

# OPEN LABOUR

## Position Paper 2021-2022

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## **INTRODUCTION**

We are Open Labour: forward-thinking, democratic socialists who believe in creating broad and diverse alliances to champion policies which transform society.

We are realistic about public opinion, and we believe that Labour's 'open Left' must seek to shape it, not to simply be followers. We believe the UK must become a high-investment, green economy rooted in a modernised, fairer democracy and a more equal society.

This document sets out the foundations of Open Labour's vision for the UK. These are our positions, as formed through years of policy-making, online and in-person conferences, and ongoing dialogue with our membership. Many thanks to the team of volunteers - we have no full-time staff - who took on the mammoth task of putting this document together.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, whilst the Conservative government has spent eye-watering amounts of money on failed projects such as the £12 billion Track & Trace system, austerity has continued on the ground and is expected to be turbo-charged under the guise of 'paying back' pandemic spending.

For over a decade, living costs have increased whilst wages have stagnated. Public services like the NHS and state education have been deliberately deprived financially, and in-work poverty is at a record high. Regional inequality is stark - Manchester Evening News reported recently that a child born in Salford is likely to live a decade less than a child born in Surrey Heath.

The Conservatives promised an era of 'levelling up' for communities across the UK, but it has yet to commence. Their grand plans for regional development are still no more than a widely-mocked white paper which sets targets to be measured in the distant year of 2030 - twenty years after they first came to power - and only offers £1 back for every £13 already taken.

The people of these islands are being short-changed by a cynical Tory mob who are more interested in saving their own skin than acting in the interests of the country they govern.

Meanwhile, the uber-rich have been 'levelled up', lining their pockets. Some of this is thanks to the government's VIP lane for public contracts to go to friends, family and donors.

The government gave more money to Covid fraudsters than the amount they've promised to 'level up' the entirety of the north of England.

We reject this broken economic settlement built on wrong priorities, falsehoods about public spending, and corruption at the heart of government. Any bold alternative must start with a rejection of fiscal austerity, privatisation and devastating cuts - in real terms - to welfare, services and public sector pay.

There must be a new deal for people across our regions and nations - one with economic security, dignity and quality of life at its heart. We need more devolution, not the centralising power grab we are now seeing.

Those who live in our more rural and coastal areas can feel as abandoned as the formerly industrial areas. Even the most popular coastal towns are deprived of modern transport services to get to them.

And recently nothing has blighted them more than the increase in dumping of human sewage in rivers and on beaches. It is an odd way for self-proclaimed patriots to treat our once green and pleasant land.

We stand with our trade unions in the fight for fairness in our workplaces and communities.

Our new deal must go hand in hand with a fundamental shift in the welfare state, regulation in housing, and better work-life balance. Enabling people to live freer, happier and healthier lives, means prioritising meaningful support and opportunities for all, with a focus on wellbeing, health and sustainability over GDP.

A programme of renewal must also prioritise driving the recruitment of the future teachers, health and social care workers, construction workers and other vital industries with severe workplace shortages. And that has to be on the basis of the promise of a satisfying and secure career.

We need a radically fairer housing market, with a new generation of affordable homes, checks on rogue landlords and rent prices, property tax reform and legislation to outlaw the house hoarding which is denying local communities spaces to live.

Open Labour has long argued that co-operation, human rights and humanitarianism should be at the forefront of any foreign policy. We are internationalists, standing for a modern human security approach - including a Human Security services to help provide stability in emergency situations - and the defence of our citizens and international treaty obligations, which includes our duty to help refugees.

The climate crisis is not just about delivering a Green New Deal at home. Globally, we must push for a greater effort to save our planet. Investing in a green and digital future to protect our security and our environment is an urgent task.

Much like Labour's winning offer to the country after World War Two, we must be bold in our offer to the UK as we emerge from the coronavirus pandemic and work to mitigate the climate crisis. Our party's determination in 1945 built a new Britain; A Britain with a national health service, a cradle-to-grave welfare state, and a new generation of affordable social housing.

Labour has the potential to deliver a democratic, green and decentralised economy which can address big challenges like climate change and pandemics. Open Labour will continue to argue for a devolved economy built on democratic and public forms of ownership, workers' rights, high standards and regulation.

The Labour Party today must have the same zeal as it approaches the next general election. It must be a bold vision offering real change going forward.

We can build a country where poverty is a thing of the past, where racism is challenged rather than met with a government seal of approval, where people have security and freedom over their own lives.

As we reflect on the last couple of years in particular, there have been a number of significant moments which revealed glimpses of the country we could be. The push to make sure no child went hungry during the school holidays, successful campaigns by the Labour and Trade Union movement for economy-saving measures like the furlough scheme in the wake of Covid, the vast solidarity with English football's young lions in their stance against racism - these were pivotal moments where people stood up and said our country can be better than this.

It is also important to remember which side of history the Conservative government instinctively went to on all of these occasions. As with every lurch forward in the march of progress, there will always be a small but loud, and often powerful, minority which wants to hold the rest of us back.

Every improvement society has ever made, every democratic right, every freedom, has been fought for and wrestled from the hands of people who would otherwise deny us those things.

The Conservatives are seeking to further water down and, in some cases, effectively repeal many existing freedoms in this country, including the democratic right to vote, the internationally-recognised right to seek asylum, and the Human Rights Act itself.

Brexit has put many of our rights at risk, now that the safety net of basic rights underpinning UK law can be ripped up by current or future Tory governments. We must seek to codify a bedrock of workplace rights, so that rights afforded to us from directives such as for parental leave, working hours, young people, equal pay, equal treatment and part time, fixed term and agency workers are strengthened.

For anybody who thinks the threat to these rights is hyperbolic - the Tories have tried to challenge such directives before. Under John Major, the Working Time Directive - created to prevent employers from requiring their workforce to work excessively long hours - was challenged by the Tory government (United Kingdom v EU Council). The European Court of Justice held that limitations on working hours are a health and safety matter.

The government could far more easily challenge this and other such rights again. We need to make sure standards in our workplaces and communities are upheld, not thrown on the rubbish heap as the Tories further deregulate and derail the economy.

Meanwhile, the Tories flex standards and systems for themselves, and their friends, family and donors, creating an elite bubble where any consequences, sense of public duty, and respect for anyone outside of their clique do not exist. We should not accept this new status quo.

This is a crucial year for the Labour Party and we should spend the next few months building and agreeing a policy platform. Once united around that vision, we must spend at least a year putting it to the public and putting ourselves in the best position to win the next election, which will likely be in 2023.

Frankly, there isn't a lot of time for mucking about. The next election may be the best chance Labour has had, or will have, for years.

When in government, Labour must be ruthless in pursuit of our goals. We must be unafraid to argue for common sense solutions built on cooperative public models of ownership and greater democracy.

The political project of the right in recent years has been about exploiting the feeling of a lack of control over our lives and using it to usher in sweeping ideological changes which exacerbate these concerns rather than address them, using a rhetoric that puts the blame on 'others'.

For Labour, the response must be about giving a voice to the diverse communities which make up our society, empowering people in their places of work, addressing inequality and strengthening rights and freedoms to give all of us greater personal stability.

Policy differences within the Labour Party may feel large at times. But it is important for us to keep some perspective.

The Conservative agenda is a world away from ours, whilst our agenda is currently a world away from government. They will also continue to alter the electoral process in their favour and make it increasingly difficult for opposition parties to wrest power from them in the future.

The dangers of another general election victory for the Conservatives cannot be underestimated. Our democracy is vulnerable and flimsy, built on the naive belief that we are 'all honourable men'.

But the current government has demonstrated what can happen when our democracy is led by those without honour. The consequences are lethal: a poisoned political arena, a divided and unstable society and a democracy stretched beyond its limits.

We must now work together to build a better Britain. A place where we value our health, happiness and security and appreciate those qualities as going hand-in-hand with our economic success and international reputation. A place which works for everyone, in every nation and region across our country.

We cannot achieve this without a Labour government. One which is prepared to fight for the radical upgrades needed to propel our country forwards and create lasting, positive change.

**Tessa Milligan**  
**Chair of Open Labour**



# HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE



## **HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

Prevention-led care for people, not profit

Our Health and Social Care system has been severely weakened after 12 years of cuts to public services. Moreover, services have been held back from developing so as to be equipped to deal with the enormous changes in our society. The Covid-19 pandemic continues to exacerbate systemic issues caused by government cuts.

Work must be done to dramatically reduce NHS waiting lists and wait times to see GPs. We also need to properly resource ambulance services so that crews are able to meet the recommended emergency response times. We need a guarantee that all patients in A&E will be seen much more quickly.

### **Health**

In 2010 life expectancy stalled for the first time in 110 years. This trend has worsened, and life expectancy has now reduced for some disadvantaged groups. There is a direct correlation between life expectancy and someone's socioeconomic position. Consequently, as we have seen a rise in socioeconomic inequality, we have also seen a parallel rise in health inequalities. Health inequalities are unnecessary and can be reversed through policy intervention.

Health is not just determined by access to health services, though this is of critical importance. Health is also affected by a multitude of social determinants. For example, someone's economic circumstances, access to transport, education, quality and security of housing and their social and community context. Someone living in an overcrowded house, on a precarious low paid 'zero hour contract', with limited access to amenities (food, shops, sports and recreational opportunities) due to poor transport – is much more likely to have poor health outcomes than someone who doesn't face the same issues.

Open Labour stands for:

- Significant investment in health and social care services, with the aim of building a resilient and robust NHS ready to face tomorrow's challenges.
- Reversing privatisation of our health and social care services to ensure that services are publicly owned and run for people and not for profit.
- Placing local authorities at the heart of health and social care strategy alongside the NHS and public health agencies.
- Developing a national strategy on health inequalities led by the Prime Minister – with a strong focus on the social determinants of health. In 2010 the Coalition government dropped the national health inequalities strategy.
- Reviews into inequalities in healthcare should be intersectional and recognise the prejudice some groups disproportionately face at all levels in the NHS.
- A recruitment and retention strategy to boost the NHS workforce, pay and working conditions.
- Free prescriptions and dentist and optician appointments

### **Mental Health**

Whilst demand for mental health treatment on the NHS has shot up, the NHS's ability to meet that demand has shrunk. Early intervention is key to recovery, yet many languish on astonishingly long waiting lists whilst their health continues to deteriorate. Deprivation, which has risen significantly under the Conservatives, is a contributing factor to the likelihood of ill mental health.

We need a national mental health strategy which strives for early intervention, reducing stress in the general population and ease of access, including opt-in support following difficult events such as a significant bereavement. The statistics are stark: Suicide is the leading cause of death for men under 50. Only 1 in 3 children and young people with a diagnosable mental health condition get access to NHS care and treatment. Between April and June 2021, almost 200,000 young people were referred to children and young people's mental health services in these three months alone. The government has failed to respond to the mental health fallout from the coronavirus pandemic in particular. A Labour government would treat mental health with the urgency it needs.

This should include a harm reduction approach to drugs, as other countries around the world are doing, and have done with success (Portugal). Paul Sweeney MSP has campaigned for the licensing of overdose prevention facilities in Scotland, and we need a grown-up conversation about how a harm reduction approach could work across the UK to prevent drug deaths.

Community-based mental health models, such as the Greater Manchester Student Mental Health Service, an NHS scheme for all universities in Greater Manchester, would help to increase access to psychiatrists, GPs and many types of mental health therapies with a lower waiting time than current adult mental health services.

Open Labour stands for:

- Increased funding for mental health departments and specialist mental health treatment within the NHS and within schools.
- Trained mental health first-aiders and counsellors in every school, proportional to the number of pupils in the school, with the ability to refer pupils for NHS treatment if necessary.
- Clear standards for the treatment of anyone with mental health conditions, including a treatment guarantee within one month. This would mean that anyone receiving a referral for mental health related concern would receive their initial assessment much more quickly, followed by an agreed upon treatment plan, with a fuller range of treatment options.
- Make independent counselling services, such as those in universities, accountable to a central standards body.
- Roll out 'crisis cafes' in communities across the UK for use by local people and a UK-wide scheme modelled on the 'Greater Manchester Student Mental Health Service' for all students.
- Strive to build a strong mental health service to the point where a smoother, more accessible choice to 'opt-in' can be provided to those who have recently experienced a difficult life event such as a significant bereavement and to those more likely to encounter difficult experiences as part of their day job (such as nurses, firefighters, etc).
- A harm reduction strategy for recreational drugs which will decriminalise and redirect users to health support and rehabilitation.
- More funding for research and treatment into complex mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, personality disorders and psychosis.
- Abolish Serenity Integrated Mentoring and ensure patients get the treatment they need without police having powers over their healthcare.



## Social Care

Action to address what is currently a broken system has significant benefits: improving the quality of people's lives and their health and well-being; reducing health inequalities and stress on the health service; and reducing the reliance on informal care and the impact of this on families. Currently, many private care home operators are owned or backed by hedge funds and take public money whilst extracting huge profits for investors and directors. Money that should be used to improve care is thus extracted from the sector and often from the UK. The decimation of local government funding over the last decade has also placed unsustainable pressures on councils and stripped back provision to the bare minimum - from 15- minute visits from carers to the removal of any choice and opportunities for younger adults in their communities.

Open Labour stands for a social care system based on the following principles:

- Social care is about quality of life. The brutal cuts that we have experienced as a consequence of Tory austerity have reduced care to the basic provision of food and help with washing and dressing. Decent social care should be focused on quality of life and ensuring that everyone is provided with the opportunity to flourish and to have social opportunities.
- Good social care benefits everyone. The provision of care should be publicly funded, not for profit and responsive to the needs of the diverse communities that make up our population. Investing properly in care means valuing people with additional needs who require support in their communities and the commitment and experience of care workers.
- Everyone should have the choice to live where they want and with whom they want. This means ensuring that adults who access social care are supported to live in their community in their home rather than in a "facility" and that older people at the end of their lives are supported to stay at home for as long as this is feasible with access to good residential care if needed.
- Social care for adults (18 - 64) should provide opportunities and choices that reflect people's wants and needs, rather than imposing a one-size-fits-all model based on assumptions about what particular groups of people may or may not enjoy or want to do.
- The economic contribution of informal carers must be acknowledged and meaningfully addressed via carers' allowance and meaningful support in workplaces.
- A national framework for care quality, with pay and training linked to standards.

# EDUCATION & CHILDCARE



## **EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE**

More access, more choice, more family friendly

The government has driven down the standard of schooling, worsened working conditions for education staff and plunged the childcare sector into crisis.

Whilst many education and childcare providers across the UK are in need of 'levelling up', the Tories have spent a decade knowingly underfunding them, whilst parents struggle with the rising cost of living. Meanwhile, private schools and their wealthier patrons continue to enjoy an unjustifiable tax break. Then there's the Tories' Free School programme - they do not deliver better education than local authority schools, and have become a venture for private profit. To truly 'level up', all schools deserve equal footing and must be accountable to their local communities.

Under the Conservatives, teacher vacancies have more than doubled whilst per-pupil spending has fallen to its lowest rate in 30 years. Instead of investing more in our schools and developing a long-term strategy to reduce staff shortages and class sizes, they have recycled short term incentives which do not go far enough in tackling fundamental problems in education.

The government's response to added complications from the Coronavirus pandemic has been shockingly poor and if not addressed will mean lasting gaps in children's education outcomes for years to come.

### **Childcare**

The cost of childcare has skyrocketed and the Tories have slashed funding for Sure Start with over 1000 centres shut down. Brexit and the pandemic have hugely impacted the childcare workforce, with the availability of childminders and nannies collapsing. Working parents from a great variety of financial backgrounds are left stuck when it comes to childcare as we emerge from the pandemic with the poorest families hit hardest.

Women do a disproportionate share of childcare and this affects equality in the workplace. To address this, we need more action to support and encourage fathers to carry out more childcare and a greater share of household responsibilities, including more support for fathers to work flexibly and part-time as well as improved support for parental leave, including more "use or lose it" paid paternity leave.

We need a long -term plan to shift towards free, funded childcare for all families who need it. Not only would this give families more freedom, it could help to reduce the gender pay gap and see a positive economic return as more people can stay in work and gain new skills.

Open Labour stands for:

- A strategy to make affordable, quality childcare widely available in the immediate short term.
- A long-term plan for free and funded childcare for all families who need it.
- Investment to enable all local authorities to restore Sure Start provision, at a minimum, to the level which existed in 2010, and to supply further funding upon demonstration of how this will be used to level-up childcare and parental support provision within the local authority area.
- Working with other countries to create a childcare and education VISA, to stem worker shortages in the immediate short term.
- Giving all working parents – including zero-hours contract workers, agency workers and those in casual work – access to the same rights from day one in their jobs. This includes all family friendly rights, which are often only available to “employees” and support for students.

- Introducing 10 days' paid carer's leave on full pay from day one in the job, to support all working parents.
- Introduce the ability to register on a national database of childcare workers to all nannies and childminders, with a legal requirement to be registered.

## Schools

Access to a good education must be a fundamental right for all regardless of background or circumstances. Schools should equip young people with the knowledge, skills, confidence and freedom to forge their own path in life.

We support Labour's 'Children's Recovery Plan', a wide-ranging strategy to support children's development in light of the pandemic. It also looks to the future and takes into account the needs of many parents, as demonstrated by plans for fully-funded breakfast clubs and extracurricular activities, such as sports, drama and reading to boost time for children to play and socialise.

We believe free school meals should be extended to disadvantaged pupils over school holidays too and we want to encourage this broader shift in the education debate to an approach which centres the wellbeing and learning development of children.

In all schools, evaluation of learning should move to low-stakes formative assessments. We reject the culture of high-stakes standardised testing and other private sector ideas which reduce students and schools to statistics and see broad topics crammed into narrow time-frames, resulting more in memory testing rather than genuine learning and development.

We need a diverse, decolonised curriculum which reflects modern Britain, and is delivered by education staff who are paid fairly, have better working conditions and greater capacity to focus on learning outcomes, supported through continued development. We should value practical subjects such as music and sport equally to more academic subjects and give young people a choice over their path in life.

Open Labour recommends:

- A long-term strategy to reduce school class sizes to drive higher quality of education for every child and lower the work burden for teachers.
- Increase per-pupil spending and alter the national funding formula to 'level up' disadvantaged schools ensuring all schools have sufficient resources.
- Extend free school meals to disadvantaged pupils over school holidays.
- Recruitment and retention scheme for current and prospective teaching staff to tackle shortages across all specialisms and improve working conditions.
- Enhance local authority powers to offer communities the freedom to open new schools to create the school places their area needs, and phase out existing grammar schools in favour of equal opportunity, comprehensive schooling.
- Cease the creation of 'Free Schools', also known as academies and bring existing ones into local partnerships so they are accountable to the communities they serve.
- Reform the academy oversight system so that finances are transparent, properly scrutinised and publicly accountable.
- End high-stakes testing systems in primary schools and school and college league tables.
- Guidance and counselling should be built into student life with a guarantee that wellbeing and mental health support is available to every child who needs it.

- At the very least, charitable status and associated tax breaks for private schools should end within the first year of a Labour government and the money used to help 'level up' state schools.
- Mentoring should be utilised instead of the over-use of harsh disciplinary measures disproportionately used against working-class students and students of colour.

## **SEND**

SEND provision must be properly funded and resourced and should focus on what a child or young person needs to learn and thrive. The voices and needs of disabled children and young people must be at the centre of this.

Every child deserves an education that enables them to learn effectively, to realise their aspirations and to be part of a community that recognises and celebrates our differences. Disabled children and young people also deserve the same choices and opportunities as their non-disabled peers – this includes the right to engage in social and enrichment activities that are open, inclusive, and accessible.

The bureaucracy, gatekeeping and obstacles that families face in navigating what many experience as a hostile and unsupportive system also needs to be overhauled in favour of one in which a commitment to accessibility and inclusive practice is expected in every educational setting in order to end the corrosive segregation and isolation that so many disabled children experience.

Support for children and young people with SEND is in crisis. This has a devastating impact on their lives, life chances, health and wellbeing, placing families under enormous pressure and struggling with a system that is underfunded, inadequately resourced and simply not fit for purpose.

The extension of the age range of children and young children with SEND that councils are obligated to support under the Children and Families Act 2014 has produced further strain on the system because successive Tory governments have failed to provide the necessary money to enable them to meet this requirement, in tandem with disastrous year-on-year cuts to local government funding.

Open Labour stands for:

- Working to embed inclusive practice in every setting.
- A quicker, more responsive system which focuses on need rather than diagnosis.
- Provision in communities, ending the tendency to transport children out of the area and therefore reducing opportunities for building social relationships.
- Recognition that investing in SEND in early years and primary education settings has long term benefits, including reducing longer term funding requirements.
- Commitment to providing choices and opportunities rather than a one size-fits-all approach to what a disabled young person might want to do.
- Close the gap in funding for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, and reverse deficits in the High Needs Budget.

## **Universities and Further Education**

We believe in access to lifelong education, built on fair taxation.

The marketisation of university education has brought huge financial debt to the HE sector, whilst leaving an ever-growing number of graduates in jobs which don't require degrees. The current model does not offer value to students or taxpayers. Vocational and technical pathways are too often looked down on and undervalued, leaving an increasing shortage of graduates in key industries struggling to meet demand, such as engineering and construction.



The government continues to treat students like a magic money tree, including setting comically high interest rates on student loans despite bank rates having been at historic lows for years. They've spent the last few years selling off student loans to hedge funds, scrapping discounts and maintenance grants for vital degrees like nursing and just recently freezing the repayment threshold to further hike costs for graduates and squeeze working people. Research suggests that 1 in every 4 young people don't think they will ever feel financially secure.

Higher education needs to be re-modelled to meet the demands of the economy and workforce shortages, needs of students and staff and the potential of local communities. The university admissions process could also be reshaped to widen participation and fair access, enabling institutions to more effectively match students by their achievements and potential.

The opportunities for economic and social transformation via Further Education, which increase individuals' level of choice and agency, must be recognised. Investing in FE is investing in the future of our communities. As highlighted by the UCU, moves towards regional and municipal devolution may offer the opportunity to re-establish a locally co-ordinated further education system which prioritises the needs of communities.

Open Labour stands for:

- Replacing tuition fees with maintenance grants and phasing out student debt.
- Reforming Student Finance to ensure all applicants and their families are treated with dignity and respect and to make entitlement calculations much fairer to students of all different family backgrounds.
- Ending insecure, zero hours contracts to deliver teaching.
- Investing in accredited and non-accredited lifelong learning and reinstating the union adult learning fund.
- Promoting and funding skills training to meet the needs of Britain's rapidly growing low-carbon sectors and to green the whole economy.
- Moving towards a post-qualification admissions (PQA) system where university offers are based on achievement rather than predictions.
- Ensuring properly funded and consistent additional learning support (ALS) funding to support disabled learners to fully access and participate in further and higher education.
- Greater protection of academic freedom through the development of open, democratic and collegial forms of institutional governance, including access to proper whistleblowing procedures and a changed approach to funding for UK research to reduce pressure on academics to seek commercial sponsorship.
- Scrapping the teaching excellence frameworks because they are not fit for purpose.
- Increasing transparency around senior pay in colleges and universities and link it to staff pay.
- Rebuilding Further Education to boost local communities and invest in upskilling and retraining.
- Returning Further Education colleges to local democratic control and closing the £7,000 pay gap between school and college teachers.

# HOUSING



## **HOUSING**

Building a better future

Open Labour believes that - like Education, Healthcare or Food - Housing is a basic necessity and a human right. A central Labour policy aim needs to be that all are adequately and appropriately housed.

The housing crisis has been growing for a number of years. For decades, successive governments have failed to plan, build and regulate the housing sector whilst social housing is gradually phased out.

If we are to ensure the basic right of having good quality, affordable homes with secure tenancies and ownership then we need radical change and a joined-up strategy to deliver that change.

Instead, we are left with a government locking generations out of home ownership paying sky-high rents forever increasing. The result is the UK has one of the most unequal housing markets and land ownership on the planet.

### **Tenants**

We must give power and licence to tenants in the private rented sector so they have the security and confidence to build their lives.

Private renting in England is more costly as a share of income than most countries in Europe. As the charity Shelter says: "Unless we act now, we face a future in which a generation of young families will be trapped renting privately for their whole lives, where more and more people will grow old in private rentals, where billions more in welfare costs will be paid to private landlords – and hundreds of thousands more people will be forced into homelessness."

The private rented sector was the fastest growing housing sector between 1997 and 2016. Private rented stock grew by 3.2 million dwellings, an increase of 135 per cent. Private renting increases both the asset rich (landlords) and asset poor (tenants).

The UK private rented sector attracts billions in foreign investment much of whose stock lies empty. These overseas owners accumulate wealth by the increase in value of both land and property whilst the UK has a housing and homelessness crisis.

There is an increasing trend that property speculation and landlordism is replacing work as a primary source of income much more widely than the landed gentry. This form of earnings doesn't increase productivity or efficiency. It does the reverse. There must be a re-balancing of earnings between those in the wage economy and those who live off capital rate.

This is also an intergenerational crisis with house prices prior to the 1990s more readily within reach of those on even below average wages. In 2019 research from Zoopla found that a first-time buyer needs to earn an average of £84,000 a year to purchase even the lower-priced homes in London (higher than the salary of an MP).

Left to its own devices, the housing market cannot meet basic demand. It is ripe for radical change.

Open Labour stands for:

- Ending unfair Section 21 evictions, 'No DSS', 'No Universal Credit' and other such forms of discrimination against those seeking tenancies.
- Introducing a landlords' database, a tenants' rights' charter and enforcement agency to protect the country's 11 million private renters and give them access to more secure and longer-term tenancies.
- Overhauling the regulations which have turned landlords into an immigration control force.
- Private rent caps to stop spiralling prices.
- Limiting buy-to-let especially for new builds so that homes go to people who will actually be living in them.
- Work towards a 'Housing First' policy to tackle homelessness.
- Property tax reform and legislation to outlaw house hoarding including fines and - ultimately - compulsory purchase lower than market rate.
- These reforms should include a requirement for Private Landlords to ensure housing does not stand vacant for more than one year. Local authorities should be allowed to double council tax on empty homes after six months and then have the power to compulsory purchase these properties at their use value rather than property value.
- Increasing the capital gains tax for second homes and investment properties to at least 40%, reflecting Higher Rate Taxpayers, with a potential super tax rate for the largest landlords. This would encourage people to seek more productive and socially beneficial ways to earn their income and support UK productivity.

## Land

We must change the system of land use regulation to empower the building of communities.

It's difficult to know exactly who owns what land and property. We do know that since 1995 the value of land has increased fivefold - now worth in excess of £5 trillion - and people who own tens of thousands of acres receive Government agricultural subsidies whilst care workers can't afford to pay their rent.

To achieve this aim we need to rebalance the ownership of land and property so there is more equality between the public sector, the purely private market, individuals and community. The nature of housing and land policy must change so there is a presumption that land and housing is to be utilised for the benefit of people or the environment and not for speculation.

The land registry, ordinance survey and the valuation office need to be merged, made into a body immune from privatisation and all its data made open so that both the public and HMRC can know who owns what land and property in the UK.

Labour needs to consider how to rebalance the huge disparities in land ownership and the wealth tied to it, with measures to support a much more equitable ownership of land and property. We also need to open up data on who owns land compelling the need to register all land holdings and publish the names of all persons of significant control of land.

To protect rural and coastal communities, the practice of buying whole villages (whose ownership is derived from the Feudal System) needs to end with these villages transferred into community land trusts giving residents common ownership.

Open Labour stands for:

- End the exemption on council tax for vacant and derelict residential land; require the transfer of such land to a community land trust where the owner cannot pay the tax levied. Reform the Land Compensation Act 1961 (Land Compensation Act 1963 in Scotland) to abolish 'hope value' in compulsory purchase valuations, as recommended by Shelter and Labour's 'Land for the Many' commission.
- Establishing National and local Community Land Ownership Trusts, to vest land and utilise it for the common good and community benefit, whether for rewilding, housing or employment. The National Land Trust would not directly develop but hold land until Community Trusts could utilise it and land would be vested by a number of methods including reclamation of land left vacant or derelict for a defined period.
- Opening up data on who owns land, compelling the need to register all land holdings and publish the names of all persons of significant control of land.
- Merging the land registry, ordinance survey and the valuation office, made into a body immune from privatisation, and give both the public and HMRC access to this land and property ownership data.
- Measures to support a much more equitable ownership of land and property, such as a land value tax, and Overseas Land and Property Tax payable by individuals or companies domiciled or owned in tax havens.

## Planning and building

We need a system that is aspirational and gives local authorities the ability to access the funding and land needed to build new homes. The planning process must empower voices from underrepresented groups and those experiencing poor housing and homelessness. We must encourage a wider range of participants so that the process can be truly representative of the impact of new developments.

A significant part of the housing problem is chronic workforce shortages in the construction industry which must be addressed quickly. Disruption in the supply of construction materials as a result of Brexit has contributed to current problems as has high international demand for these materials. Global demand for steel - a key component in construction - also outstrips global supply, whilst the UK government leaves the British steel industry on its knees.

The issues with new housing development can be traced to a reliance on private developers operating on a speculative model of development. In future, developments need to either be started utilising land owned by community trusts where developers are merely constructors or that developers have a long term interest and accountability for the developments so their responsibilities don't end when the sale is completed.

Open Labour stands for:

- Enshrining the right to adequate housing in law.
- Building more homes closer to where people work. This is not just a matter of convenience, but better for the environment.
- A building programme for a new generation of social housing which is safe, green and well-designed.
- The revival and protection of the British steel industry.
- A strategy for a new generation of construction workers in well trained, well treated, well paid, unionised jobs.



- Funding for local authorities to be able to sufficiently and properly maintain existing social housing.
- A change to planning law to ensure that a minimum of 50% of social housing is included in all new developments except the very smallest.
- Right-to-buy must be reformed. Local Councils should be able to reduce/abolish discounts or suspend RTB altogether and exercise the right to buy back homes already sold through RTB.
- Requiring local authorities to review all existing planning permission on sites to ensure that any developments yet to commence meet that standard.
- Opposition to the Conservatives' Developer's Charter which "would prevent local residents from objecting to developers' plans to build poor quality housing, eyesores, or any other form of inappropriate new buildings on their streets, in their communities or on treasured public spaces".
- Changing the planning consultation process to include under-represented voices, such as people who are suffering from homelessness and overcrowding who would benefit from new homes in an area.
- Restriction of new holiday homes in rural and coastal areas, which are facing increasingly unaffordable rises in local rent prices and communities being hollowed out.

### **Safe, green homes**

Building zero carbon homes and retrofitting existing homes is a vital step to meet our housing and climate emergencies. The environment will not be harmed by a significant increase in building desperately needed homes. With proper planning and guidance, we can build sustainable housing.

The cladding and sub-standard refurbishment scandal has seen a huge increase in fire risk and placed further pressure on fire services. We also back calls for greater central funding for Fire and Rescue services as opposed to the current reality of year-on-year real terms cuts going back at least a decade.

There is also no reason at all why modern cost-effective fire suppression systems cannot be fitted in new builds and retrofitted in housing identified as having the greatest risk to life in the event of a fire.

Open Labour stands for:

- Retrofit existing homes with next generation heating and energy supply.
- Implementing a Zero Carbon Homes standard from the first day of a Labour government.
- Greater central funding for Fire and Rescue services.
- Fitting modern cost-effective fire suppression systems in new builds and retrofitting housing identified as having the greatest risk to life in the event of a fire.
- Reforms to tackle the construction, cladding, testing and certification industries' seeming culture of deceit, adversarial contracting, risk-dumping, lowest price tendering, and trading on wafer-thin profit margins, all free from adequate scrutiny or public accountability.
- Protecting leaseholders from the financial burden of the cladding crisis. Details of at-risk properties should be made available to all, including potential homebuyers. Invest in the housing regulators so they can challenge Housing Associations and rogue landlords.

# WORK, WELFARE & PENSIONS



## **WORK, WELFARE AND PENSIONS**

Security begins at home

Open Labour believes that the goal for the next Labour government must be working as swiftly as possible to zero poverty. This means building a society and an economy where, in or out of work, nobody is condemned to poverty or has the threat of homelessness hanging over their heads.

That means a triple-pronged approach to personal and financial security for all - supporting those who can work to get work, a strong welfare safety net and pension system, and universal basic service provision across the UK.

This means that the fundamental services which people need to live and go about their lives must be universally-accessible. These amenities must be a free-at-the-point-of-use guarantee so that people in this country, regardless of age, background or circumstances, may have security and freedom over their own lives.

Labour must be the party which supports those who can work to get work. There must also be help for those who can't get employment, and families which struggle with low income and those who are prevented by disability from working.

People in need of welfare support should be treated humanely, with respect and dignity. The punitive, inhumane culture at the heart of the DWP must swiftly come to an end.

The rhetoric of 'levelling up' stemmed from the Tory party's need to reinvent themselves following over a decade of increasingly unpopular austerity which still continues today. A Labour government should usher in an era of true 'levelling up' which improves the quality of living and ensures no community or town is left behind.

### **Jobs and workplaces**

A Labour government should prioritise a high investment and skills economy that will support well-paid good jobs.

We want an economy in which British business leads the world in quality and innovation, while also leading the way on sustainability, pay and conditions. These values should also be reflected in trade deals with other countries.

We also support a "social 'partnership' approach like that developed by the Labour Welsh government to involve workers actively in making the public policy decisions that will have an impact on their working lives.

We want to see a new approach to industrial relations, where workers have a clear say in how companies are run, where democracy is extended beyond traditional politics and empowers people in their communities and workplaces.

There are a number of EU directives which previously enshrined some basic workplace rights in UK law, rights now under threat post-Brexit and particularly under any current or future Conservative governments. These include directives on parental leave, working hours, part time workers (this legislation was used to help win the Part Time pensioners cases in the late 1990s). It is vital that workers rights become a strongly codified guarantee in any democratic renewal programme.

We must move quickly towards a genuine living wage that applies equally to all age groups. We need better sick pay and improved employment rights from the first day at work. We should also have more quality apprenticeships by raising the apprentice wage and ending the Treasury raid of the apprenticeship levy.

We need greater protections against unfair dismissal and better, much more affordable access to Employment Tribunals to ensure access to justice.

Open Labour supports Labour's plan for Fair Pay Agreements to deliver a new deal for working people to secure fair pay, job security, dignity at work and equality. Fire and rehire must be ended as should zero hours contracts.

Working with unions, we want to see a root and branch overhaul of trade union laws and the red tape and bureaucracy which underpins them. There is little point giving working people more rights on paper if the unions which represent are denied the means to protect those rights.

Any private sector company bidding for any public sector work should have to demonstrate that it treats its workers fairly, including paying a living wage.

There needs to be greater support for the self employed to be able to go about their business without exploitation within wider supply chains. We should also consider how to reduce stress and limitations on working, such as introducing workers' parking permits for tradespeople parking work vehicles whilst on a job, and making NHS parking free for staff (and patients and visitors).

Reducing stress also means a long-term goal of reducing the working week at no loss of pay, giving all workers better life-work balance, as well as the right to flexible working.

Open Labour stands for:

- A real living wage which applies equally to all age groups as a minimum wage.
- Raising apprentice wage and ending Treasury raid of the apprenticeship levy.
- Reinstating the Future Jobs Fund and expanding it to cover all jobseekers out of work for six months or more. Build upon it as part of a longer-term objective to guarantee employment or training to all long-term unemployed people in Britain.
- Better sick pay and employee protections, including looking to EU directive rights under threat post-Brexit.
- End fire and rehire.
- Reform trade union laws to allow e-ballots for industrial action, eliminate unduly onerous procedural requirements for conducting such action and legalise, subject to free and fair strike ballots, secondary strikes and secondary picketing where an industrial dispute concerns workers from several employers.
- Private sector companies bidding for public sector work must demonstrate that they pay a living wage, are not an anti-union employer and have a good record of employee relations.
- Greater democracy in the workplace.
- A 'social partnership' which involves workers in public policy decisions that will have an impact on their working lives.
- Reforming the tax system to ensure the wealthiest and big business cannot avoid tax to the detriment of the less well-off.
- Reforming business rates and supporting high streets to produce local jobs.
- All except the genuinely self employed to have access from the same workers' rights from day one.
- Protecting the self employed and small businesses within wider supply chains from poor business practice and exploitation by larger businesses.
- Introducing a right to flexible working as outlined by the TUC.
- Continued rollout of 4-day week trials and a long-term strategy of reducing working hours at no loss of pay.

## **Income security**

We support Labour's moves to improve the welfare safety net and ensure those on low or insecure incomes can keep more of their income rather than it being clawed back by an unfair taper rate. In the immediate short term, the cuts to Universal Credit should be reversed as a matter of urgency.

We need to build a welfare system which gives better income and benefits security and an end to the fear of sudden drops in income or punitive and sudden benefits withdrawals which force people into poverty and housing insecurity.

The Department for Work and Pensions, alongside the Home Office, has gained a reputation as one of the nastiest departments of government. The Labour Party in Government should carry out an immediate and swift review of the work of the Department and its punishment culture.

If it is incapable of reform it should be broken up.

It does not cost money to treat people fairly and with dignity. We cannot have the tone for in-work and welfare benefits set by the news and comments desks of the Daily Mail.

Social welfare support - although many are National Insurance contribution based - have become dirty words thanks to Conservative-led governments treating those in need with derision, suspicion and often deliberate cruelty.

A huge lucrative bureaucracy - much of it outsourced to large private sector assessors and enforcers - has exploded out of all proportion to the sums of money involved, particularly when compared to the numbers involved in tracing tax dodgers.

The future system must be less bureaucratic with flatter structures with no expensive and inefficient private sector providers leeching off the system.

The UK state pension - a contributory based pension that people have paid for - is amongst the lowest among the wealthier countries of Europe. A Labour Government needs to build a much better link between state pension and average incomes and break the chains of pensioner poverty.

The attacks on work-related pension schemes have been taking place for decades and allowed a series of ill-judged contribution holidays for employers. It saved companies billions of pounds but severely undermined many pension schemes and funds, a legacy which remains today.

The sustained attacks undermined and diminished private sector pensions. The undermining of these schemes was then used to attack public sector schemes and funds.

We also cannot have any further instances where people are not fairly informed of changes to the state pension or adequately compensated for any losses, as has happened with the WASPI women.

The public sector pension schemes and funds have been under sustained attack in the last two decades. Despite repeated promises from Governments that the 'next change is the last' it has been an on-going process. Labour needs to break this cycle.

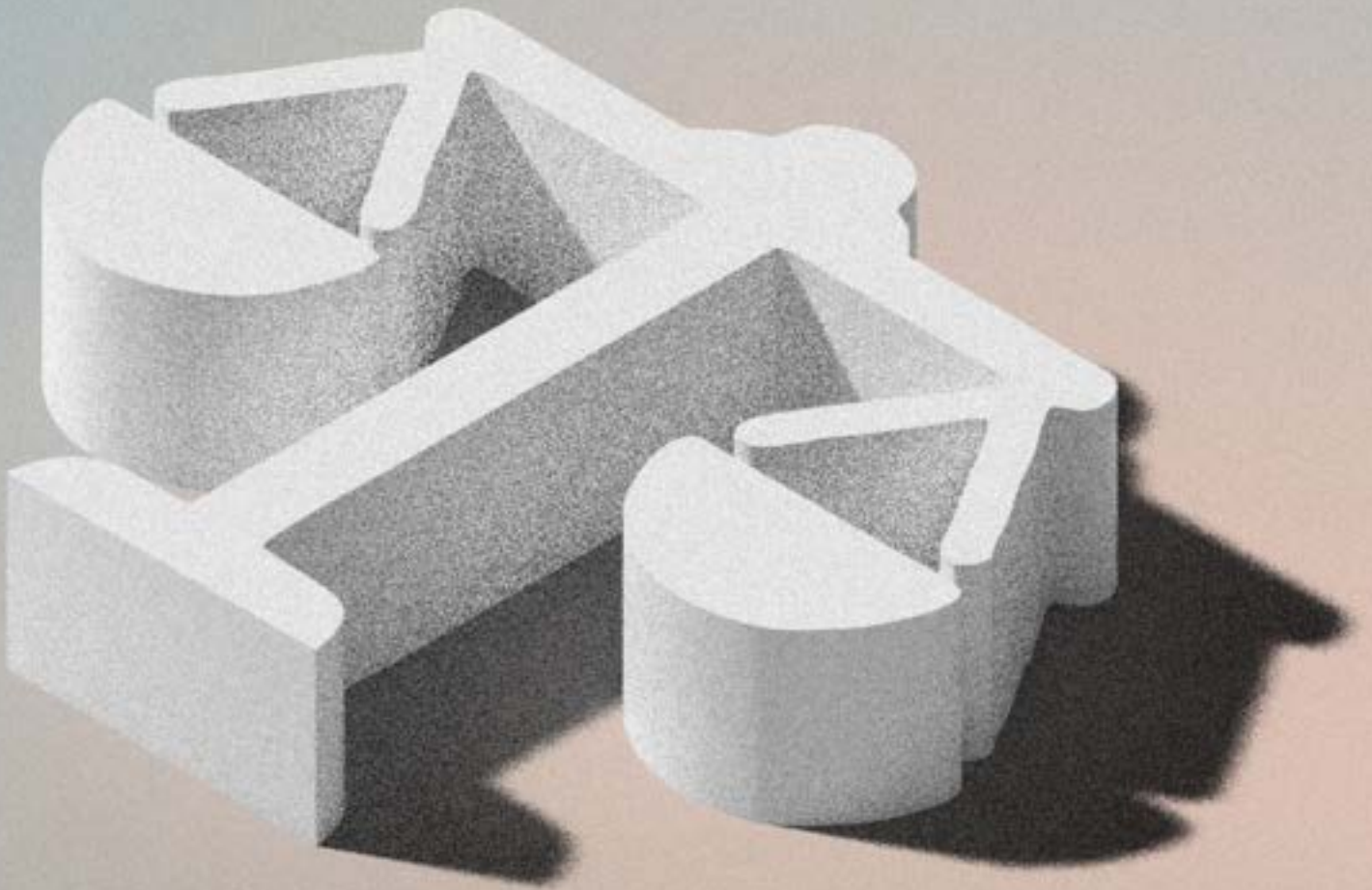
If you work you should have access to pension rights from day one. Excluding those under the age of 22 from automatic enrolment in workplace pension schemes wires the system in favour of middle class graduates and locks young working people out of the pension contributions they deserve.



Open Labour stands for:

- Ending the privatisation in our welfare system.
- Ending the punitive culture in the DWP and the distressing fit-for-work testing system which often produces inaccurate results, with disastrous consequences.
- Ensuring that the basic services people need to go about their lives are universally accessible.
- A new welfare system which is a genuine safety net for all, automating support and reducing bureaucratic barriers wherever possible.
- End pensioner poverty and build a better link between state pension and average working incomes.
- Justice and compensation for the WASPI women.
- Remove the age limitations for automatic enrolment in workplace pensions schemes.

# JUSTICE



## **JUSTICE**

Justice delayed is justice denied

Labour must commit to robustly tackling the causes of crime, and recognise the role of structural, systemic factors and how we can take a more preventative approach in reducing crime.

Justice must be available to all, not just to those who can afford it. Successive Conservative governments have slashed legal aid, closed local courts, imposing insurmountable barriers to justice, and paradoxically costing more money through delays to legal proceedings and worsening court backlogs.

Meanwhile, putting hundreds in prison on more minor, non-violent offences drives up reoffending and public health problems, whilst some of the most dangerous people routinely evade justice - currently fewer than 1 in 60 rape cases lead to a charge in England and Wales, a record low.

### **Crime**

Open Labour believes that justice policy which is evidence-based with a focus on harm reduction is the best way to prevent and reduce crime. We would like to see a truly cohesive approach to justice policy which accounts for these factors and makes a concerted effort to address the issues at source. This will allow for early intervention, diversion and prevention. Too often, low level offenders, especially young people, are put into prison and on a downward spiral instead of offered a genuine chance at rehabilitation.

The UK justice system is failing women and girls, and so is the Conservative government. Labour's justice policy must be safety-focused, survivor-centred, and trauma-informed. Access to support is key to survivors' wellbeing and ability to engage with the criminal justice system. This is particularly important in the Family Courts.

The war on drugs has failed and research suggests the proportion of prisoners developing a drug problem in custody has more than doubled in the past five years. The UK should move to a harm reduction approach to drugs, as other countries around the world are doing, and have done with success. To continue with the current system is an endorsement of preventable drug deaths and will continue to feed the business model of child-grooming drug gangs. We need to crack these criminal gangs, make our communities safer, and make sure addicts get the support they need to enter recovery.

### **Policing**

The police are vested with incredible power, including to restrict people's liberty. They can only operate effectively with the consent of the public. The police need to be accountable for what they do, deserve the trust of the public and reflect the communities they serve. The use of stop and search is more disproportionate now than it was two decades ago, with no adequate explanation or justification for the nature and scale of racial disparities, including on drug possession searches where in 2019 Black people were 2.4 times more likely than White people to be searched but were less likely to use drugs. New scrutiny and transparency is needed including more use of police body worn cameras, community oversight, and new police training.

As Labour members, we must commit to ensuring that the Labour Party recognises the barriers faced by Black people and People of Colour and ensure that justice is an equal endeavour. When the British Transport Police refused to take any further action against the infected man that spat in the face of Belly Mujinga, who later died of coronavirus, it highlighted the injustice faced by Black women who are less likely to be taken seriously when they report crime and violence. Cases of black people being killed by police, or black families - such as the family of Stephen Lawrence - being denied justice for so long reminds us of the deep-rooted problems which are still failing our communities in the most devastating ways. Some Black men and women still report that they have been wrongly treated as suspects not victims of crime.

There have been a string of investigations and recommendations on how the police operate, particularly in relation to racial discrimination - such as the Lammy Review, Scarman Report and Macpherson Report. Open Labour believes the recommendations of these should be implemented in full. There should also be a public inquiry with statutory powers into the racial disparity in treatment of missing persons cases. We cannot tinker around the edges when our communities are being failed. We need to deliver a justice system and a society in which all people regardless of the colour of their skin have security, privacy and justice.

### **Probation and prisons**

Most would agree that the worst offenders should face tough sentences for the crimes they commit, but the Tories plan to set tougher sentences for vandalism than assaults or GBH (grievous bodily harm). This is not 'public protection', this is the weaponisation of incarceration for low level crimes for cheap populist political points whilst continuing to fail victims of violence.

Prisons and probation budgets have also been decimated and violent crime has risen. Open Labour believes that the justice system as a whole needs urgent investment and reform. For all their fixating on the economy and ensuring "value for taxpayer money", the Tories are wasting a lot of money incarcerating largely low-level offenders, and reoffending rates have stayed roughly the same, suggesting putting more people in prison is not reducing criminal offending.

As with all public services, probation can only perform as it should if it is properly resourced. Prisons failing to rehabilitate offenders only means higher caseloads for probation staff - many of whom are leaving because their workloads are unmanageable. Labour must aim to improve rehabilitation rates. Individuals can find themselves locked out of opportunities and work despite trying to change their lives for the better.

At present, our prison system is in total disarray. A decade of Tory cuts has decimated staffing levels, prison conditions have worsened, drug issues are rife and assaults on both staff inmates are skyrocketing. The pandemic has also laid bare how unsanitary the prison estate is - with many prisons acting as a catalyst for COVID infection which seeped out into the surrounding communities. An internationalist approach which seeks to learn lessons from Scandinavian penal systems could be beneficial - countries such as Norway have reoffending rates of approximately 20% 2 years after release, compared to 60% in the UK.

Open Labour stands for:

- Reversing cuts to legal aid funding and committing to support for law centres and legal advice charities.
- End privatisation in probation and across the justice system. Administering justice is a public good and should not be a profitable venture for companies whose main responsibility is to shareholders.
- Providing access to intermediaries and interpreters and ending NRPf (No Recourse to Public Funds).
- Ensure that lack of secure immigration status is never a barrier to justice.
- Workers in the justice system, including legal advocates, judges, police officers, and court staff, must receive mandatory, comprehensive, and regularly reinforced training on how to treat cases of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

- Automatic referrals to IDVAs, ISVAs, counselling and other emotional and practical support services for survivors.
- Opposition to the Nordic Model, which puts sex workers at higher risk of violence, police harassment, poor health outcomes and exploitation.
- Kickstarting a new, resourced effort to meet the Macpherson report's overall aim of "the elimination of racist prejudice and disadvantage, and the demonstration of fairness in all aspects of policing", and implementing the Lammy Review's recommendations in full.
- Ending stop and search, and reviewing the impact of other such police powers with a look to reducing harm and closing racial disparities in interactions with police.
- Opposition to legislation designed to outlaw Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, instead supporting a fairer system to plan and authorise encampments.
- The return of neighbourhood policing with dedicated teams of police officers and police community support officers.
- High-quality and comprehensive training for police officers and an independent process for all police complaints.
- A liaison and diversion approach to mental health, ensuring individuals with complex mental health needs are assessed and diverted away from the criminal justice system where feasible.
- Opposition to the building of new prisons. The best way to alleviate strain on the prison estate would be to commit to improving existing prisons and striving to rehabilitate low level non-violent offenders.

## Immigration

Open Labour believes the immigration system must guarantee humane treatment, security, dignity and respect for all - regardless of immigration status.

Demonisation of migrants has had a profound effect on political discourse and has led to populist policies which cause suffering and harm to individuals, damage communities, and squeeze our own economy and public services.

We support total culture change in the Home Office and a review of all policy decisions made since 2010. It costs nothing to treat people with dignity and fairness.

Any reformed immigration system must consider the need to support key industries, especially our fundamental services which are suffering severe workforce shortages.

This should involve a reshaped visa system for those working for public service organisations in education, childcare, health, social care, and green research, industry and technologies. We can incentivise global talent with offers such as lower visa fees, no immigration skills charge fee for public service organisations, and settlement after 3 years.

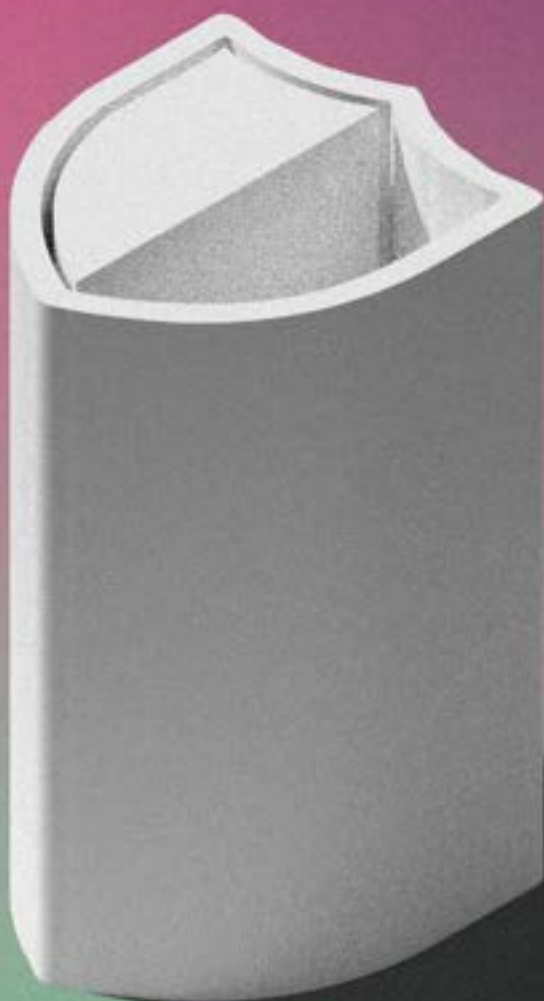
Open Labour stands for:

- Total reform of the culture of the Home Office and reviewing all policy decisions made since 2010.
- Opposition to the draconian measures in the Nationality and Borders Bill.
- Supporting a single and consistent definition of British Citizenship under which all Citizens are subject to equal treatment.
- A commitment to minimum standards of service from the Home Office through consideration of applications and provision of facilities, particularly for detainees and asylum seekers.
- The principle that all individuals arriving in the UK, by any means, are potential asylum seekers until a declaration by the individual to the contrary and to be treated as such.



- Guarantee safe routes for asylum seekers and rights to family reunion, work and social security.
- Scrapping 'Hostile Environment' measures, use of landlords and public service providers as border guards, and 'No Recourse to Public Funds'.
- Equality under the law – removing double payments for access to the NHS through tax and National Insurance payments as well as the NHS Surcharge payments.
- A commitment that the UK's immigration system will enhance workers' pay and rights in the UK, not allow unscrupulous bosses to undercut and exploit.
- A commitment that the legal immigration framework will enhance and not restrict the quality of public services and industry in the UK.
- Using application fees and the immigration skills charge to encourage visa application conditions for public service visa categories under a new visa system committed to visa net gains.
- Appeal routes to be re-introduced for all applications made to the Home Office to ensure accountability and fairness.
- A commitment to properly resourcing Home Office services and a caseworker/application ratio minimum threshold to be enforced to ensure that individual's access to rights are not lost through inefficient Home Office services and processing times.
- Increased involvement from other Government Departments in respect of specific visa routes to ensure visa eligibility and conditions meet standards applied to the settled population.
- Extending equal voting to all long-term residents in the UK.
- Actively challenging anti-migrant narratives and prejudice.

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT & COMMUNITIES



## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES**

### Rebuilding communities

For Labour as we emerge from the crises of lockdowns and eleven years of brutal targeted austerity, it's worth reflecting on the role of the local state. Localism has been a catch phrase but historically the centralists have been in charge in both parties in England.

Local government is not empowered or representative and our local communities are not centre stage in many debates where they should be. We need ambition and real power from below otherwise, as with New Labour, we will run out of steam and implode.

Parts of the UK face one-party oligarchical local states with first past the post, decimating autonomy and levels of representation, imposing local deals based on massive restrictions in representation and creating a servile structure of devolved administration with fewer powers and resources.

We must renew the local model and strive to build 'socialism from below'. There must be a swift end to the weaponisation of funding and investment for local communities and the way the central Conservative government has allegedly held local communities for ransom in order to carry out internal party management. Both powers and resources need to be devolved to communities.

We have seen too many situations where members of excluded communities have been failed and marginalised; this can happen when a superficial level of inclusion and representation is in place. We must ensure the diversity of our communities is reflected in decision-making processes.

Councillors need to be advocates, community development workers, and leaders in their communities. To achieve this, the makeup of the elected councillors must change to represent the communities that make up each area. All parties must be mandated to make progress in these areas - as with safeguarding, it does not happen unless it is mandated.

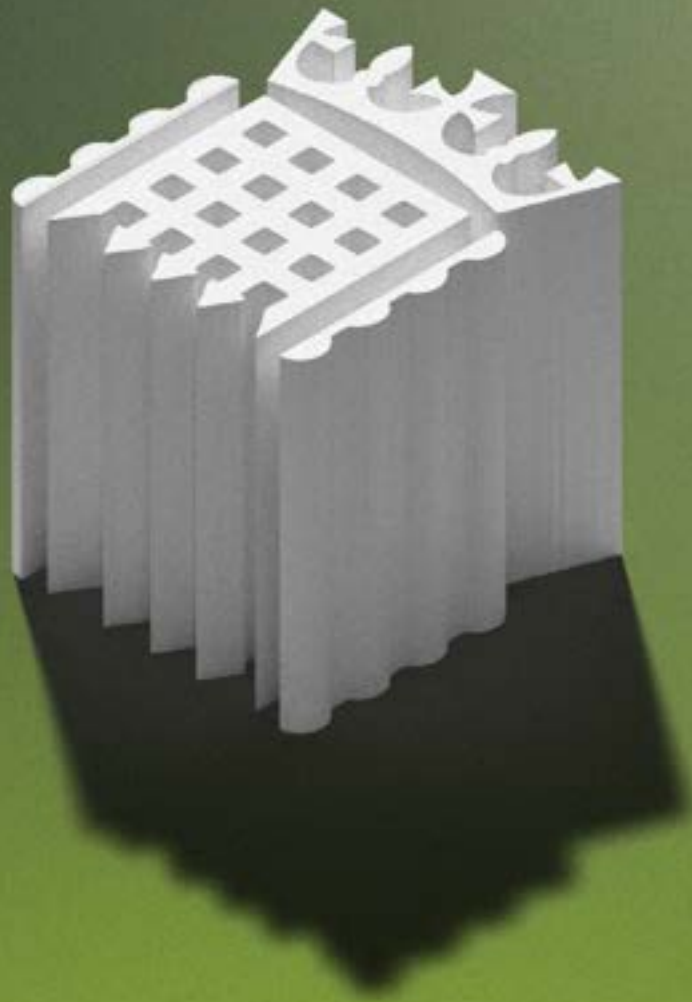
Local Government has become lost in a world of centralised diktat; the bond of obligation to local communities with people of all backgrounds has been sacrificed on the altar of centrally driven 'management by objective'.

It's time to get angry and recover local Government for the people by the people, with real autonomy and real power.

Open Labour stands for:

- Reviewing the existing structures of local government and developing plans to democratise councils and empower local communities.
- Greater devolution of powers - including to raise finance - and resources.
- Reinstate redistributive resource allocation based on objective needs and deprivation.
- Reintroduce advisory and audit structures.
- The ability to determine local democratic structures more freely.
- Proportional representation in all local government and mayoral elections.
- Introducing a ratio of electors to councillors that applies across the UK.
- Inclusive structures that secure career progression and skills development based on capability.
- Employment rights for councillors including parental and care leave, and reintroduce employer reimbursement for time off for civic duties, so that councillors have greater freedom to go about their job of representing their communities, and to make it an accessible role for a much wider range of people.
- Improved capability, competence and safeguarding. An agenda of better training and assessment based on fuller vetting by all parties of candidates for first tier councils.
- More compassionate models of local governance, including ending the use of bailiffs to recover council tax and using much more effective and ethical debt collection schemes.

# CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM



## **CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM**

Democracy for the 21st Century

The history of the British Labour movement stands on a foundation of democracy and equal rights - the chartist tradition, and that of womens' suffrage. The Labour Party Constitution (specifically Clause IV, Pt. 2C) commits Labour, to supporting: 'An open democracy, in which government is held to account by the people, decisions are taken as far as practicable by the communities they affect and where fundamental human rights are guaranteed'.

It is in this spirit that we set out our proposals for constitutional reform, including proportional representation, an elected House of Lords, a codified constitution, federalism and greater devolution.

Those who make laws should be elected by the people and accountable to them. We therefore believe that the reforms of the House of Lords started by the 1997 Labour Government should be completed with the direct election of all members of the second chamber.

The Labour Party played a leading role in introducing proportional electoral systems to the UK's devolved parliaments and assemblies in Scotland, Wales and London. However, the voting system currently used for the House of Commons has undermined the legitimacy of UK politics by producing parliaments unrelated to popular support, and contributed to lower voter registration and turnout. First-past-the-post runs counter to the fundamental democratic principle that all votes should count equally. The important link between elected officials and constituencies can be preserved in many proportional systems in use throughout the world and in the UK. We therefore believe that the House of Commons should be elected by proportional representation and have campaigned on this for a number of years.

The UK does not have a codified constitution, which allows too much scope for abuse of power, such as in relation to the prorogation of Parliament. We therefore support the introduction of a codified UK constitution that sets out the rights and obligations of citizens, the scope of the powers of the executive, Parliament and the judiciary, the checks and balances to ensure the proper functioning of the state and the operation of devolution.

The codified constitution should also include entrenched human rights, including social rights. We do not agree with the Government's position of replacing the Human Rights Act with the Government's new Bill of Rights. Instead we recommend that the Labour Party runs a public consultation for introducing its own legislation to sit alongside and strengthen the provisions in the Human Rights Act. This legislation should be underpinned by our socialist values and should uphold key rights, including the right of migrants and refugees to family life (a key right under the Human Rights Act and the European Convention on Human Rights). Furthermore, to ensure all pillars of our democracy are accountable to its citizens, the legislation should uphold the independence of the judiciary, Parliament and the Government, where their legal powers to scrutinise each other should be enforced.

This programme of democratic renewal should also consider how to ensure fair governance and accountable leadership of the United Kingdom. Under Boris Johnson's leadership in particular, we have seen British democracy pushed to its limits in recent years. Parliament needs a mechanism for all MPs to be able to formally correct the record (not just a mistranscription), strong mechanisms to tackle false claims, and for its members to be able to fairly discuss the 'misleading' of Parliament - often just plain and simple lies told at the dispatch box - without being trapped by the unparliamentary language rule.

We support much greater devolution of spending power and decision making in all parts of the UK including regionally. The name United Kingdom implies a federal system uniting multiple nations, however this is not reflected in constitutional arrangements and a better constitutional arrangement for the United Kingdom should reflect a fairer balance of the four nations. This would further devolve the centrality of power and more accurately reflect the nature of modern nation states. Let's bring UK democracy into the 21st Century.

Open Labour stands for:

- Fully democratise the House of Lords, all members of UK parliament must be directly elected.
- Introduce proportional representation to all public elections in the UK including for General Elections.
- Implement a codified constitution which sets out the rights and obligations of citizens, the scope of the powers of the executive, Parliament and the judiciary, the checks and balances to ensure the proper functioning of the state and the operation of devolution, and entrenches human rights, including social rights.
- Reform parliamentary rules to allow fairer debate and introduce a mechanism for all MPs to be able to formally correct the record.
- Radical devolution of decision-making and spending powers across the nations and regions of the UK.

# INTERNATIONALISM



# **INTERNATIONALISM**

Solidarity beyond borders

Open Labour fundamentally resolves to place international co-operation, human rights and humanitarianism at the forefront of any foreign policy decision-making within the party and wider Labour movement.

The international system is in crisis and multilateralism is collapsing. Global institutions have become a tool of neoliberal free market economics, rather than aiming to make the world a fairer place, reducing conflict and creating sustainable development. We are at a crossroads: to allow that collapse and see the world return to strongman populism or to refound multilateralism in a way which builds on the human rights of all, equality, democracy and social justice.

We uphold the principles of an ethical foreign policy, as described by the late Robin Cook, which we believe are as important today as they were more than twenty years ago; as such, we resolve to continue to support international relations that work towards alleviating human suffering and which promote mutual understanding, cooperation and peaceful resolution of conflict.

The crisis that we are living through offers the opportunity for a new paradigm, particularly in the areas of economic development, knowledge and technology and human security. We are all aware that the biggest threat to our security in recent times has been COVID-19, not an armed attack from a foreign power, and that we face a range of existential risks such as climate change alongside the traditional fear of nuclear war.

Open Labour summarises these systemic risks around three general dimensions – (a) Breakdown in the human ecology; (b) Economic inequality, technological disruption; and (c) Democratic crisis, identity politics and straining multilateralism.

Open Labour believes the major challenges of our time are – broadly – ‘collective action problems’, they require cohering our fragmented global order around a collaboration that promotes ‘global public goods’.

## **Europe**

Open Labour will work with our sister parties in the Party of European Socialists on these collective action problems. Brexit took us backwards on many key issues and the continued pursuit of a ‘hard’ Brexit by the Conservative government, in tandem with a deregulatory trade policy per se, is hugely damaging to the economy, to workers, the environment and our social welfare model. Against the government’s hard Brexit vision, we support a relationship with the EU based on close economic and regulatory cooperation, mutual rights for citizens and collaboration in education, knowledge, technology, the environment, research and global development. Brexit is turning out to be very different from the sunlit uplands promised by Boris Johnson. It is proving costly, damaging and job-destroying, and Labour must set out plans to at least attenuate the damage.

Open Labour stands for:

- Seeking to end austerity and neoliberalism, including through progressive reform of the Eurozone and regulation of the banks so as to achieve increased social redistribution across Europe.
- Global efforts to mitigate the climate crisis and introduce a green transition.
- Developing a fair, inclusive, and managed pan-European migration policy, strengthened digital rights, and the promotion of human rights and social and economic development globally.
- Continuing to work with our sister parties and organisations to build a Europe that respects national self-determination, a Europe that is fair, transparent, and fit for purpose.



## Human security

The Open Left could pivot the focus onto the idea that the centrepiece of our foreign policy should be human security should be human security, which underpins and strengthens national security. Human security is the only way to ensure national security because we are only safe if the planet is safe. It is not just about values, it is also about being realistic; The international community no longer considers the UK a great power and the UK Government can no longer protect the safety of our citizens unilaterally, the only way this can be done is by promoting a safer world based upon the international rule of law, human and economic rights, human development, and global disarmament.

This is something that smaller countries like Scandinavians have recognised for a long time and they have had an influence disproportionate to their size. Human security is about the security of individuals and the communities in which they live rather than being only about the security of states and borders. It is about both physical security, for example war or terrorist threats, and also material security from such threats as poverty, disease, or climate change.

In a global context, human security is about spreading a rule of law and human rights and having the kind of well-rounded emergency response - utilising a human security services - that can address emergency situations, such as, pandemics, genocide and ethnic cleansing, flooding or famine. This work will also require a rebuilding of our global institutions which have been weakened by the growth of populism.

Labour needs to take on the Bretton Woods Institutions collapse into the arm of global capital and the G20. The fact that the IMF has \$650 billion in Special Drawing Rights that are mainly being drawn down by the G20 is a stain on the institution whose intellectual foundations are Keynesian. Special drawing rights should be given to low-income nations to help them create sustainable development and create resilient communities.

Open Labour stands for:

- Promoting a safer world based upon the international rule of law, human and economic rights, human development, and global disarmament.
- Global civil society efforts to radically reform finance and trade to protect wellbeing ('human security') and ensure access to public goods are equitably shared.
- Radical reform of intellectual property to grow the knowledge commons and support for open access research pursued for the benefit of all, including waiving COVID-19 patents and sharing the technology with the global south.
- Antitrust measures to tackle corporate monopolisation of new technologies and new forms of common ownership to democratise global and local economies.
- The strengthening of international labour and environmental standards and enforcement.

## Fundamental Rights

We believe those nations that continue to abuse the human rights of their citizens or others present in their geographical location, for whatever reason, should be held to account for their actions by the international community, irrespective of power or status.

The issue of self-determination and occupation and annexation of territory is also one Labour needs to address from a human rights perspective. Open Labour stands by international efforts to support self-determination across the world in areas such as Western Sahara, Kashmir, West Papua and Chagos Islands. For example, we reject the annexations of Tibet and Crimea, and we support Palestinian self-determination as part of a negotiated peaceful two-state solution alongside Israel.

Military Occupation tends to be associated with widespread violations of human rights. It is little known that Indonesian Forces have been responsible for half a million deaths in West Papua since occupation. Too often Labour governments have sought to tackle human rights without also tackling the political issues but the two are inextricable.

The UK still considers itself a major soft power player with the BBC, British Council, our global Universities and cultural institutions still being globally trusted and renowned. However another type of soft power is emanating, a much bigger influence, and that is China's economic programme. The belt and road programme includes expanding coal fired power Stations, oil pipelines and road building to strengthen China's economic dominance. It is now also intervening in our domestic politics with a major fracturing on the right of British Politics about whether Huawei should form a major part of the UK 5G network as well as the future of Hong Kong and Britain's responsibilities to its citizens. Labour's approach to China is a central question for the 21st Century, particularly given the ongoing Uyghur genocide and the way the products of slave labour from the region permeate global supply chains.

There's the broader issue of how a future Labour Government can use a range of measures including economic measures to show opposition to occupation, loss of democracy and transparency, and the creation of oligarchies as happened in Ukraine and which resulted in the annexation of Crimea with no real sanction. Labour also needs to take on strongmen closer to home not least Viktor Orban, the Prime Minister of Hungary, whose continued break with democracy, his racism and human rights abuses has elicited little action by the EU, likewise, we should be prepared to act in the Commonwealth; for example the case of with President Biya of Cameroon, who is violently suppressing the Anglophone community.

Much closer to home is the use of the UK as the international laundromat for dirty money, often linked to authoritarian regimes. We must target the crony capitalism and war economies that drive authoritarianism and conflict, and efforts to stamp out illicit finance must include reforms to unleash transparency regarding property ownership and political donations, and implementing the recommendations of the Russia report.

Open Labour stands for:

- Truly anti-imperialist principles of self-determination and agency.
- Lobbying the UK government, no matter which party is in power, to never do business, establish state-led contracts, etc., with states that violate international law and deny human beings fundamental rights.
- Encouraging internationally supported initiatives, especially through the UN but also organisations like the European Union, the Organisation for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE), for those opposing occupation, annexation of territory, and seeking self-determination.
- A Human Security approach which is able to protect people from war and genocide.
- An approach of targeted sanctions, improving financial transparency and addressing crucial material sources of conflict and authoritarianism - which the UK is at the centre of, being the destination of choice for global money launderers.
- Commitment to the defence of our citizens and to our treaty obligations including the mutual defence of our allies.

## **International development**

Open Labour deplores the abolition of the Department for International Development. UK aid has been one of our most important instruments of soft power. The dramatic cuts undertaken by this Government will hurt many impoverished people, especially in war zones like Syria or Democratic Republic of Congo, and will hugely damage Britain's international reputation.

More generally, trade law has often come to embody corporate power, and 'free markets' are now seen as an end in themselves. This wasn't always the case. After WWII, free trade was seen as important in so far as it realised full employment and development, this is no longer the case.

The global financial system, with the IMF at its centre, functions like a debtor's prison for many, turning many poorer countries into permanent economic subjects of the west. Labour needs to lead a reset, with massive debt cancellation and fundamental change to the way governments fund themselves.

Open Labour stands for:

- The restoration of the Department for International Development.
- Restoring aid budget to 0.7% GDP as soon as possible, with an aim to go beyond - particularly with climate focused support and acceptance of the UK's historic role in loss and damage to the environments of other countries.
- Halting the approach that causes trade deals to become a race to the bottom.
- Abolishing the investor state dispute settlement system which allows big business to sue governments in secret.
- A fairer global financial system to ensure debt doesn't become a matter of permanent bondage for those who can safely borrow, and with more domestic resource mobilisation (taxes).

### **Ethical foreign policy**

Labour should now consider what stance a future Labour Government would take in cases of massive violations of human rights, genocide or ethnic cleansing. Open Labour advocates a Human security approach which is able to protect people from war and genocide but also utilises other capabilities. In extreme cases to protect civilians from Genocide we may need to use force but it has to be protective and defensive, and it has to be embedded in a broader political, economic and social approach. Careful consideration must be given as to how any intervention takes place. Syria is a counter example of what happens when you don't intervene in extreme cases, with Russia filling the vacuum and once again becoming a major power far outside its immediate geographic sphere.

We conclude with the words of a young Robin Cook, who in 1978 said "...it is a truism that every war for the past two decades has been fought by poor countries with weapons supplied by rich countries." It is a truism today as much as it was more than 40 years ago and it is an indictment on governments since then that have facilitated it happening; we therefore restate our belief in a foreign policy that puts human rights and humanitarianism at the core of who we are as a socialist movement, and that will necessarily require difficult decision making for the next Labour government, Open Labour resolves to always be a voice in promoting choices which ensure an ethical foreign policy.

# ENVIRONMENT



## **ENVIRONMENT**

System change, not climate change

The climate emergency poses the biggest threat to all of our futures, but tackling that crisis could bring incredible opportunities to our economy and society. A huge boost to jobs and industry, improved health and wellbeing, a thriving and more resilient natural world. Meanwhile, the government dumps sewage in our rivers and along our coasts, pursues trade deals which throw British agriculture under the bus, and are on track to miss more climate targets.

Labour recognises that investing in a green and digital future to protect our security and protect the planet is an urgent task. Where the decimation of British industry began under Thatcher, we can get to work rebuilding this country's beating industrial heartlands with secure, unionised jobs for the future, closing the digital divide and creating opportunities which are spread fairly across our regions and nations.

We fully support Labour's bold climate investment pledge of £28 billion extra each and every year to 2030 to rewire our economy, build a better society and seize the opportunities of a low carbon, digital economy. We want to see a fair and prosperous transition to net zero, and one which is international and realises the role Britain can play in ensuring others work with us to meet this global challenge. We want to see emissions cut rapidly, a strategy to reverse the decline of nature both at home and around the world, and a more sustainable economy where we buy, make and sell more at home. Labour should strive to be the party of the great British countryside, creating more resilient natural habitats, strengthened flood defences, and a fairer deal for our agricultural industries.

The energy crisis and continually rapid rise in the cost of household bills has proven the failure and instability of the private model in delivering fundamental services. Our communities should have a stake in the resources we all depend on and make sure that these fundamental services are run for people, not profit. For instance, there is no fair reason that something as fundamental as our drinking water should be in the hands of private companies, or that renewable energy can't be community-owned.

Open Labour stands for:

- A Green New Deal: a managed, fair and prosperous transition to net zero.
- A green, digital jobs revolution which will rebuild Britain's industrial heartlands.
- Ensure that jobs and opportunities are spread evenly across our regions and nations.
- Make utilities community-owned and run for local people, not private profit.
- Rollout broadband and access to the digital world, so no one in the UK is left behind.
- Make green travel affordable and bring British transport into the 21st Century.
- Building carbon neutral homes, and retrofitting existing ones.
- International approach to mitigate the climate emergency, support countries in the global south facing existential threat, and ensure that climate refugees are given safe haven.
- Action on polluting waste such as single use plastics.
- A new Clean Air Act in line with WHO guidelines.
- Strengthen flood defences and invest in the fire service.
- Work with UK food producers to develop sustainable agricultural technologies and food security.

# TRANSPORT



## **TRANSPORT**

Tackling the climate crisis at speed

Public transport is an essential service which gives people greater freedom, choice and agency over their own lives. Reducing car use is also integral to our climate strategy and the safety of our streets.

Britain's cities are far behind many of their European neighbours in cycle infrastructure, buses and use of light rail. We need a commitment to establishing safer walking routes to schools, improved pedestrian crossings, and cycle schemes in schools so that all children are offered the opportunity to learn how to ride a bike.

Private companies have not proved themselves able to provide functioning bus networks in many parts of the UK and bus use is declining whilst the cost of using them has risen. Much like London's Oyster cards, a card scheme used nationally or regionally to connect our buses and railways, improve affordability and ease of access, and connect all parts of the UK through public transport is an ambitious but achievable project which would unleash job opportunities, businesses, local arts and culture, and social connectivity across our regions and nations.

Light rail across cities can also boost urban development, enhance the social and cultural scene of an area, and provide connections to other forms of transport like buses. The UK should look at how light rail can be used in our cities so that more people can get about easily, quickly and affordably, opening up job and business opportunities to greater numbers of people. It is vital that urban planning takes into account the needs of disabled people to ensure that travel routes don't lock out those who already face restricted mobility.

Electrified trains are cleaner, greener and quicker. They will be key to our international commitments to decarbonise transport in line with the Kyoto and Paris agreements. Bringing regional rail into the hands of the communities they serve, through common ownership, will not only make rail a dramatically more affordable option but also form an important part of the long-term strategy to reduce road use and implement a Green New Deal.

A properly-organised freight system, as part of a full industrial strategy for the country is needed. This has the potential to bring large numbers of polluting HGVs off our roads, and provide greater security to the fast transport of goods around the UK since the HGV workforce has shrunk dramatically post-Brexit.

Owning an electric car is a far off dream for most people, due to lack of affordability. This can be addressed through interest-free loans for those on low to middle incomes to buy an electric vehicle, hand in hand with a scrappage trial nationally to ensure a long-term transition to green transport. Integral to this is the rollout of charging points on streets across the UK to make this form of transport usable for all. This and other such national infrastructure projects should be delivered hand in hand with local authorities to ensure the needs of communities are met in the transition to green transport.

Open Labour stands for:

- Ditching the failed private model for rail and buses, bringing public transport networks into the hands of local people, through common ownership and cooperative principles to give communities a stake in the fundamental services they use.
- Delivering Northern Powerhouse Rail, the full completion of HS2 to Scotland, and a full rolling programme of electrification of rail across the UK.
- Improved accessibility and step-free access in both existing and new travel routes across all forms of transport.
- A properly-organised freight system for the transport of goods across the UK.
- Establishing safer walking routes to schools, improved pedestrian crossings.

- Cycle schemes in schools and greater safe cycle infrastructure to make cycling more attractive in towns and cities.
- Digitally connecting different forms of public transport to improve affordability and connections across the UK, and 'level up' transport infrastructure in areas which need it most.
- Funding for suicide prevention measures in train stations, particularly those identified as hotspots.



# EQUALITY



## **EQUALITY**

Liberation, liberation, liberation

We live in a wonderfully diverse society, and our membership comes from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences. We must ensure that we strive for the equality of women, disabled people, LGBTQ+ people, and people from Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds, in all that we do. It is important to embed these equality issues as part and parcel of everyday policy making and governance.

Open Labour stands with those who fight for racial justice and equality at home and around the world. The current British Establishment upholds institutional racism, with racial disparities in every part of life as seen in health outcomes, treatment by the police and justice system, and access to education, which the COVID-19 pandemic has further deepened.

We must repair the damage done by government policies which have further restricted the lives of many people of colour, such as voter ID and inhumane migration policy. Open Labour also supports a decolonised education system to give us a much stronger, fuller understanding of British and world history, acknowledges the plight of people of colour, and brings learning into the 21st Century. The wrongs of our past should be learned from, not glorified.

Open Labour welcomes and will campaign for any measures that will make the UK a fairer and more accessible society. All venues should make efforts to be as accessible as possible, offering wheelchair ramps, lifts and accessible toilets. We support increasing BSL provisions, for example making sure lessons in BSL are more readily available for children, students of all ages and anyone working in the public sector, such as healthcare professionals and teachers.

Misogyny is learned behaviour, which is why we need a robust education approach to confront prejudice and discrimination against women, particularly given rising online radicalisation. The government has routinely failed to take real steps to tackle violence against women and girls or to build a justice system which can actually deliver justice for victims. We must work to end the 'boys will be boys' culture which enables these crimes and build a justice system which victims of this violence can have faith in. Particularly in light of the recent Met investigation which revealed horrifically violent attitudes towards women and people of colour, we believe serious reform of the police and justice system is vital.

Whilst abortion is no longer a criminal offence in Northern Ireland, this area of healthcare provision in Northern Ireland must be brought to match the services available in Scotland, England and Wales. Work must also be done to tackle the persisting racial disparity in NHS treatment, such as that seen in the maternal mortality rates of black women and systemic barriers to mental health treatment for black men.

A vastly improved NHS should also aim to make sure LGBT+ people are supported, whether it's through equalising access to IVF treatment, or better treatment for mental health. The waiting times for appointments for transgender patients are disgraceful - people should not have to rely on savings and private healthcare to receive the treatment they require.

Cruel practices against LGBTQ+ people which still exist in the UK need to be brought to an end. We need to look beyond our borders too - the UK should be a safe haven for LGBTQ+ people fleeing persecution and violence around the world.

Open Labour stands for:

- Embedding equality as part and parcel of everyday policy making and governance.
- Listing British Sign Language (BSL) as an official national language in Great Britain and increasing braille provision.
- Properly funding SEN (Special Educational Needs) coordinators in schools.
- Disability Advisory Services should follow a student-led approach when it comes to putting in disability provisions for them.
- Equal reproductive rights and healthcare provision in Northern Ireland.
- Improved health outcomes for patients from ethnic minority backgrounds, including a strategy to narrow the racial disparities for black women in the maternal mortality rates.
- A national strategy to tackle violence against women and girls.
- Consequences for institutions which are complicit in violent misogyny by failing, sometimes deliberately, to tackle serious problems when raised.
- A reformed police and justice system to tear down institutional racism and ensure justice is delivered.
- A decolonised curriculum and fully inclusive health, sex and relationships education in schools.
- Tougher measures on tech companies to prevent online platforms from becoming hotbeds for hatred.
- For public monuments which celebrate horrors such as slavery to be moved to museums or other such locations where the historical context can be explained, understood and learned from.
- A full ban on conversion therapy.
- An LGBTQ+-friendly asylum system.
- Legal recognition of non-binary gender, introducing an X gender marker on passports and other forms of ID.
- Improved healthcare, NHS culture, and NHS waiting times for transgender patients.
- Equalising access to IVF treatment.

# LABOUR PARTY REFORM



## **LABOUR PARTY REFORM**

Transform Labour, transform Britain

Labour is a bridge between its roots in working class and radical politics, and a broad social majority. Our party needs open and democratic culture and structures, a welcoming and respectful environment, and to be ready for the tough work of internal and external alliance building. Labour should be an inclusive party of the democratic left, realistic about public opinion and always striving to lead it.

The Labour Party has made important strides internally over the last few years. Some might dismiss a discussion of internal party reform as 'navel gazing', but recent events have demonstrated both the moral and electoral value of having one's own house in order. Labour should lead by example with commitments to democracy, inclusivity and fairness.

The publication of the Forde Report in full is vital. It is important action is taken to address the many concerns that Open Labour made in its submission in 2020 and we will continue to follow up on these, including in the debate about the report's recommendations and how to implement these.

Labour Party Safeguarding Rules are important and all CLPs and other bodies should follow them. We are pleased Open Labour's Safeguarding policy dovetails with Labour Party guidance and rules, and we recommend all non-affiliated groups in the Party adopt guidance consistent with Party Rules for themselves.

Rule Changes over Parliamentary selections have caused confusion with various sections added over the years giving the NEC powers in a number of circumstances to draw up shortlists. The NEC has also approved recent guidance on long-listing too. It would be fair on CLPs if the rules on this were reviewed so there is consistency and clear explanation. With many parliamentary candidates appointed by panels in 2017 and 2019 it means many CLPs have not had a selection meeting since 2014.

The broader range of views expressed in the 2020 NEC elections and the broad consensus over Labour Students structures has seen more STV elections approved. Other factions often see STV as a tactic they deploy in just certain elections. Open Labour believes this should be in terms of a point of principle to further democratise and promote diversity and openness within the Party, just as predecessor organisations with our politics in the 1980s and 1990's argued for OMOV when there was still strong opposition across the Party. Past opposition to STV has flagged up the count itself as complex, however the rise of online voting through Anonymvoter which as an STV option means this argument is now redundant.

We support the rooting out of antisemitism from our ranks, making sure we earn back the trust of the Jewish community and ensuring our Jewish peers feel welcome and safe in the party. The Labour Party needs to support members from ethnic minority backgrounds in being champions for Labour within their communities, and champions for their communities within Labour. We need a strong Labour Party that is fiercely anti-racist and provides a strong voice for people of colour. We also need to make sure that Labour is a safe and welcome space for women, that everyday misogyny is tackled in our party, and that all sexual harassment complaints are properly dealt with.

The representation of Black members, particularly Black men, within the Labour Party is disgracefully low at all levels, especially in local councils and across the UK's different parliaments. Representation should be seen as an essential aim in achieving racial justice, not as a simple box-ticking exercise. Open Labour recognises that the diversity among political staffers is extremely poor and the voices of minority communities are not being sufficiently heard in the corridors of power. Open Labour supports the continuation of the vital work of the Bernie Grant Programme to train up talented members of colour to be involved in the Party. We also believe in the need for a preventative and educational strategy to tackle prejudices such as Islamophobia and anti-GRT racism.

Open Labour believes the Labour party has a transphobia problem with a significant failure to address deep concerns raised about the conduct of some agents of the party in regards to transphobia. Whilst transphobia is already against Labour Party rules, those rules must be properly enforced. It is important that trans members lead the way in advising the party of how best to identify this prejudice. The party must seek to educate and take a preventative and restorative approach to help prevent transphobia within our own ranks.

Open Labour stands for:

- The NEC should approve new rules to formalise LGBT structures, as has been done for Women's, BAME and Disabled equality structures.
- The NEC should establish a timetable for the roll out of Local Government Committees (which are replacing Local Campaign Forums) to ensure consistency and progress over a reasonable period of time.
- Young Labour elections should adopt STV to bring the youth wing's democratic structures in line with the new student structures.
- Expand preferential voting (AV) in single seat elections and STV in voting sections with 2 or more seats, across party structures.
- A commitment to ensure all CLPs without a Labour MP have a proper selection process to choose their parliamentary candidate in the next elections.
- Repeal new rules which give NEC and the regional executive committee control of longlisting, and put it back in the hands of local parties.
- Encourage the creation of local equalities branches and empower these to be able to make nominations.
- The continued roll out of all-women shortlists.
- Making sure sexual harassment and gender discrimination is dealt with, with a complaints system which those reporting such instances can have faith in.
- Efforts to increase representation of people of colour within positions of power in Labour, both amongst staff and elected officials, including regular diversity reports and targets.
- Implementation all-BAME shortlists where possible to increase representation in parliament and other levels of public office.
- A robust action plan to make this Party a safe space for all ethnic minorities, formed in consultation with mainstream community stakeholders.
- Adopt a formal definition of 'transphobia' in consultation with trans rights groups and stakeholders.
- Ensure all party events are in accessible venues.

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