off our own coasts, we will complete the network of Marine Conservation Zones that we have already started, to create a UK Blue Belt of protected sites.

### *We will protect animal welfare*

The quality of the food on your plate, and the economic security of our farmers, depend on us upholding the highest standards of animal welfare. We will push for

high animal welfare standards to be incorporated into international trade agreements and into reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. We will ban wild animals in circuses and press for all EU member states to ensure that animals are only sent to slaughterhouses that meet high welfare standards. We will encourage other countries to follow the EU's lead in banning animal testing for cosmetics and work to accelerate the global development and take-up of alternatives to animal testing where appropriate. We want people to integrate fully into British society, but that does not mean they should have to give up the things they hold dear in their religion. So while we will always make sure the Food Standards Agency properly regulates the slaughter of livestock and poultry, we will protect methods of religious slaughter, such as shechita and halal.

**A record investment in Britain's flood defences – over £3 billion**

### *We will tackle international wildlife trade*

As hosts of the London Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade, we helped secure the adoption of the London Declaration on Illegal Wildlife Trade and will continue to lead the world in stopping the poaching that kills thousands of rhinos, elephants and tigers each year. We will oppose any resumption of commercial whaling, and seek further measures at the EU and internationally to end shark-finning. We will promote effective worldwide measures for tuna conservation, press for a total ban on ivory sales, and support the Indian Government in its efforts to protect the Asian elephant. We will press for full 'endangered species' status for polar bears and a ban on the international trade in polar bear skins, as well as for greater attention to be paid to the impact of climate change on wildlife and habitats in Polar Regions in the Arctic Council and other international fora.



# Guaranteeing you clean, affordable and secure energy supplies

## Our commitment to you:

*Affordable, reliable energy is critical to our economy, to our national security, and to family budgets. We will:*

- **keep your bills as low as possible** and promote competition in the energy market
- ensure your homes and businesses have **energy supplies they can rely on**
- **help you insulate your home**
- **halt the spread of subsidised onshore wind farms**
- **meet our climate change commitments, cutting carbon emissions as cheaply as possible, to save you money**

Without secure energy supplies, we leave British families and business at the mercy of fluctuating global oil and gas prices; we increase our dependence on foreign sources of energy; and we become less safe and less prosperous as a result.

National energy policy demands a willingness to take decisions today for the good of tomorrow. But Labour took the opposite approach. Power margins – the safety cushion we need to prevent blackouts – have fallen to record lows because of their historic failure to invest in new capacity. Domestic sources of oil and gas were unexploited. And Labour failed to deliver the next generation of energy projects that will help us keep the lights on, drive bills down and reduce carbon emissions.

All this hurt consumers. The number of major energy suppliers halved and energy bills soared, with the average gas bill more than doubling.

We have taken a different approach. Where Labour was chronically short-termist, we have secured decent, affordable energy supplies not just for the coming years, but for the coming decades.

Our long-term plan has unlocked £59 billion of investment in electricity. All parts of the UK will soon be helping to deliver secure, affordable and low-carbon energy, from the Hinkley Point nuclear power station, to

**Without secure energy supplies our country becomes less safe and less prosperous**

offshore wind turbine manufacturing at the new Green Port in Hull, the next generation of pipelines West of Shetland and the Swansea tidal lagoon. Our tax cuts have encouraged record levels of investment in existing North Sea gas, and the birth of a new industry, shale gas, which could create many thousands of jobs.

And we have delivered a better deal for consumers too. We have demanded that energy companies simplify their tariffs; encouraged more independent suppliers – which now account for ten per cent of the household market; and made it much easier for people to switch energy providers.

But the job is only half done. We need a Conservative Government to see through this long-term plan and secure clean but affordable energy supplies for generations to come. This means a significant expansion in new nuclear and gas; backing good-value green energy; and pushing for more new investment in UK energy sources. Healthy competition, not short-termist

political intervention, is the best way to secure a good deal for consumers. So we will keep on relentlessly pushing for more competition to keep bills low.

This is a long-term plan to keep the lights on; keep our homes warm; and keep families from endless worry about their energy bills.

**Under Labour, the average gas bill more than doubled**

## Our plan of action:

### *We will promote competition to keep your bills as low as possible*

We have helped increase the number of independent energy suppliers from seven to 21, made it easier for customers to switch to better deals, slashed the number of tariffs to just 4 per supplier, and cut switching times in half. We will go even further, implementing the recommendations of the Competition and Markets Authority investigation that we triggered. We will ensure that every home and business in the country has a Smart Meter by 2020, delivered as cost-effectively as possible, so consumers have instant, accurate bills and can switch to an alternative provider within one day. And we will support low-cost measures on energy efficiency, with the goal of insulating a million more homes over the next five years, supporting our commitment to tackle fuel poverty.

### *We will secure your energy supplies*

We will continue to support the safe development of shale gas, and ensure that local communities share the

***We want a better deal – and low bills – for hardworking families***

**3.1 million people are now on better energy tariffs**

proceeds through generous community benefit packages. We will create a Sovereign Wealth Fund for the North of England, so that the shale gas resources of the North are used to invest in the future of the North. We will continue to support development of North Sea oil and gas. We will provide start-up funding for promising new renewable technologies and research, but will only give significant support to those that clearly represent value for money.

### *We will halt the spread of onshore windfarms*

Onshore wind now makes a meaningful contribution to our energy mix and has been part of the necessary increase in renewable capacity. Onshore windfarms often fail to win public support, however, and are unable by themselves to provide the firm capacity that a stable energy system requires. As a result, we will end any new public subsidy for them and change the law so that local people have the final say on windfarm applications.

### *We will protect our planet for our children*

We have been the greenest government ever, setting up the world's first Green Investment Bank, signing a deal to build the first new nuclear plant in a generation, trebling renewable energy generation to 19 per cent, bringing energy efficiency measures to over one million homes, and committing £1 billion for carbon capture and storage. We are the largest offshore wind market in the world. We will push for a strong global climate deal later this year – one that keeps the goal of limiting global warming to two-degrees firmly in reach. At home, we will continue to support the UK Climate Change Act. We will cut emissions as cost-effectively as possible, and will not support additional distorting and expensive power sector targets.

## Fighting crime and standing up for victims

### Our commitment to you:

*Your local area should be a safe place to grow up, work, raise a family and retire. We will continue to cut crime and make your community safer. We will:*

- **finish the job of police reform**, so you can have more confidence that your local policing team is working effectively
- **toughen sentencing and reform the prison system**, so dangerous criminals are kept off your streets
- **support victims**, so that the most vulnerable in our society get the support they deserve.
- **scrap the Human Rights Act and curtail the role of the European Court of Human Rights**, so that foreign criminals can be more easily deported from Britain.

Crime is down by more than 20 per cent since 2010, according to the independent Crime Survey, and is at its lowest point since records began. Lower crime means fewer robberies, less violence on our streets, fewer lives ruined, and more people able to feel confident about the future.

Labour didn't trust our brilliant policemen and women, probation staff and prison officers to do their job, but tried to micromanage every police force from Whitehall, doing serious damage to officer morale, police discretion and forces' performance. And Labour failed to provide sufficient prison places: tens of thousands of prisoners were released early, putting the public at risk.

We have made progress in turning around the situation we inherited, with comprehensive reforms to policing, rehabilitation and the rights of victims. We have already increased the proportion of officers working on the frontline, and cut 4.5 million hours of police paperwork. We have given Chief Constables a clear mandate to cut crime, reformed stop and search, established the National Crime Agency, strengthened the police inspectorate, made the police more accountable through Police and Crime Commissioners, increased transparency through crime maps, and set up the College of Policing to drive up professional standards.

We have made sure that 45,000 offenders will now receive supervision and rehabilitation on release from prison,

with providers paid according to the results they achieve in reducing reoffending. We reformed drug treatment so that abstinence and full recovery is the goal, instead of the routine maintenance of people's addictions with substitute drugs. And with new laws to crack down on domestic violence, measures to prevent Female Genital Mutilation

**Crime has been cut by more than a fifth**

(FGM), the first ever Modern Slavery Act, action to tackle human trafficking and substantial progress in tackling online child abuse, we have consistently stood up for the most vulnerable in our society.

We will carry on making every community safer, even when resources are tight. We will continue reducing paperwork, increasing sentence lengths for the most serious offences, and making sure that prisons are places of rehabilitation.

We need to complete our revolution in the way we manage offenders in the community, using the latest technology to keep criminals on the straight and narrow. And we must also become smarter when it comes to crime prevention, dealing with the drivers of crime such as drugs and alcohol. So we will focus not only on punishment, but also

on rehabilitating offenders and intervening early to prevent troubled young people being drawn into crime.

## Our plan of action:

### *We will finish the job of police reform, backing officers to fight crime unimpeded*

We will ensure proper provision of health and community-based places of safety for people suffering mental health crises – saving police time and stopping vulnerable people being detained in police custody. To speed up justice, we will extend the use of police-led prosecutions. We will allow police forces to retain a greater percentage of the value of assets they seize from criminals. We will improve our response to cyber-crime with reforms to police training and an expansion in the number of volunteer ‘Cyber Specials’. We will enable fire and police services to work more closely together and develop the role of our elected and accountable Police and Crime Commissioners.

### *We will transform the relationship between the police and the public*

We have taken action to boost public confidence and trust in the police and now want to go even further. We will improve the diversity of police recruitment – especially of black and ethnic minority officers – by supporting the development of new direct entry and fast-track schemes such as Police Now, which offers top graduates a new route into policing. We will overhaul the police complaints system. We will use the Police Innovation Fund to accelerate the adoption of new technologies, including mobile devices, that will transform the service the public receives. And we will legislate to mandate changes in police practices if stop and search does not become more targeted and stop to arrest ratios do not improve.

### *We will introduce more effective crime prevention measures to break the cycle of offending*

We are developing a modern crime prevention strategy to address the key drivers of crime. We will publish standards, performance data and a ranking system for the security of smartphones and tablets, as well as online financial and retail services. We will overhaul the system of police cautions, and ensure that offenders always

have conditions, such as victim redress, attached to their punishment. We will create a blanket ban on all new psychoactive substances, protecting young people from exposure to so-called ‘legal highs’. And we will make sobriety orders available to all courts in England and Wales, enforced through new alcohol monitoring tags.

### *We will reform our prison system*

Despite making savings in the prison budget, there are around 3,000 more adult male prison places today than in 2010. We will make further savings by closing old, inefficient prisons, building larger, modern and fit-for-purpose ones and expanding payment-by-results. And we will introduce widespread random testing of drug use in jails, new body scanners, greater use of mobile phone blocking technology and a new strategy to tackle corruption in prisons.

There are around 3,000 more adult male prison places today than in 2010

### *We will protect victims and support the vulnerable*

We have already introduced a new Victims’ Code and taken steps to protect vulnerable witnesses and victims. Now we will strengthen victims’ rights further, with a new Victims’ Law that will enshrine key rights for victims, including the right to make a personal statement and have it read in court before sentencing – and before the Parole Board decides on a prisoner’s release. We will give all vulnerable victims and witnesses greater opportunity to give evidence outside court, and roll out nationally pre-trial cross examination for child victims.

### *We will prioritise tackling violence against women and girls*

We have made protecting women and girls from violence and supporting victims and survivors of sexual violence a key priority. We will now work with local authorities, the NHS and Police and Crime Commissioners to ensure a secure future for specialist FGM and forced marriage units, refuges and rape crisis centres. We will ensure that all publicly-funded

advocates have specialist victims' training before becoming involved in serious sexual offences cases. We have set up an independent statutory inquiry into child sexual abuse, and will make sure it can challenge institutions and individuals without fear or favour, and get to the truth. And we will continue the urgent work of overhauling how our police, social services and other agencies work together to protect vulnerable children, especially from the kind of organised grooming and sexual exploitation that has come to light in Rotherham, and other towns and cities across the UK.

### *We will toughen sentencing and use new technology to protect the public*

We will continue to reform the way we rehabilitate prisoners. We will deploy new technology to monitor offenders in the community and to bring persistent offenders to justice more quickly. A new semi-custodial sentence will be introduced for prolific criminals, allowing for a short, sharp spell in custody to change behaviour. To tackle those cases where judges get it wrong, we will extend the scope of the Unduly Lenient Scheme, so a wider range of sentences can be challenged. We will review the legislation governing hate crimes, including the case for extending the scope of the law to cover crimes committed against people on the basis of disability, sexual

orientation or transgender identity. We will improve the treatment of women offenders, exploring how new technology may enable more women with young children to serve their sentence in the community.

### *We will reform human rights law and our legal system*

We have stopped prisoners from having the vote, and have deported suspected terrorists such as Abu Qatada, despite all the problems created by Labour's human rights laws. The next Conservative Government will scrap the Human Rights Act, and introduce a British Bill of Rights. This will break the formal link between British courts and the European Court of Human Rights, and make our own Supreme Court the ultimate arbiter of human rights matters in the UK. We will continue the £375 million modernisation of our courts system, reducing delay and frustration for the public. And we will continue to review our legal aid systems, so they can continue to provide access to justice in an efficient way.

## *We will scrap the Human Rights Act and introduce a British Bill of Rights*

## Preventing terrorism, countering extremism

### Our commitment to you:

*Keeping you and your family safe is our overriding priority. The threat of extremism and terrorism remains serious, but with our tough, intelligent and comprehensive approach, we will confront and ultimately defeat it. We will:*

- **strengthen the ability of the police and intelligence agencies to disrupt terrorist plots, so the authorities have all the tools they need to prevent attacks**
- **deal with online radicalisation and propaganda, so we can reduce the risk of young people being drawn into extremism and terrorism**
- **tackle all forms of extremism, including non-violent extremism, so our values and our way of life are properly promoted and defended**

The first duty of government is to keep you safe. We will always do whatever is necessary to protect the British people. We have protected and increased the budgets for the security and intelligence agencies and counter-terrorism policing. But the scale of the threat to our country from a number of terrorist groups remains serious, and the rise of ISIL in Syria and Iraq has created new havens for terrorists from which attacks against Britain can be planned, financed and directed.

***We will always do whatever is necessary to protect the British people***

However, the nature of the threat we face is making it more difficult for the security services to identify terrorist plots – especially thanks to new technology. We must always ensure our outstanding intelligence and security agencies have the powers they need to keep us safe. At the same time, we continue to reject any suggestions of sweeping, authoritarian measures that would threaten our hard-won freedoms. In the last year alone, we have given the authorities greater powers to disrupt and control the movements of people who want to travel abroad to fight, including strengthening powers to confiscate the passports of those seeking to travel to commit terrorism.

The next Conservative Government will continue to take a tough, intelligent and comprehensive approach to preventing terrorism and confronting extremism. We will update our counter-terrorism laws wherever necessary to make sure they properly reflect the threats we face.

**Abu Hamza and Abu Qatada removed from this country once and for all**

Dealing with these threats is not just about new powers. It is about how we combat extremism in all its forms. We need to tackle it at root, before it takes the form of violence and terror. At the heart of our approach lies an uncompromising defence of British values, and a very simple message: in Britain, you do not just enjoy the freedom to live how you choose; you have a responsibility to respect others too.

### Our plan of action:

***We will strengthen counter-terrorism powers***

We have strengthened counter-terrorism laws, including making it easier to stop British nationals travelling



abroad to fight, and control the return of those who do. We will keep up to date the ability of the police and security services to access communications data – the ‘who, where, when and how’ of a communication, but not its content. Our new communications data legislation will strengthen our ability to disrupt terrorist plots, criminal networks and organised child grooming gangs, even as technology develops. We will maintain the ability of the authorities to intercept the content of suspects’ communications, while continuing to strengthen oversight of the use of these powers.

*We will confront all forms of extremism, including non-violent extremism*

We have already reformed the Prevent strategy so that it focuses on non-violent as well as violent extremism. We will now go even further. We will outlaw groups that foment hate with the introduction of new Banning Orders for extremist organisations. These could be applied to dangerous organisations that fall short of the existing thresholds for proscription under

Over 75,000 pieces of unlawful material have been taken down from the internet

terrorism legislation. To restrict the harmful activities of extremist individuals, we will create new Extremism Disruption Orders. These new powers might, for instance, prevent those who are seeking to radicalise young British people online from using the internet or communicating via social media. We will develop a strategy to tackle the infiltration of extremists into our schools and public services. We will strengthen Ofcom’s role so that tough measures can be taken against channels that broadcast extremist content. We will enable employers to check whether an individual is an extremist and bar them from working with children. And we will take further measures to ensure colleges and universities do not give a platform to extremist speakers.





## Dignity in your retirement

### Our commitment to you:

*If you have worked hard during your life, saved, paid your taxes and done the right thing, you deserve dignity and security when you retire. We want Britain to be the best country in which to grow old. We will:*

- **take the family home out of Inheritance Tax** for all but the richest by raising the effective threshold for married couples and civil partners to £1 million
- continue to **increase the State Pension** through our triple lock, so it rises by at least 2.5 per cent, inflation or earnings, whichever is highest
- reward saving by **introducing a new single-tier pension**
- give you **the freedom to invest and spend your pension however you like** – and let you pass it on to your loved ones tax-free
- **protect pensioner benefits** including the free bus pass, TV licences and Winter Fuel Payment
- ensure Britain has a strong economy, so we can continue to protect the NHS and **make sure no-one is forced to sell their home to pay for care.**

Our pensioners have made this country what it is, and we believe that, in return, younger generations owe it to them to ensure they have dignity and security in their old age.

In office, Labour neglected the elderly. They raided pensions with a £150 billion stealth tax. One year they increased pensions by a paltry 75 pence. And they did nothing to give people control over their savings and pensions, or to stop them from having to sell their homes to pay for care. In place of these meagre pension increases, we have introduced the triple lock: the Basic State Pension will now always rise in line with whichever is higher – earnings, inflation or 2.5 per cent. Since 2010, we have seen the Basic Pension has risen in value by £950. We have abolished the Default Retirement Age, so you can keep working as long as you like. We

are replacing the Pension Credit – basically a means test – with a new Single-Tier Pension: whatever people save, they will keep. And we have introduced a cap on residential social care costs: no one will have to sell their home to pay for care. On top of all this, we have scrapped compulsory annuities, giving people complete control over their pension pots; kept all pensioner benefits; and protected NHS spending.

In the next five years, as our country recovers and our elderly population grows, we will continue to put pensioners at the heart of our long-term economic plan.

### Our plan of action:

*We will look after you as you grow older*

We will cap charges for residential social care from April 2016 and also allow deferred payment agreements, so no one has to sell their home. For the first time, individual liabilities will be limited, giving everyone the peace of mind that they will receive the care they need, and that they will be protected from unlimited costs if they develop very serious care

***We are building a Britain where everyone who has worked hard and done the right thing can enjoy security in retirement***



## We will continue to increase the Basic State Pension through our 'triple lock' guarantee

needs – such as dementia. We will protect the NHS budget and we will prioritise funding for dementia research.

### *We will guarantee your financial security as you grow older*

We will keep the triple lock pension system. From April 2016 we are bringing in a Single Tier Pension; this will effectively abolish means-testing the pensions of people who have contributed all their lives. We will maintain all the current pensioner benefits including Winter Fuel Payments, free bus passes, free prescriptions and TV licences for the next Parliament, while implementing the "temperature test" for Winter Fuel Payment, so that expats in hot countries no longer receive it. And we will allow pensioners to access their pension savings and decide whether or not to take out an annuity, so they can make their own decisions about their money.

### *We will help you support your loved-ones*

We have guaranteed that ISAs can now be passed on to a spouse tax-free, so that from this April they are no longer subject to Income Tax and Capital Gains Tax. We have abolished the 55 per cent tax on pension pots, so that when the deceased is 75 or over any beneficiary only has to pay their marginal Income Tax rate – normally 20 per cent – when they draw down the pension. And we have enabled anyone who dies before the age of 75 to pass on their pension pot completely tax-free, so that beneficiaries will pay no tax on pensions they inherit or on the income they draw down. And we will take the family home out of tax for all but the richest by increasing the effective Inheritance Tax threshold for married couples and civil partners to £1 million, with a new transferable main residence allowance of £175,000 per person. This will be paid for by reducing the tax relief on pension contributions for people earning more than £150,000.

*It's your money, you worked hard for it – and you should be able to pass it onto your loved-ones*



## Stronger together: a Union for the 21st century

### Our commitment to you:

*Wherever you live in the great nations of our United Kingdom, we are on your side. We will:*

- **give English MPs a veto over matters only affecting England, including on Income Tax**
- **honour in full our commitments to Scotland to devolve extensive new powers**
- **implement the agreed settlement for Wales, handing over more responsibility to the Welsh Assembly**
- **continue to build a Northern Ireland where politics works, the economy grows and society is strong.**

England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – ours is the greatest union of nations the world has ever seen. Together we have done so much, and we can do much more. The Conservative Party is the party of the Union – and we will always do our utmost to keep our family of nations together.

It was right to create the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly, but the job was not finished. Without the ability to raise money, the devolved Parliaments were not accountable to taxpayers. Without devolution to local councils and communities, power felt as distant as ever. And one fundamental unfairness remains today: Scottish MPs are able to cast the decisive vote on matters that only affected England and Wales, while English and Welsh MPs cannot vote on matters that only affect Scotland. This leaves a space for resentment to fester – and put our Union in jeopardy.

We have tackled the problems we inherited. First, we held the referendum on Scottish independence. It was the right thing to do, and the question of Scotland's place in the United Kingdom is now settled. We have made the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly responsible for funding more of what they spend. We have agreed with Northern Ireland's parties a deal to help ensure that politics works, the economy grows and society is more cohesive and united. And we have set out clear plans for English votes for English laws.

All this reflects a core Conservative belief: power to the people. Around Britain you can see that principle in practice.

In town halls, councillors now have more of a say over public spending. In communities, local people have the right to vote in referendums on council tax rises. Neighbourhoods are deciding what is built in their area and what happens to assets such as parks and public buildings.

***We believe in giving power to hardworking taxpayers, letting you decide on the issues that affect you and your family***

Our commitment to the Union means we want to strengthen it. We will let local people have more say on local planning and let them vote on local issues. We will not let anyone impose artificial regions on England – our traditional towns, boroughs, cities and counties are here to stay. We will continue devolution settlements for Scotland and Wales, and implement the Stormont House Agreement in Northern Ireland. And we will give English MPs a veto over English-only matters, including on Income Tax – answering the West Lothian Question.

In the last five years, we have proven that we are the party of the Union. We will go further in the next Parliament, pushing power out beyond Westminster, Cardiff Bay, Holyrood and Stormont, so we keep our United Kingdom strong and secure for the long term.

## Our plan of action:

### *We will build an enduring settlement for the United Kingdom*

We will work to ensure a stable constitution that is fair to the people of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. We will strengthen and improve devolution for each part of our United Kingdom in a way that accepts that there is no one-size-fits-all solution: we will implement the Smith Commission and St David's Day Agreement or equivalent changes in the rest of the UK, including English votes for English laws.

### *We will give English MPs a veto over matters only affecting England*

We will maintain the Westminster Parliament as the UK and England's law-making body. But we want Parliament to work in a way that ensures decisions affecting England, or England and Wales, can only be taken with the consent of the majority of MPs representing constituencies in England, or in England and Wales. We will end the manifest unfairness whereby Scotland is able to decide its own laws in devolved areas, only for Scottish MPs also to be able to have the potentially decisive say on similar matters that affect only England and Wales. We will maintain the integrity of the UK Parliament by ensuring that MPs from all parts of the UK continue to deliberate and vote together, including to set overall spending levels. But we will:

- change parliamentary procedures so that the detail of legislation affecting only England or England and Wales will be considered by a Committee drawn in proportion to party strength in England or England and Wales.
- add a new stage to how English legislation is passed; no bill or part of a bill relating only to England would be able to pass to its Third Reading and become law without being approved through a legislative consent motion by a Grand Committee made up of all English MPs, or all English and Welsh MPs.
- extend the principle of English consent to financial matters such as how spending is distributed within England and to taxation – including an English rate of Income Tax – when the equivalent decisions have been devolved to Scotland.

### *We will honour in full our commitments to Scotland*

A new Scotland Bill will be in our first Queen's Speech and will be introduced in the first session of a new Parliament. We will implement the recommendations of the Smith Commission so that more than 50 per cent of the Scottish Parliament's budget will be funded from revenues raised in Scotland and it will have significant new welfare powers to complement existing devolved powers in health and social care. We will provide the Scottish Parliament with one of the most extensive packages of tax and spending powers of any devolved legislature in the world. We will retain the Barnett Formula as the basis for determining the grant to cover that part of the Scottish Parliament's budget not funded by tax revenues raised in Scotland. We will agree new rules with the Scottish Government for how the block grant will be adjusted, to take account of the new devolved tax and welfare powers. And we will ensure that where responsibility for taxation has been devolved, tax changes only affect public spending in that part of the country.

### *We will implement Wales' devolution settlement*

We will clarify the division of powers between Wales and the UK Government. We will:

- devolve to the Welsh Assembly control over its own affairs – including the Assembly name, size and electoral system, Assembly elections and voting age.
- implement other recommendations of the second Silk Report where there is all-party support as set out in the St David's Day Agreement; this will include devolving to the Welsh Assembly important economic powers over ports and energy consents.
- introduce a new Wales Bill if these changes require legislation.
- continue to reserve policing and justice as matters for the UK Parliament.
- introduce a 'funding floor' to protect Welsh relative funding and provide certainty for the Welsh Government to plan for the future, once it has called a referendum on Income Tax powers in the next Parliament.

- make the Welsh Government responsible for raising more of the money it spends so the Welsh people can hold their politicians to account.

*We will continue to build a Northern Ireland where politics works, the economy grows and society is strong*

We will maintain Northern Ireland's position within the United Kingdom on the basis of the consent of its people. Our strong support for the political institutions established over the past two decades as a result of the various Agreements will continue. We will:

- put the safety and security of the people of Northern Ireland as our highest priority. We will develop and implement our strategy to combat terrorism, giving the strongest possible support to the brave men and

women of the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

- work to implement fully and faithfully the historic Stormont House Agreement to enable devolution to function more effectively; to deal with the legacy of the past; and to make progress on divisive issues such as flags and parading.
- continue to work closely with the Northern Ireland Executive to implement commitments in the 2013 economic pact to rebalance the economy and to build a more united and stronger society.
- complete the devolution of Corporation Tax powers to the Assembly, consistent with the Executive fulfilling its commitments on finance, welfare reform and efficiencies in the Stormont House Agreement.



## Real change in our relationship with the European Union

### Our commitment to you:

*For too long, your voice has been ignored on Europe. We will:*

- *give you a say over whether we should stay in or leave the EU, with **an in-out referendum by the end of 2017***
- *commit to keeping the pound and **staying out of the Eurozone***
- *reform the workings of the EU, which is too big, too bossy and too bureaucratic*
- *reclaim power from Brussels on your behalf and **safeguard British interests in the Single Market***
- *back businesses to create jobs in Britain by **completing ambitious trade deals and reducing red tape.***

The EU needs to change. And it is time for the British people – not politicians – to have their say. Only the Conservative Party will deliver real change and real choice on Europe, with an in-out referendum by the end of 2017.

Labour failed to give you a choice on the EU. They handed over major new powers to Brussels without your consent, and gave away £7 billion of the British rebate. We have taken action in Europe to promote your economic security. We cut the EU budget for the first time ever, saving British taxpayers £8.15 billion. We took Britain out of Eurozone bailouts, including for Greece – the first ever return of powers from Brussels. Our Prime Minister vetoed a new EU treaty that would have damaged Britain's interests. And we have pursued a bold, positive, pro-business agenda, exempting smallest businesses from red tape, promoting free trade, and pushing to extend the Single Market to new sectors, like digital.

***We believe in letting the people decide: so we will hold an in-out referendum on our membership of the EU before the end of 2017***

But there is much more to do. The EU is too bureaucratic and too undemocratic. It interferes too much in our daily lives, and the scale of migration triggered by new members joining in recent years has had a real impact on local communities. We are clear about what we want from Europe. We say: yes to the Single Market. Yes to turbo-charging free trade. Yes to working together where we are stronger together than alone. Yes to a family of nation states, all part of a European Union – but whose interests, crucially, are guaranteed whether inside the Euro or out. No to 'ever closer union.' No to a constant flow of power to Brussels. No to unnecessary interference. And no, of course, to the Euro, to participation in Eurozone bail-outs or notions like a European Army.

It will be a fundamental principle of a future Conservative Government that membership of the European Union depends on the consent of the British people – and in recent years that consent has worn wafer-thin. That's why, after the election, we will negotiate a new settlement for Britain in Europe, and then ask the British people whether they want to stay in the EU on this reformed basis or leave. David Cameron has committed that he will only lead a government that offers an in-out referendum. We will hold that in-out referendum before the end of 2017 and respect the outcome.

So the choice at this election is clear: Labour and the

Liberal Democrats won't give you a say over the EU. UKIP can't give you a say. Only the Conservative Party will deliver real change in Europe – and only the Conservatives can and will deliver an in-out referendum.

## Our plan of action:

### *We will let you decide whether to stay in or leave the EU*

We will legislate in the first session of the next Parliament for an in-out referendum to be held on Britain's membership of the EU before the end of 2017. We will negotiate a new settlement for Britain in the EU. And then we will ask the British people whether they want to stay in on this basis, or leave. We will honour the result of the referendum, whatever the outcome.

### *We will protect Britain's economy*

We will protect our economy from any further integration of the Eurozone. The integration of the Eurozone has raised acute questions for non-Eurozone countries like the United Kingdom. We benefit from the Single Market and do not want to stand in the way of the Eurozone resolving its difficulties. Indeed, given the trade between Britain and the Eurozone countries we want to see these economies returning to growth. But we will not let the integration of the Eurozone jeopardise the integrity of the Single Market or in any way disadvantage the UK.

### *We will reclaim powers from Brussels*

We want to see powers flowing away from Brussels, not to it. We have already taken action to return around 100 powers, but we want to go further. We want national parliaments to be able to work together to block unwanted European legislation. And we want an end to our commitment to an 'ever closer union,' as enshrined in

David Cameron vetoed a new EU Treaty that would have damaged Britain's interests – the first time in history that a British Prime Minister has done so

the Treaty to which every EU country has to sign up. Furthermore, we will continue to ensure that defence policy remains firmly under British national control, maintaining NATO and the transatlantic relationship as the cornerstones of our defence and security policy.

### *We will scrap the Human Rights Act*

We will scrap Labour's Human Rights Act and introduce a British Bill of Rights which will restore common sense to the application of human rights in the UK. The Bill will remain faithful to the basic principles of human rights, which we signed up to in the original European Convention on Human Rights. It will protect basic rights, like the right to a fair trial, and the right to life, which are an essential part of a modern democratic society. But it will reverse the mission creep that has meant human rights law being used for more and more purposes, and often with little regard for the rights of wider society. Among other things the Bill will stop terrorists and other serious foreign criminals who pose a threat to our society from using spurious human rights arguments to prevent deportation.

### *We will take action in Europe to make you better off*

We want an EU that helps Britain move ahead, not one that holds us back. We have already succeeded in exempting our smallest businesses from new EU regulations, and kicked-off negotiations for a massive EU trade deal with the USA, which could be worth billions of pounds to the UK economy. We will build on this. We want to preserve the integrity of the Single Market, by insisting on protections for those countries that have kept their own currencies. We want to expand the Single Market, breaking down the remaining barriers to trade and ensuring that new sectors are opened up to British firms. We want to ensure that new rules target unscrupulous behaviour in the financial services industry, while safeguarding Britain as a global centre of excellence in finance. So we will resist EU attempts to restrict legitimate financial services activities. We will press for lower EU spending, further reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and Structural Funds, and for EU money to be focused on promoting jobs and growth.



## A Britain standing tall in the world

### Our commitment to you:

*Everything we do around the world will be driven by a determination to protect your security and help you prosper. We will:*

- *ensure Britain is a major player on the world stage, using diplomacy to protect your interests, uphold British values and tackle threats to your security and prosperity*
- *help generate new trade, investment and job opportunities, to benefit you and your family*
- *maintain our world class Armed Forces so they continue to guarantee your security*
- *uphold our commitment to spend 0.7 per cent of gross national income on international development.*

Economic security and national security are two sides of the same coin. Without one, you cannot have the other. Our prosperity depends upon Britain remaining an active, outward-looking nation, one that is engaged with the world, not looking in on itself. We will maintain Britain's strong global role and our capacity to project British power and values around the world.

### *We want a strong, secure and stable country*

Labour's Great Recession weakened Britain on the world stage. They left a £38 billion black hole in the defence budget, went 12 years without conducting a Strategic Defence Review, and, at times, failed to provide our Armed Forces with the equipment they needed in Afghanistan. They shut down over 30 British diplomatic missions, failed to plan properly for Iraq's reconstruction, ignored trade and investment opportunities overseas, and neglected vital relationships.

We have strengthened Britain's influence in the world. The National Security Council that we established ensures proper, strategic decision-making at the top of government. We have boosted exports to emerging markets, opened new diplomatic posts in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and led the world in promoting women's rights and tackling sexual violence in conflict. We have balanced the defence budget and set out a clear strategy to defend our nation for the long term.

We and our allies face major challenges: Islamist extremism, an aggressive Russia, economic uncertainty in the Eurozone, nuclear proliferation and infectious diseases. A Conservative Government will tackle these challenges. We will use our membership of NATO, the EU, the Commonwealth, our UN Security Council seat, our Special Relationship with the USA, our intelligence agencies, vital institutions like the BBC World Service and British Council, and the strong personal links between our diaspora communities and other countries, to achieve the best for Britain.

### *Only with a strong economy can we maintain our world-class Armed Forces and protect our national security*

We will back this up with UK military power and international aid. Our long-term economic plan will ensure we have the economic strength to maintain our world-class Armed Forces, to uphold our national security and project power globally. Aid helps prevent failed states from becoming havens for terrorists. It builds long-term markets for our businesses, by promoting global prosperity, and reduces migration pressures. So we will maintain our commitment to tackling conflict, poverty and disease around the world.

## A stronger voice for our nation on the world stage

### Our plan of action:

#### *We will keep you secure*

We will tackle global terrorism and the poisonous ideology of Islamist extremism while taking a patient, long-term approach to preventing conflict and state failure. We will work with our partners to address threats to UK security, including the spread of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, pandemic diseases, the illegal drugs trade, piracy and organised crime. We will:

- work for peace, stability and an inclusive settlement in Syria and Iraq; and pursue a comprehensive political and military strategy to defeat ISIL
- uphold the sovereignty, integrity and capacity of Ukraine, and continue to reject Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea
- stand shoulder to shoulder with our NATO allies, reassuring all its members – especially those closest to Russia – of their security, and continue to support the Euro-Atlantic path for Western Balkan nations
- ensure that the significant achievements of our Armed Forces in Afghanistan are maintained; and support the Government of Afghanistan in ensuring that the country remains stable and never again becomes a haven for international terrorists
- support a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, robustly defending the right of Israel to protect its security, while continuing to condemn illegal settlement building, which undermines the prospects for peace
- protect global security by helping to lead international efforts to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon; and work to ensure that North Korea ends its development of nuclear weapons.

#### *We will help make you better off*

Over the last five years, we have used foreign policy to

boost our prosperity. UK exports to China have more than doubled since 2009. We will do more, using the new embassies and diplomatic posts we have opened to connect Britain to the fastest-growing economies in the world. We will push for freer global trade, concluding major trade deals with the US, India and Japan and reinvigorating the World Trade Organisation. As part of our drive to attract more investment into the UK and increase British exports, we will:

- build on our strong relationship with India, push for an ambitious EU-India trade deal and support India's bid for permanent representation on the UN Security Council
- strengthen our economic links with China, doubling support for British firms selling goods there and championing an EU-China trade deal.

**UK exports to China have more than doubled since 2009**

#### *We will stand up for British values*

Our long-term security and prosperity depend on a stable international system that upholds our values. Over the last five years, we have stood up for what we believe in: intervening to stop a massacre in Libya, leading the world in tackling sexual violence in conflict, and helping women and children who have fled violence in Syria. We will continue this leadership. We will stand up for the freedom of people of all religions – and non-religious people – to practise their beliefs in peace and safety, for example by supporting persecuted Christians in the Middle East. We will strengthen the Commonwealth's focus on promoting democratic values and development. We will drive forward the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative. We will support global processes on arms control. And we will continue to support universal human rights. We will:

- uphold our Special Relationship with the USA and further strengthen our ties with our close

Commonwealth allies, Australia, Canada and New Zealand

- uphold the democratic rights of the people of Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands to remain British, for as long as that is their wish, and protect our Overseas Territories
- stand up for the rule of law and human rights in Zimbabwe

- support a democratic transition in Burma
- promote reconciliation and human rights in Sri Lanka, including through supporting the UN investigation into war crimes, which the Prime Minister was instrumental in securing following his historic visit to Jaffna
- actively support Cypriots to find a peaceful and lasting settlement to reunite their island.

## Keeping Britain safe

### Our plan of action:

#### *We will protect our nation*

We will continue to keep our Armed Forces strong so they can continue to keep you safe. We will maintain the size of the regular armed services and not reduce the army to below 82,000. We will retain the Trident continuous at sea nuclear deterrent to provide the ultimate guarantee of our safety and build the new fleet of four Successor Ballistic Missile Submarines – securing thousands of highly-skilled engineering jobs in the UK. We will work closely with our allies to continue to strengthen NATO – supporting its new multi-national rapid response force. We will maintain our global presence, strengthening our defence partnerships in the Gulf and Asia. Later this year, we will hold a National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review to plan for the future.

#### *We will maintain a balanced defence budget and give our Armed Forces the equipment they need*

We can only have strong, well-funded Armed Forces by continuing to build a stronger economy. We have the second largest defence budget in NATO and the largest in the EU. We are meeting NATO's two targets: that each country should spend two per cent of its gross national income on defence, and of that spending 20 per cent should go on major equipment. We have made commitments for the equipment plan to be funded at one per cent above inflation for the next Parliament. We plan to invest at least £160 billion in new military equipment over the next decade: as well as our six new Type 45 destroyers, we are building a

class of seven Astute submarines and buying the Joint Strike Fighter, Scout armoured vehicles, Type 26 frigates and new Apache attack helicopters. We will bring both of our new Aircraft Carriers – HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales, the largest vessels the Royal Navy has ever possessed – into service, so we have one available for use at all times. We will continue to seek value for money in defence procurement, recognising the important contribution that the UK defence industry makes to our prosperity.

**We have the biggest defence budget in the EU – and the second biggest in NATO**

#### *We will maintain strong, modern Armed Forces*

Modern, flexible Armed Forces need strong reserve capacity, alongside strong regular forces. We have invested significantly in our reserves, and we will deliver on our commitment to expand them to 35,000. We will continue to invest in our cyber defence capabilities. We will also provide more opportunities for talented people from all communities and walks of life to serve their country. We will ensure our Armed Forces overseas are not subject to persistent human rights claims that undermine their ability to do their job.

***We will do all we can to honour those who give so much***

## *We will continue to honour the Armed Forces Covenant*

We have honoured our commitment to enshrine the Armed Forces Covenant in law and done much to support our servicemen and women. We have delivered better accommodation for service families, helped service personnel buy their own home, and ensured that children of members of the Armed Forces benefit from the Pupil Premium. We have delivered proper mental health support and priority access to medical treatments for veterans. To ensure that those who serve can enjoy greater economic security, we have boosted allowances and tax reliefs. We have protected pensions for our servicemen and women. We have ensured that injured service personnel have access to the latest prosthetics and

world-class rehabilitation facilities. And we have used £450 million of LIBOR fines from banks to support the Armed Forces community. The money has been used to support a wide range of charities and good causes, from providing better play facilities for the children of service families, to helping rehabilitation through sport for injured veterans. We pressed for the introduction of the Arctic Star medal – for veterans of the Arctic Convoys – and the Bomber Command Clasp, to ensure proper recognition for those who risked their lives to keep us free. We will build on this proud record, implementing Lord Ashcroft's recommendations on the way the nation fulfils its obligations to veterans. We will work to address hearing loss among veterans. And we will continue to support the unsung heroes of the Armed Forces community: the partners and families of those who serve.

## Tackling global challenges to make you safer and more prosperous

### **Our plan of action:**

#### *We will continue to honour our commitments*

Tackling global poverty is both the right thing to do and in Britain's interests. We have delivered on our promises to meet the UN target of spending 0.7 per cent of national income as aid and to enshrine this in law. We will continue to meet the 0.7 per cent target, maintain an independent Department for International Development and keep aid untied. Our aid budget meets the OECD aid rules, and we will actively engage in international discussions to ensure that these rules fully reflect the importance of peace, stability and effective institutions for reducing poverty. We will insist that every government and organisation we fund meets global transparency standards.

#### *We will save lives*

By 2020, we will save 1.4 million children's lives, by immunising 76 million children against killer diseases. We will help at least 11 million children in the poorest countries gain a decent education, improve nutrition for at least 50 million people, who would otherwise go hungry; and help at least 60 million people get access

### **By 2020, we will save 1.4 million children's lives**

to clean water and sanitation, to stop terrible diseases. We will continue to lead the response to humanitarian emergencies, and establish a means to respond rapidly to crises. Our leading role in dealing with the recent outbreak of Ebola in West Africa is a good example of how our aid programme helps protect Britain from serious threats, while also helping countries tackle major emergencies which put their stability at risk. We will lead a major new global programme to accelerate the development of vaccines and drugs to eliminate the world's deadliest infectious diseases, while investing to save lives from malaria and working to end preventable child and maternal deaths. We will expand payment by results and ensure all money to governments is clearly earmarked for specific purposes.

#### *We will tackle the causes of poverty and promote gender equality*

We will push for new global goals to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030 and promote human development,

gender equality and good governance. We will work to prevent climate change and assist the poorest in adapting to it. As the route out of poverty is about much more than just aid, we will boost growth and jobs, making it easier for people to start up businesses and trade freely with each other. We will continue to promote the golden thread of democracy, the rule of law, property rights, a free media and open, accountable institutions. We will promote girls' education, encourage equal access to property rights and work to achieve access to family planning for everyone who wants it. We will continue to lead efforts to tackle violence against women and girls, end FGM and combat early and

forced marriage, both at home and abroad.

### *We will help you fight poverty*

Our International Citizen Service has given thousands of young Brits the opportunity to volunteer abroad. We will triple it in size. We will also double our successful Aid Match scheme, which matches donations to charity from the aid budget. We will boost partnerships between UK institutions and their counterparts in the developing world, and help people in the UK give or lend money directly to individuals and entrepreneurs around the world.





## ***Conclusion***

### **SO THIS IS OUR DETAILED PLAN FOR BRITAIN.**

Our plan to entrench the progress of the past five years. Our plan for you and your family, at every stage of your life.

### **IT IS UNDERPINNED BY SOME SIMPLE CONSERVATIVE VALUES.**

Those who work hard and do the right thing must be rewarded. Everyone should be able to rise as high as their talents and effort will take them. We measure our success not just in how we show our strength abroad, but in how we care for the weakest and most vulnerable at home.

### **ABOVE ALL, RUNNING THROUGH THIS PLAN IS A TRUE BELIEF IN BRITAIN.**

In the past five years, as so often before in our history, we have once again defied the expectations of the world to rise up and meet our challenges. The British character is renewed every day by the millions who work hard, raise their families, care for those who need help, who do the right thing – and make this country what it is.

### **THIS MANIFESTO IS ABOUT IMPROVING THE LIVES OF EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THESE PEOPLE.**

Together we have come so far. If we stick to our long-term plan, we can secure a better future for you and your family. So let us keep moving forward; and set our sights on making our great country greater still.

