

General Election 2010: political party manifestos

In preparation for the General Election on 6th May 2010, all parties set out their vision for the future of the UK in their election manifestos. All seek to answer the question of how to reduce the fiscal deficit, setting out plans to boost the economy and reduce public spending. In light of the expenses scandal, ideas about reforming politics focus on giving power to individuals and communities to have a greater say in how the country is run. Although there have been other policy announcements, this table specifically compares the manifesto pledges of the three main political parties:

| | Labour party | Conservative party | Liberal Democrat party |
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| | "A future fair for all" | "An invitation to join the Government of Britain" | "Building a fairer Britain" |
| | http://www2.labour.org.uk/manifesto-splash | http://www.conservatives.com/Policy/Manifesto.aspx | http://www.libdems.org.uk/our_manifesto.aspx |
| Public Spending | Cut Government spending by: cutting back-office and property running costs; abolishing unnecessary arms-length-bodies; sharply reducing spending on consultancy and marketing; and cutting lower-priority spend. p1:4. | Immediate action to cut spending in 2010/11 through: a freeze on major IT spending, reductions in discretionary spending and property costs. Cut Whitehall policy, funding and regulation costs by a third, saving £2 billion a year, and save a further £1 billion a year from quango bureaucracy. Would match Labour's spending plans for 2010/11 in health and overseas aid. p9 | Increase the income tax threshold to £10,000. Would implement a one-year job creation and green economic stimulus package. p23. Government savings would include: restricting tax credits, scrapping ID cards, and refusing to replace the Trident nuclear weapons system. p16-17 |
| Reducing the deficit | Start reducing the deficit next year (2011/12), and more than halve it by 2014. Achieve this through: economic growth, national insurance increase and spending cuts. p1:3-1:4 | Start reducing the deficit immediately (2010/11). Provide an emergency Budget within 50 days of taking office to set out a credible plan for eliminating the bulk of the structural current budget deficit over a Parliament. p7-8 | Start reducing the deficit next year (2011/12). Establish a 'Council on Financial Stability', involving all political parties, the Governor of the Bank of England and the Chair of the FSA, to agree the deficit reduction plan. p17 |

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| Volunteering and Community action | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New co-operative trust schools where parents, teachers and the local community come together to help govern their local school. p 3:4 • Community Land Trusts enable local people to purchase and run local amenities and assets in their area such as youth facilities, parks and open spaces. • Promote the transfer of buildings and land to the ownership or control of voluntary and community groups. p7:5 • Promote the use of community shares that support investment in football clubs, pubs, renewable energy and shops. p7:5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train independent community organisers to help people establish and run neighbourhood groups. • Provide neighbourhood grants to the UK's poorest areas to ensure they play a leading role in the rebuilding of civic society. • Every adult citizen to be a member of an active neighbourhood group, which would address local issues e.g. start new schools, take over parks and libraries that are under threat, look at planning, hold police to account. p38 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give people a say in policing and the NHS with elected police authorities and health boards. p90. • Believe that society is strengthened by communities coming together and engaging in voluntary activity, which sets people and neighbourhoods free to tackle local problems. p84 |
| Youth | <p>Set up a National Youth Community Service, with the goal that all young people would contribute at least 50 hours to their communities by the age of 19. p7:5</p> | <p>Set up a voluntary National Citizen Service for 16 year olds, spending 2 months doing outdoor activities and community work. p37</p> | <p>Strengthen the Youth Service by making it a statutory service, and by encouraging local authorities to provide youth services in partnership with young people and the voluntary sector. p51</p> |
| Social enterprise | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Social Investment Bank will make additional capital available to social enterprises. • Social enterprise hubs will provide support. • Extend the right of public-sector workers to request that they deliver frontline services through a social enterprise. p7:5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Big Society Bank. This will provide social enterprises with the start-up funding and support they need to bid for government contracts. • Work with local authorities to promote the delivery of public services by social enterprises, charities and the voluntary sector. p38 | <p>Pass a new Mutuals, Co-operatives and Social Enterprises Bill to bring the law up to date and give responsibility for mutuals to a specific minister. p27</p> |

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| Citizenship | Improve citizenship education for young people. p7:6 | Set up a National Citizen Service (see 'Youth' section) | Allow people who have been in Britain without the correct papers for ten years, but speak English, have a clean record and want to live here long-term to earn their citizenship. This route to citizenship will not apply to people arriving after 2010. p76 |
| Safeguarding | Believe the new Vetting and Barring system will protect children without being unduly burdensome or interfering in private family arrangements. p3:6 | Propose a review of the criminal records and vetting and barring regime, scaling it back to "common sense levels". p80 | Reform the process of criminal record checking so that volunteers need only one record that is portable, rather than multiple checks for each activity. p85 |
| Environment | Link together new protected areas of habitat; maintain the Green Belt; increase forest and woodland areas. P8:2 | Review the governance arrangements for National Parks and areas of natural beauty to ensure that they are more accountable to local communities. P96 | Increase the general right of access to the countryside. Make National Parks more democratically accountable, allowing a proportion of the Park boards to be elected. p81-82 Protect green areas of particular importance or value to the community. Aim to double the UK's woodland cover by 2050. p82 |
| Olympic and Paralympic Games | Would ensure that the Olympics are delivered on time and on budget, to the highest standards. Pleased that the Olympics are already inspiring a new generation of British volunteers with over a quarter of a million young people signed up to help run the Games. p7:2 | Part of the community sports budget of the National Lottery will be used for delivering an Olympic legacy, including the vigorous promotion of competitive sports through a national Olympic-style school competition. p39 | Give people from all backgrounds and generations the opportunity to participate in sports. p45 |
| Health and Social Care | National Care Service to ensure free care in the home for those with the greatest care needs. P11:3 | Support unpaid carers, and those they look after, by providing direct payments to help with care needs and by improving access to respite care. p45-49 | Respite care for one million carers. p41 |
| Older people | Continue to support older people getting involved in their community by providing matched funding for community projects. p6:4 | Will support older people to live independently at home and have access to the personal care they need. p48 | Establish an independent commission with cross-party support to develop proposals for long-term care of the elderly. p41 |

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| Criminal justice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage use of Social Impact Bonds to harness additional investment for crime prevention. p5:3 • 'Community Payback' for criminals who don't go to prison, giving locals the right to vote on the work they do. p5:2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give people the power to elect an individual who will set the policing priorities for their community.p57. • Would pay voluntary and private providers to reduce re-offending. p58 | Give people a direct say in how petty criminals and those who engage in anti-social behaviour are punished by setting up Neighbourhood Justice Panels (NJPs) p75 |
| Unemployment/ jobs training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to invest in workplace training through Train to Gain. • New Skills Accounts will help learners know what training they are entitled to, the level of funding available. • Introduce an entitlement to an apprenticeship place in 2013 for all suitably qualified 16-18 year olds. • Expand paid internships for students in fields such as media and law. p2:4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service academies to offer pre-employment training for unemployed people (training and work placements) • Create 400,000 work pairing, apprenticeship, college and training places over two years • Give SMEs a £2,000 bonus for every apprentice they hire • Establish a Community Learning Fund to help people restart their careers p16-17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work placement scheme for up to 800,000 young people to gain skills, qualifications and work experience. p24 • Give disabled job seekers better practical help to get to work, using voluntary and private sector providers, as well as JobCentre Plus services. p30 • Fully meet the up-front costs of adult apprenticeships. p24 |
| Students | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise the education and training leaving age to 18. • Introduce greater freedom for Further Education colleges to respond to local community needs and free them up from red tape. p3:6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set colleges free from direct state control and abolish many of the further education quangos Labour have put in place. • Public funding will follow the choices of students and be delivered by a single agency, the Further Education Funding Council. p17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund 15,000 extra foundation degree places. • Scrap university tuition fees. p39 • Increase the Adult Learning Grant to £45 a week for 18–24 year-olds in Further Education. p24 |
| Europe | Intend to lead the agenda for an outward-facing European Union that delivers jobs, prosperity and global influence. p10:2 | Believe there should be no further extension of the EU's power over the UK without the British people's consent. Ensure that by law no future government can hand over areas of power to the EU or join the Euro without a referendum of the British people. p113 | Would put Britain 'at the heart of Europe'. p57 |
| Culture | Support pubs that have a viable future with a new fund for community ownership in 2010-11. Provide flexibility to make it easier to have live entertainment in pubs without a licence. p7:4 | N/A | Cut red tape for putting on live music. Remove the requirement for schools and hospitals to apply for an entertainment license. p46 |

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| Democratic Reform | Referenda on introducing the Alternative Vote for elections to the House of Commons, and a democratic and accountable House of Lords, by October 2011. A free vote in parliament on reducing the voting age to 16. p9:2 | The 'Big Society' - redistribute power from the central state to individuals, families and local communities. p35 Any petition that secures 100,000 signatures will be eligible for formal debate in Parliament. p66 | Introduce a written constitution. Give people the power to determine this constitution in a citizens' convention, subject to final approval in a referendum. Introduce a fair, more proportional voting system for MPs. Give the right to vote from age 16. Replace the House of Lords with a fully-elected second chamber. p88 |
| Compact | Would consult on putting the Compact Commission, which sets guidelines for effective partnership working between government and the third sector in Britain, on a statutory footing, and ensure greater support for the Compact at local level. p7:5 | N/A | N/A |
| Asylum seekers | N/A | N/A | Allow asylum seekers to work. End the detention of children in immigration detention centres. End the deportation of refugees to countries where they face persecution. p76-77 |